

# TRUCK WEST

December 2009 Volume 20, Issue 12

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

## Alberta, Saskatchewan ink historic pact

By Jim Bray

**CALGARY, Alta.** – A Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta has the potential to bring about smoother sailing on the two provinces' highways, adding efficiency and perhaps even leading to lower consumer prices. The agreement, though more a letter of intent than a legally-binding document, points toward such improvements as harmonizing special permit conditions for turnpike doubles, oversize and overweight indivisible loads, and maximum gross vehicle weights for B-trains.

It also sets out special permit conditions for moving manufactured homes, establishes the concept of an inter-provincial heavy haul/high clearance corridor and a joint research and pilot project "to address common concerns with wide-base super single tires."

"We've been discussing the issues for quite a while," says Saskatchewan Highways and Infrastructure Minister Jim Reiter, crediting his predecessor for much of the work. "It's one of those things where, over a period of years, individual changes by governments to regulations sort of just got built up and up and up until it got to the point where there was such a deterrent to the cross-border movements of goods that the time had come to do something about it."

Reiter says both provincial

Continued on page 6



**SMOOTHER SAILING:** Trucking between the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan will only get easier thanks to an agreement between the two provinces to reduce red tape and streamline regulations.

## Non-RTAC backtrack

**CALGARY, Alta.** – *Truck West* has learned the province of Alberta has promised the trucking industry it will "defer weight restrictions" on non-RTAC trailers "indefinitely."

The promise, made in a letter to the Alberta Construction Trucking Association (ACTA) and other trailer operators, comes as welcomed news to the Alberta trucking industry, which was faced with prohibitive weight penalties if using trailers that pre-dated the RTAC standard as of the end of 2010.

Many of the trailers that would be affected are used seasonally and are still in good condition. The proposed weight penalties of 1,000 kg per year would also place Alberta-based operators at a disadvantage when hauling into neighbouring provinces, since Saskatchewan and B.C. both grandfathered existing equipment that was not RTAC-compliant.

The September issue of *Truck West* brought light to the issue, which was particularly worrisome to construction truckers. ACTA president Ron Singer said in the article that the anticipated 2011 deadline requiring trailers to comply with RTAC standards was one of the most important issues on his desk.

"This is really going to hurt the users of these trailers because after 2010 they'll not only be unable to use them, but they won't be able to sell them either since they'll be virtually useless," he said. Fortunately, Alberta Transport Minister Luke Ouellette has since agreed imposing further hardship on an already struggling construction trucking industry is not a good idea. □

## Look, no hands!



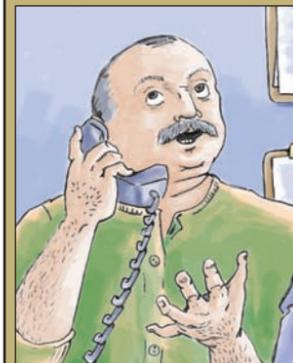
We test several hands-free cell phone devices

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

Truck West, USPS 017-178 is published monthly by Business Information Group, a division of BIG Magazines L.P., a leading Canadian information company with interests in daily and community newspapers and B-2-B information services.  
 US office of publication: 2424 Niagara Falls Blvd, Niagara Falls, NY 14304-5709. Periodicals Postage Paid at Niagara Falls, NY. US postmaster: Send address changes to Truck West, PO Box 1118, Niagara Falls, NY 14304.

SENIOR PUBLISHER – Rob Wilkins  
 ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER – Kathy Penner  
 EXECUTIVE EDITOR – James Menzies  
 MANAGING EDITOR – Adam Ledlow  
 CIRCULATION MANAGER – Vesna Moore  
 CIRCULATION ASSISTANT – Anita Singh  
 CREATIVE – Carolyn Brimer, Beverley Richards  
 V.P. PUBLISHING – Alex Papanou  
 PRESIDENT – Bruce Creighton  
 Circulation inquiries: 416-442-5600 ext. 3553  
 Change of address: Please include subscription number from mailing label.

Subscription rates: Canada (Includes GST) – One year \$40.60; U.S. – one year \$66.95; foreign – one year \$66.95

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PAP Registration No. 11065

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Canada Magazine Fund, towards our editorial costs.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program, towards our mailing costs.

## Canada

### Advertising inquiries

Kathy Penner: 416-510-6892  
 Fax: (416) 510-5143



**Rob Wilkins**  
 Publisher  
 (416) 510-5123  
 rwilkins@trucknews.com



**Kathy Penner**  
 Associate Publisher  
 (416) 510-6892  
 kpenner@trucknews.com



**Don Besler**  
 National Sales Mgr.  
 (416) 699-6966  
 donbesleris@rogers.com



**Brenda Grant**  
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 bgrant@istar.ca



**Doug Copeland**  
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 Man., Sask. & Alta.  
 (416) 510-6889  
 dcopeland@trucknews.com



**Laura Moffatt**  
 Research Director

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## Are police antagonizing truck drivers?

Are Ontario police unfairly targeting truckers? I'm no conspiracy theorist, but based on conversations with drivers and recent news reports, it's difficult to think otherwise. Consider this: Last month an Ontario-based truck driver with an 'expired' A/Z licence was pulled over by police in the US. He was nervous, to say the least, knowing that US police agencies may not be aware of the long-running DriveTest strike that has prevented him from renewing his licence. But to his surprise, the officer said he was aware of the strike and asked if the driver had a copy of an MTO letter explaining the situation. He did, and was sent on his way without further incident.

Around the same time, another Ontario driver was involved in a minor accident here at home. According to the driver, the police officer who responded told the driver he was not allowed to drive with an expired licence, despite the DriveTest strike. "While I did not get charged for not having a licence, I had to give up my D/Z licence and drop to a G just so I could drive my own car to work," the driver told me. "I thought I should let you know that not all cops honour the MTO."

And therein lies the problem. There seems to be a serious disconnect between front-line police officers in this province and their higher-up authorities. Why would a police officer right here in Ontario be unaware of legislation enacted by the province that extends the date of Ontario driver's licence expirations while an American trooper is up to speed on the issue?

It's cause for concern. What's even greater cause for concern, however, is a growing rift appears to be forming between Ontario police and the professional driver population at large. I can recall a number of instances in recent months, includ-

### Editorial Comment

James Menzies



ing the issuing of a fine for talking on a cell phone before the law was to be enforced and of course the now infamous ticket given to a driver for smoking in his rig, where police officers seemed to be going out of their way to target truck drivers.

At the same time all this is happening, police agencies such as the RCMP are asking the trucking industry to be more forthright in reporting cargo theft and other forms of truck-related crime.

All this begs the question, is the seemingly aggressive approach the OPP is taking towards professional drivers in Ontario undermining the attempts of the RCMP and other enforcement agencies towards establishing better cooperation between the trucking industry and police? I would suggest so.

RCMP officer Rob Ruiters, a rare breed of cop who takes a genuine interest in cargo theft and other truck-involved crime, said during TransCore's user conference this past summer that the trucking industry and police agencies must work more closely together than they have in the past.

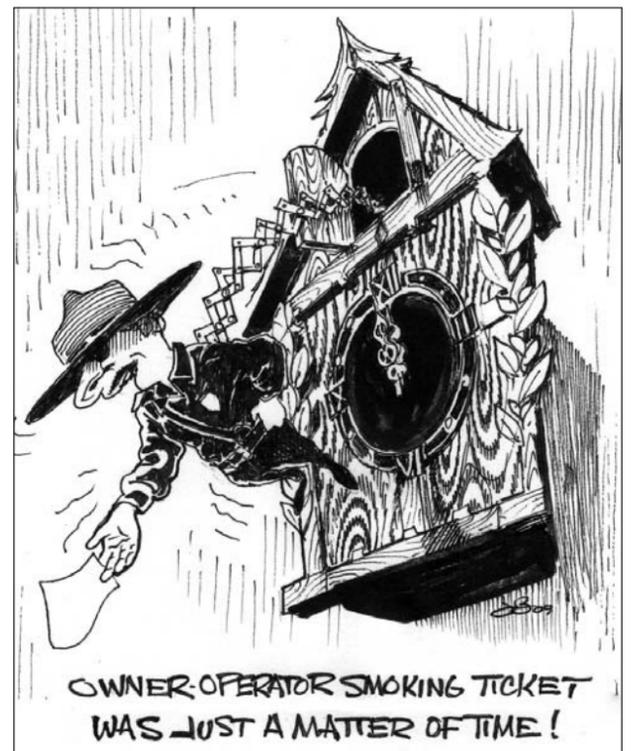
"The commercial vehicle industry and the cops did not work well together (in the past)," he admitted, noting that trucking

companies would often complain that police wouldn't do anything about a stolen trailer and in turn police would accuse a fleet of not knowing where its trailers were at any given time in the first place.

Ruiters and his colleagues have worked tirelessly to bridge the gap between law enforcement and the trucking industry, as evidenced through his many presentations at trucking industry events.

But if he's to achieve his goals of better cooperation between the industry and police, something needs to be done about the huge disconnect that appears to exist between front line enforcement officers and their superiors, because it seems many cops have an axe to grind with truckers which is fueling distrust among professional drivers and doing irreparable harm to police/driver relations. □

– James Menzies can be reached by phone at (416) 510-6896 or by e-mail at [jmenzies@trucknews.com](mailto:jmenzies@trucknews.com). You can also follow him on Twitter at [Twitter.com/JamesMenzies](https://twitter.com/JamesMenzies).



## Finally, some good news

This being the final issue in a very tough year, I wanted to end things on an optimistic note. I've written much in recent months about all the negatives facing our industry. But I am also now hearing some distinct positives I want to share with you.

David Newman of NB Financial is one of the better known transportation industry analysts in Canada and at the recent CITT conference in Niagara-on-the-Lake he pointed to several positive signs – "green shoots" as he calls them – that things are about to turn around.

Newman, who has won numerous awards for his market forecasting abilities, believes the ISM New Orders Index, which is produced by the Institute of Supply Chain Management and measures new manufacturing orders in the US, is the best indicator for freight volumes. And that index started showing first recovery and then improvement earlier this year. So why isn't trucking seeing freight volumes rise yet? Because there is a six- to nine-month lagged correlation between the time new orders are placed in the system and the

### Viewpoint

Lou Smyrlis  
 Editorial Director



time truckers get to move the freight those orders trigger and get paid for it.

Looking specifically at the ISM New Orders Index back in September, Newman was convinced things were about to improve and two months later he remains convinced he is right about improvement by the end of this year and early in 2010.

What's interesting is that his biggest doubters may be the very people who sincerely wish he is right: the motor carrier executives themselves. A country-wide survey that NB Financial conducted with CITT and has just released, found transportation service providers, and trucking in particular, are uncertain about the rebound in industry volumes next year.

Yet shippers responding to the same survey appear to be more confident that the industry may

witness improvement in 2010. A much greater percentage of trucking executives responding to the survey believed freight volumes would either remain flat or actually decrease further next year. And less than a third of transportation providers overall answered the survey's "exact volume projection" question, pointing to the uncertainty being felt right now.

Shippers on the other hand proved less uncertain with respect to freight volume growth and projected a slight improvement next year, with 29% projecting a 5-10% increase. And a sizeable number of shippers responded to the "exact volume projection" question, with a median projection of +8%.

Now, we know from our own research on freight volume projections (ours is due out next week) that shippers tend to be overly optimistic.

But, as Newman points out, you still have to be encouraged by the result as it is the source of volume, the shippers, who are more confident about the future. □

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

# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

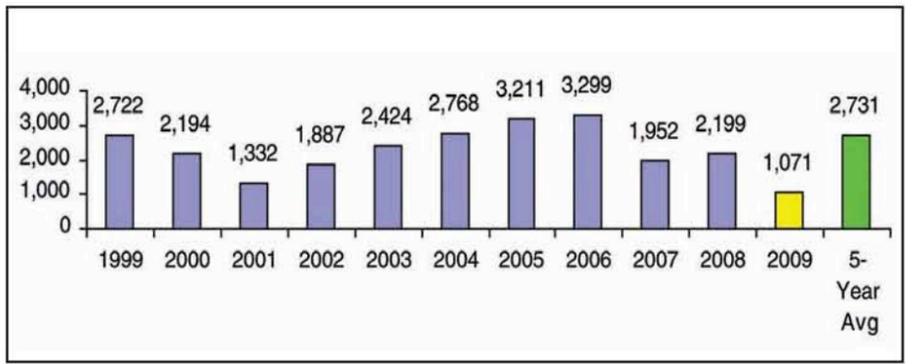
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## Monthly Class 8 Sales - Sept 09

Class 8 truck sales in Canada took yet another beating in September. While the 1,071 trucks sold nationwide were a slight improvement over the previous month, this still proved to be the worst September of the past decade, and by a long shot. It was also about 1,700 units off the five-year average (It should be noted that five-year average includes the industry's peak years of 2004 to 2006.) and about 1,000 below last year's September sales. This is the worst recession to hit the North American market in the post war era and monthly truck sales continue to reflect that reality.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	296	379
International	275	609
Kenworth	187	246
Mack	68	137
Peterbilt	138	319
Sterling	95	181
Volvo	88	230
Western Star	44	98
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>2199</b>

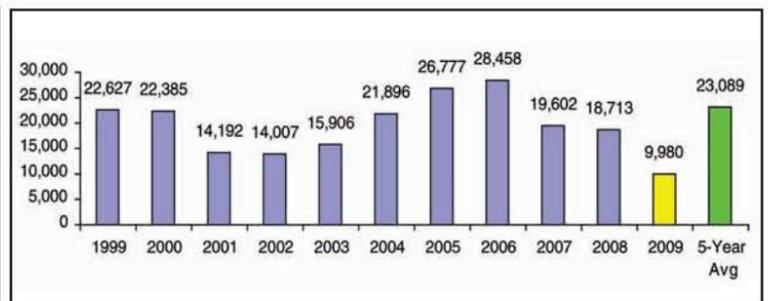
## Historical Comparison - Sept 09 Sales



## Class 8 Sales (YTD Sept 09) by Province and OEM

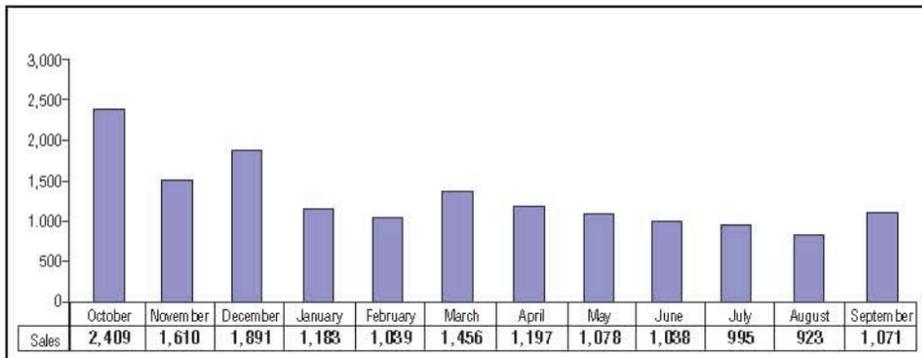
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	102	234	99	117	751	405	156	104	3	6	1,977
Kenworth	156	306	85	81	244	331	48	12	0	0	1,263
Mack	33	68	81	45	399	100	25	20	0	0	771
International	89	380	52	137	1,233	710	127	52	26	55	2,861
Peterbilt	91	163	92	85	139	118	34	19	0	0	741
Sterling	93	96	25	9	202	220	17	5	8	25	700
Volvo	49	92	74	138	375	148	53	49	0	6	984
Western Star	84	214	33	24	110	101	51	64	0	2	683
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>3,453</b>	<b>2,133</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>9,980</b>

## Historical Comparison - YTD Sept



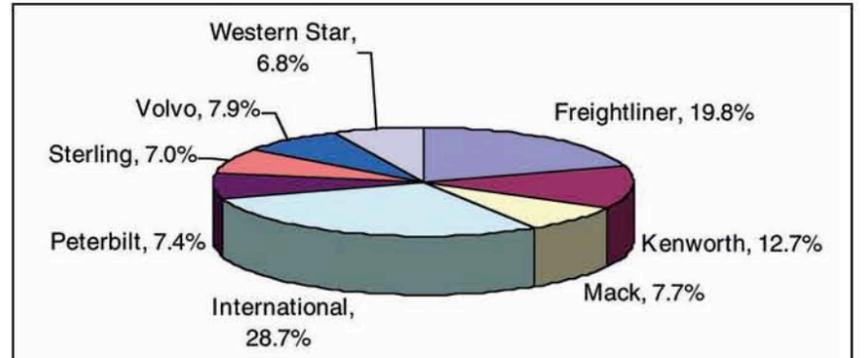
The third quarter, much like the second and first, was a disaster for Class 8 truck sales. The first quarter of the year was so weak that three months into the year sales were more than 2,000 off last year's YTD pace, hardly a banner year in itself, about 3,000 off the five-year YTD average and about 5,000 off the banner year of 2006. Nine months into the year and the hole is getting deeper. Canadian Class 8 truck sales are at their lowest point YTD of the past decade by a long shot. They are about 13,000 units off the five-year average, at almost half the level of last year's sales and more than 18,000 units off the banner year of 2006.

## 12 - Month Sales Trends



There are many reasons motor carriers are reluctant to purchase new trucks right now. Although the recession is likely over, the rebound is not expected to be as robust as it was in past recessions and trucking will not be a leading indicator this time around. Still, high inventory to sales ratios will continue to dampen freight volumes and the trucking industry remains in over capacity, which places downward pressure on rates. General freight rates declined 5.6% YTD in 2009 from the end of last year, according to the latest research. Used truck values are also making it difficult for carriers to turn in their old trucks for new ones. In addition, the growing age of the Canadian truck fleet is misleading because mileage is down compared to the pre-recession years.

## Market Share Class 8 - Sept YTD



International retains its lead in this downward market, controlling 29% of Class 8 sales in the Canadian market YTD. Freightliner, a former front runner for many years, is close to 20% of total sales. Traditionally strong performers Kenworth and Peterbilt have fallen back compared to previous years, perhaps because both are strong in the west and Western Canada is no longer booming.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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## Behind the headlines

Trucknews.com has won the Best Video award at the first-ever Canadian Online Publishing Awards. The awards program, produced by *MastheadOnline* magazine, recognizes excellence in online editorial and innovation by Canadian magazine and Web site publishers.

Entrants were judged in two divisions: the red division for consumer, custom, religious, and public association Web sites and the blue division, for business-to-business, professional association, farm, and scholarly Web sites. Trucknews.com bested other Best Video competitors in the blue category for its weekly WebTV show, *Transportation Matters*. Video features were judged on how they serve their intended audience, through their educational, entertainment and production values.

Trucknews.com was also a finalist in the biggest COPA award category of the night: Best Overall Magazine Web Site. Trucknews.com was the only transportation magazine to be recognized in any award category.

For more information or to see a complete list of winners, visit [www.canadianonlinepublishingawards.com](http://www.canadianonlinepublishingawards.com).

To view episodes of *Transportation Matters*, visit the Multimedia section of Trucknews.com. □

## Ontario changes gears, will allow auto transmissions for sr. driver road tests

**TORONTO, Ont.** – The Ontario Ministry of Transportation has quietly approved the use of automatic transmissions for senior drivers who must annually renew their A/Z licence after the age of 65.

Using a truck with an automatic transmission will allow them to qualify for a full privilege Class A licence, according to the Private Motor Truck Council (PMTTC), which along with the Ontario Trucking Association and Owner-Operators Business Association of Canada, has been lobbying for the change. In a letter to the PMTC, the Ministry of

Transportation confirmed “As of Nov. 1 2009, senior commercial drivers conducting annual renewal road tests are allowed to use a vehicle equipped with an automatic transmission to qualify for a full privilege Class A driver’s licence.”

New drivers and non-senior drivers will have to use a mechanical transmission when obtaining an A/Z licence, however.

“The purpose of this policy change is to address issues that have been brought to the ministry’s attention since the introduction of the Class A Restricted licence,” the letter explained. □

## USDA reverses plan to hike APHIS fees

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) is celebrating another victory having helped convince the US Department of Agriculture to scrap its proposed Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) fee increase.

The USDA has withdrawn an interim rule that would have seen USDA APHIS fees skyrocket by over 14% as of Nov. 1.

The CTA led the charge in opposing the fee increase, and on Sept. 30 deemed the proposed hike “ludicrous” in light of current economic challenges. CTA chief David Bradley said the reversal by USDA was “the right thing to do” but said “it never should have got to this stage.”

CTA also said it will continue to oppose the application of the APHIS fee on all shipments.

“It is patently unfair and inappropriate that all trucks, regardless of whether their cargo is auto parts or agricultural products should have to pay APHIS fees in the first place,” Bradley contended. □

## Economy caps list of top trucking industry issues

**LAS VEGAS, Nev.** – A US research group has released its list of the top 10 critical issues facing the North American trucking industry, with the economy – not surprisingly – coming in at number one.

The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) surveyed of more than 5,000 trucking industry executives to compile the list. The *ATRI Top Industry Issues* report also solicited and tabulated specific strategies for addressing each issue.

Government regulation, which officials said has been climbing the list since the survey started in 2005, came in at number two this year. Other issues included fuel, congestion, Hours-of-Service and the environment, while truck size and weight made its first appearance ever on the list. The ATA, which commis-

sions the survey, says the group will use the results “to better focus its advocacy role on behalf of the US trucking industry and ATA Federation stakeholders.”

“The annual ATRI survey proves invaluable in helping us chart a course of action for the future,” said ATA chairman Charles “Shorty” Whittington of Grammer Industries, Grammer, Ind.

“On every legislative and regulatory topic, issues come and go so quickly today,” said Bill Graves, ATA president and CEO. “If we’re not at the table with sound, science-based information and a common sense plan of action, then we’re going to get left behind, and saddled with solutions that have no bearing on moving America’s freight safely and efficiently.” □



**READY TO ROLL:** The specially-designed 18 Wheels of Christmas trailer is ready to be filled with food donations for needy families.

## 18 Wheels of Christmas gets rolling

**CALGARY, Alta.** – The 18 Wheels of Christmas campaign is rolling again, hoping to collect a record amount of food from the transportation industry for Western Canadian food banks.

The campaign challenges transportation companies to collect and donate skids of food for food banks in Calgary, Edmonton and Saskatoon. Rosenau Transport has donated use of a specially-designed trailer which will tour Alberta and Saskatchewan to collect the food

and deliver it to the Interfaith Food Bank in Calgary, the Edmonton Food Bank and the Saskatoon Food Bank, organizers have announced.

If you’d like to take part and make a donation, you can contact the following: In Calgary, Dale, Colleen or Shirley at 403-279-4204; in Edmonton, Justin or Ken at 780-431-0594; or in Saskatoon, Tim or Carrie at 306-244-7088.

You can also e-mail [18wheels\\_xmas@rosenau.org](mailto:18wheels_xmas@rosenau.org) to coordinate a pick-up. □

## OOIDA says it supports DoT bid to curb distracted driving

**GRAIN VALLEY, Mo.** – The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) is supporting the DoT’s efforts to curb distracted driving by participating in upcoming rulemaking sessions related to the issue.

The forthcoming meetings to discuss regulation and legislation, announced recently by Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, should be extended to all vehicle operators, not just truckers, OOIDA says.

“For years I’ve seen car drivers doing everything from reading books to putting on make-up. Now I see folks texting while driving all too often,” said OOIDA member and veteran trucker Dale Wiederholt.

“All drivers need to put safety first and fully focus on operating their vehicles.”

OOIDA has said it would also like to see more programs that educate the motoring public about driving around big rigs.

Current programs involve a state officer riding along with an owner/operator and watching for motorists who follow too closely or cut in front of tractor-trailers.

“These and related types of programs go a long way towards encouraging highway safety,” said OOIDA’s executive vice-president Todd Spencer.

Also testifying at the hearing, held by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, was Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman Julius Genachowski who announced that the FCC would embark on a campaign to educate the public about the dangers of texting while driving.

“We applaud the Department of Transportation, the Senate and the House for focusing efforts on combating texting while driving. It is a terribly dangerous activity that has become all too common,” said Spencer.

OOIDA has also called upon government entities to provide law enforcement with the resources that they need to fully enforce existing laws on inattentive or negligent driving.

“Currently, there are laws on the books that provide police with the authority to ticket drivers who are doing something they shouldn’t be behind the wheel. We need to encourage law enforcement to crack down on all drivers of all types of vehicles, not just truckers,” said Spencer.

However, Spencer cautioned that laws should be carefully crafted to address the problem while still protecting privacy rights. □

**CLEAR SHOT:** Officials as far away as Washington, D.C. have taken notice of the Alberta/Saskatchewan Memorandum of Understanding.

# Prairie provinces breaking down borders

*'There seems to be a lot of interest in what's going on in western Canada,' Al Rosseker*

**Continued from page 1**

governments are committed to doing what they can to help their respective economies and "there is no time better than the present."

For his part, Alberta Minister of Transportation Luke Ouellette says, "Transportation is fundamental to supporting Alberta's economy and we are committed to seeing that regulations don't impede the economic competitiveness of either province. This MoU supports highway safety and the reduction of barriers to inter-provincial transportation."

Trucking associations in both provinces hail the MoU as a way to help their industry be more efficient immediately, while opening the door to further harmonization.

"We're greatly encouraged," says Al Rosseker, executive director of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association. "Anything that can be done to lessen regulatory entanglements is good news. If we can streamline things to the point where there's some commonality, at least in the regions, we look at that as a positive outcome."

Mayne Root, Rosseker's counterpart with the Alberta Motor Transport Association, agrees. "We are supportive of anything that makes transportation across borders easier," he says. "We're pleased with the direction it's going and will work to ensure it works out for both (provinces)."

Rosseker notes that his and

other western Canadian trucking associations have been lobbying their respective governments about harmonizing regulations for years.

"This is one of the first milestones," he says, "and it shows that some of our efforts are paying off."

Government and bureaucracies, Rosseker says, are tuning in to why such harmonization is needed, and he gives them full credit, both for having the vision and for listening to the industry. He also expressed optimism that it will spread eastward.

"Hopefully, the Manitoba trucking industry will continue to carry the ball," he says, "and we'll continue to support them."

The AMTA's Root says his organization had input with Alberta Transportation on some of the issues covered by the new memorandum, "just some informal and formal meetings to talk about some of the issues," he says. "You could say it's the Alberta consultative process – the way it works most of the time."

Saskatchewan's Reiter acknowledges that the issues covered in the memorandum are important to the trucking industry, but stresses that they go beyond trucking.

"The business community sees the problems inherent in the system," he says, "And so (the MoU) is good news for the trucking industry, good news for the business communities and good news for citizens of both provinces because this can help streamline the flow of goods which in turn should help with the cost of goods."

The Minister notes as well that the agreement's effects could be felt far beyond his province.

"For Saskatchewan's export-based economy, this means businesses will be more competitive in reaching inter-provincial, national and worldwide markets," he says.

"Our two governments are acting to reduce red tape and enhance our business climate to continue to grow our provincial economies."

Reiter admits that this MoU doesn't mean all is suddenly sweetness and light across the prairies, however.

"It continues to be a work in progress," he says, hinting that there'll be further developments fairly quickly while others will take a while to work out. But overall, "it's going to be a good thing for both our economies and as it moves forward I can see

nothing but more good news stories coming out of this."

Rosseker would like to see one of those subsequent good news stories be LCV (Long Combination Vehicle) speeds becoming harmonized across all the prairie provinces.

Currently, Manitoba and Alberta allow LCVs to drive at up to 100 km/h, but the speed limit drops to 90 km/h at the Saskatchewan border.

"If you look at taking a load from Saskatoon to Edmonton or from Regina to Winnipeg," he says, "you can't make the return trip in one day driving 90 kilometres an hour when you consider factors like hours-of-service and the like. But if you push it up to 100 km/h, then you can."

Rosseker says the STA has had verbal assurance from the province that it will happen and that, when it does come to pass, "It'll mean a lot to us."

Such harmonization would help truckers remain at constant speeds, which helps fuel mileage as well as helping get the goods delivered more quickly.

"Continuity is the key," he says. "That's what we're looking for."

News of the agreement appears to be spreading.

"I've been contacted from as far away as Washington, D.C.," Rosseker says. "So the word is getting out. There seems to be a lot of interest in what's going on in western Canada." □

'This is one of our first milestones and it shows that some of our efforts are paying off.'

All Rosseker, STA

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# Chemical hauler takes responsibilities seriously

By Jim Bray

**CALGARY, Alta.** – What's better than the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval? If you're a company involved in the chemical industry, it could be Responsible Care-In-Place Verification, a way to help ensure safety and efficiency in handling what could be extremely dangerous substances.

A set of stringent health, safety, environmental, security, and community outreach standards designed and monitored by the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association (CCPA), the Responsible Care-In-Place standard could be thought of as similar to the ISO standards, but taken to the next level.

And while maintaining such standards may seem like a no-brainer considering the potential for human life loss and environmental damage that could result from an emergency involving chemicals, only two Canadian trucking companies have qualified for recognition under the program so far: Northwest Tank Lines and Harmac Transportation.

According to Michael Perry, a Victoria-based management consultant who works with and speaks for Northwest Tank Lines, it's part of "the cradle-to-grave mentality of handling chemicals responsibly in Canada, to take charge from the input side of the manufacturing process to the eventual delivery of the product to the end user."

Since most chemical companies don't own transportation companies, Perry says, the transportation link of the chain was out of their control and the Responsible Care-In-Place Verification process is meant as a way to correct that situation.

Perry says the concept really took off after the infamous Bhopal, India, disaster in 1984, in which methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from a tank at a Union Carbide plant, killing approximately 3,800 people and injuring several thousand others, according to the Madhya Pradesh state government as quoted by Union Carbide on its [www.bhopal.com](http://www.bhopal.com) Web site.

"After that," Perry says, "chemical companies got together and decided to clearly take responsibility of the process from start to finish, including disposal of any residual chemical products."

Perry says this extends, in Northwest Tank Lines' case, right to washing out tanks of chemicals the company hauled. "You can't just go and wash it out into a creek," he says. "It has to go into a contained site and be handled properly according to the rules. This business is federally-regulated too, so there are rules you have to follow."

The Responsible Care-In-Place standard goes above and beyond the regulatory and legal requirements, however, and Perry says the chemical companies have bought into it completely. "It's a theme of sustainability," he says.



**A SHINING EXAMPLE:** Northwest Tank Lines is one of only two Canadian chemical haulers to become certified so far.

It took Northwest, which celebrates 55 years in business in 2010, three years to get verified as a Responsible Care-In-Place partner, an exhaustive process in which the CCPA sends out a quartet of auditors, two of whom are from the community itself and two who are professional consultants.

"They talked to suppliers, customers, drivers and staff," says Perry, "and got a real feel as to whether Northwest was actually practicing the stringent Responsible Care-In-Place standards."

Perry says that if the auditors find any items that are "real show stoppers," areas where the company has serious work to do before its house is considered to be in order, it's given a certain amount of time to correct them, after which the auditors take another look to verify the requirements have been met. In Northwest's case, Perry says, there were only some minor items that needed work and "those were all done within the prescribed time frame and therefore the verification was done."

Northwest's audit was completed in the fall of 2008 and official recognition as a verified Responsible Care-In-Place transportation partner was given at the CCPA's Western Leadership group meeting in February, 2009.

That doesn't end the process, though. "There's an ongoing system in place to check on whether companies are adhering to the CCPA's expectations," Perry says, including the requirement for Northwest's president to sign off annually on a report that the company is still meeting the Responsible Care-In-Place requirements. An official audit is also required every three years.

What separates the Responsible Care-In-Place standards from ISO, Perry says, is that a company is only required to map out

its processes with ISO, but there's no real verification – whereas with Responsible Care-In-Place they've added the confirmation process. The criteria cover health and safety (occupational and operations), environmental concerns, security and Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency Response (TransCAER).

Perry claims Northwest is one of the leaders in TransCAER community outreach activities, attending several events each year with emergency first responders such as fire, EMS and police "to raise awareness and preparedness in transporting chemicals," he says, noting that Northwest president Tom Blaney was the recipient of the first-ever CCPA/TransCAER President's Award for Leadership and Continuous Improvement in Transportation Safety.

The TransCAER events include simulated chemical spills to give the participants a chance to practice what they'll need to do if there ever is an incident. Northwest also has a contract with Quantum Environmental to help out in any emergency.

Such attention to detail makes a good marketing tool for Northwest and any other company that goes through the Responsible Care-In-Place audit process successfully, and Perry says Northwest uses that to its advantage when he conducts independent annual customer interviews for the company.

"I always ask them if they're aware of Northwest's commitment to responsible care and TransCAER," he says, "and they all are because it's just part of the culture, the DNA of Northwest. And they can see the benefits, the professionalism of the drivers, the quality of the equipment."

As part of its commitment, Northwest also hired a full-time

health, safety and environment director and an additional safety manager, as well as installing satellite tracking in all the units so there's always a connection between the drivers and dispatch. It has also added electronic stability to its equipment so that, for example, if a unit heads into a corner too quickly the stability system overrides the driver, decreasing the engine power and/or applying the brakes.

Perry says Northwest has also installed audible back-up alarms on all its signature black and silver units.

"It's that sort of thing that the customers are aware of and appreciate," Perry says.

It's also the kind of thing that could allow Northwest to charge a premium for its services, if it weren't for current economics and the ongoing challenge to successfully market the benefits of a Responsible Care Partnership.

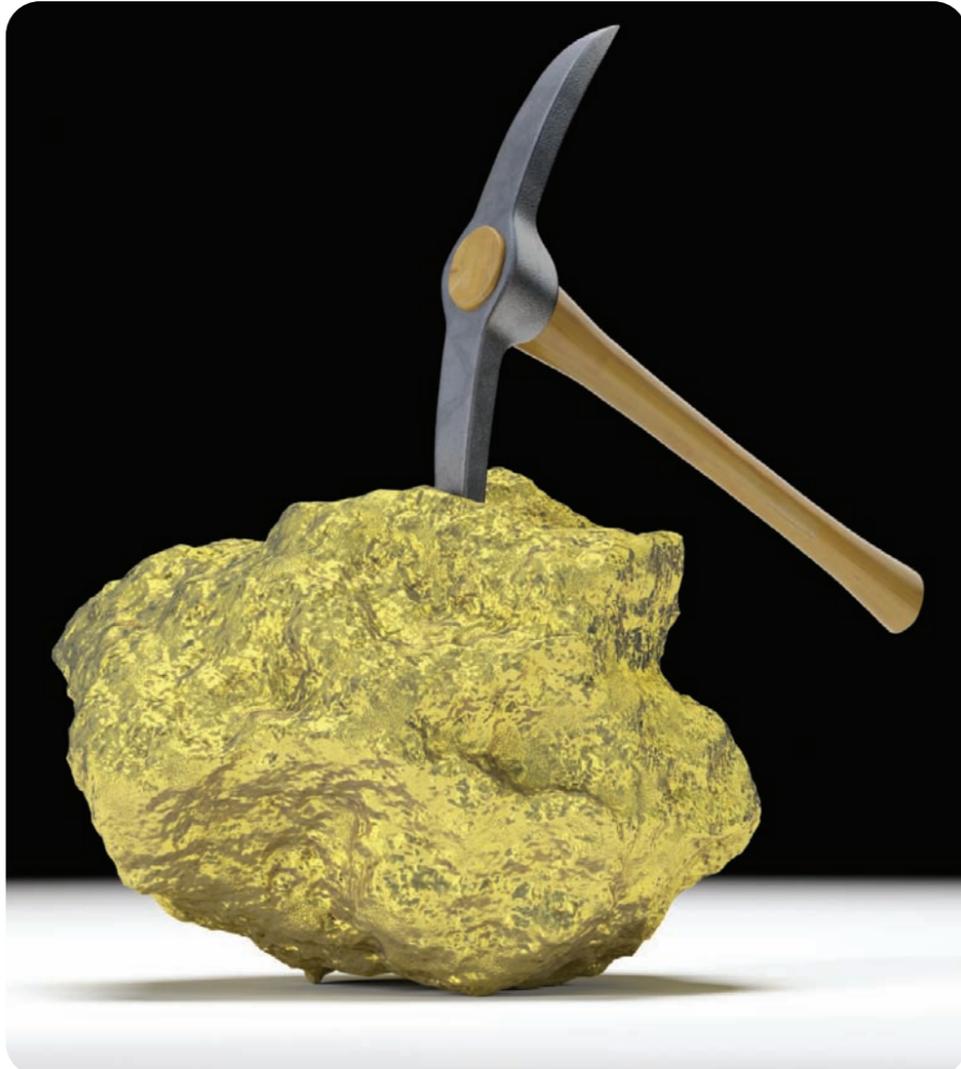
Still, even though the current business climate means Northwest can't really charge a premium, Perry notes "it gives a lot of customers a sense of security knowing that they don't have to worry about the product being hauled from Point A to Point B."

Perry also says Northwest's customers notice and appreciate its regular company newsletters – called *Spirit* – which it publishes twice a year. "Customers typically like reading about Northwest's ongoing commitment to safety and learning about their people and equipment," he says.

While qualifying for – and maintaining – the Responsible Care-In-Place standard is a major commitment and a major expense, Perry says it gives the company a competitive advantage.

And with a better economy and increased customer awareness of Responsible Care, such an advantage could be a benefit to a company's bottom line as well. □

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# Beyond 'ABC-123'

## Essential skills make up the new literacy

By Julia Kuzeljevich

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – Workplace communication has become ever more immediate and technical, but the old fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic have not quite fallen by the wayside. It's just that the bar has been raised.

According to the Canadian Council of Learning, nearly half of Canadian adults don't possess enough literacy skills to understand a public bus schedule, read directions on a pill bottle or keep up with technological advances in the workplace.

To mark International Literacy Day on Sept. 8 of this year, the Council released an interactive map showing literacy rates across 52,000 cities, towns and communities across Canada.

Some 48% of Canadians aged 16 and older only possess a level '2' or lower in literacy, which means that they have the skills to "deal only with simple, clear material involving uncomplicated tasks." (A level '3' is considered the "minimum threshold for coping with the demands of the global knowledge-based economy," said the Council).

Low literacy levels are a huge threat to productivity and economic performance, especially if you take the following Statistics Canada factoid into consideration: each 1% increase in the average rate of literacy and numeracy skills permanently raises a country's GDP per capita by 1.5%.

So are businesses and educators getting the message?

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada said that over the past year alone, close to 400,000 copies of the federal government's Literacy and Essential Skills toolkit, which is divided into Assessment, Learning, and Training Supports, have been ordered or downloaded.

"Many of these tools have only recently been published and are already receiving very positive feedback. Employers and workplace practitioners have communicated that they recognize the importance of literacy and essential skills and the need to increase employees' skill levels. Research has also shown that they would be more likely to address the development of literacy and essential skills if they had access to free, generic and user-friendly tools, learning models and supports," HRSDC told *Truck West*.

Even as a large percentage of the Canadian public grapples with everyday literacy issues, employers are facing multiple staffing challenges: clarifying and classifying the elements that make up "essential skills," recruiting from an ever-shrinking workforce as the Canadian population ages, and identifying strategies to hire and train newcomers to the country – immigrants who will make up the bulk of Canada's workforce in the coming decades.

But according to a September

2009 report by TD Economics, immigrants to Canada are still not being utilized to their full potential, costing the economy billions of dollars every year.

The culprit? Poor language and literacy skills, with about six in 10 newcomers possessing less than the desired level of literacy.

In the transportation industry, given the challenges of recruitment and retention, how pervasive is the literacy issue? It depends on how you define it, noted Linda Gauthier, executive director of the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council.

"A lot of people define literacy as reading, writing and document use. But many will include computer skills," she said. In the last two years, Gauthier told *Truck West*, screening for reading, writing and basic math skills has become increasingly important.

The CTHRC identified 13 essential skills a truck driver needs, and the top three require proficiency in language: reading text, using documents (interpreting road maps, bills of lading, etc.), and writing.

"A number of years ago people could develop coping skills but that is more difficult now given the on-board electronic equipment and the amount of paperwork and documentation. It's not sufficient to say that people are coming out of school with certification, but to show that people have document use skills, and when it comes to those already in the workforce the responsibility falls on the employer," said Gauthier.

Back in 2003 the CTHRC published an essential skills needs assessment for the trucking industry.

"We identified that the larger companies were looking at ways to assess their employees. That report led us to develop the TOWES test,

and to do more research to see what the uptake and the benefits would be."

TOWES (the Test of Workplace Essential Skills) has been in use for several years in a number of provinces, and is used as a screening process for people coming into entry-level truck driver training programs. The program focuses on skills that people may have used but forgotten (how to find things within the material they are scanning, for example).

Gauthier said uptake for TOWES was initially slow, but now industry is paying more attention.

"We've also developed some training modules that would help when you put someone through the assessment and you've found them lacking in some of the skills. The material was developed using trucking workplace materials so that they can be easily integrated," she said.

A few years ago, CTHRC also undertook a literacy-related project with the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute (CPPI).

"We looked at essential skills as measures of safety performance, and could essential skills impact safety with petroleum haulers? The results indicated that document use, which is huge in the petroleum industry, was weak on the part of drivers and trainers. Even the trainers didn't have the document use skills required. The report also indicated that there was the potential for a higher incidence of accidents in that field when the skill level of the drivers was not high enough," said Gauthier.

John Skowronski, director of environmental affairs for the CPPI, told *Truck West* that as a result of the project, the CPPI has come up with a rating process, and tried to look at the root causes of safety incidences to see if they could be tied back to

literacy.

"One of the elements we found was that the ability to interpret forms was a cause in some (safety-related) incidences. The issue was not so much understanding the forms but the different mix of forms suppliers would use. Was there some way for us to reduce that variability by using a standard form among suppliers?"

"We haven't come up with any changes but we do have a recommendation to come up with a standard bill-of-lading. That's the primary output for us. There are regulatory requirements that are simple to meet, (ie. emergency response info). The second requirement is that individual suppliers have corporate requirements and for them (especially the large international firms) it makes sense to work with one system of documentation that works well for them but may not be compatible with another's system," he said.

The CTHRC plans to develop generic ESL-specific training for companies that won't be able to afford it in-house. English as a Second Language (ESL) skills are not necessarily tied to basic literacy skills, but English (or French) language ability is nevertheless important in determining essential skills, especially as more and more immigrants come from countries where neither French nor English is widely spoken or taught.

"You don't equate literacy with schooling, because literacy has to do with techniques not necessarily taught in school. With ESL, although there are benchmarking tests, they test on social knowledge of English and not workplace knowledge. So carriers that have brought foreign-trained workers into the country find themselves training the foreign trained workers on trucking related terminology," said Gauthier.

"We do still come across some issues and more specifically with candidates for whom English is a second language. We utilize several tools to assess this and specifically some knowledge verification testing on transportation knowledge in which literacy/numeracy issues become very obvious in the testing,"



**A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING:** Recent findings have shown that literacy and essential skills contribute greatly to the productivity of Canada's economy and trucking industry. Photo provided by Frontier College

said Tanya Theroux, driver services manager, Challenger Motor Freight.

Manitoba-based Bison Transport has established a set of in-house assessment tools used to hire from abroad and to train new hires to a certain level of English language comprehension, as well as knowledge about the trucking industry.

"There's no question that the literacy and numeracy requirements have changed," said David Klassen, manager, driver development at Bison, citing satellite communications, and its series of abbreviations and acronyms as an issue that can be challenging to those dealing with language comprehension issues.

Jennifer Knauf, driver services program development coordinator at Bison, said that for nominee drivers in the process of coming to Canada there is a strong focus on assessment before they are cleared.

"During the interview we ask how is their vocabulary? Can they communicate on the phone, and in orientation? Based on that we recommend either that they continue training in the home country before coming here, or have a second assessment done at the (International English Language Training) school facility to make sure they can come over right away. We're now putting a different focus on the Customs part, to make sure that when they get to the US border they can answer questions," she said.

"One of the things we put together, spurred on by our work with nominee drivers, is an online dictionary of trucking terms. Anyone is able to go online to access a list of jargon relevant to the industry. We created this dictionary and we expand on it as we go," said Klassen.

For in-house face-to-face interviews, Bison uses a tool called the Bison T Workplace English Communications Assessment. It was developed by the Manitoba Department of Labour Workplace Training branch, and is based on trucking-related text and has a speaking, reading and writing part.

"As a reference tool we use the NOC (national occupational code) standards for professional driver.



**LESSONS LEARNED:** Trucking companies are becoming more proactive about training new hires on essential skills. Photo provided by Frontier College

We find that is a very useful tool for determining skills sets for competency. We were also involved in developing customized skills sets for Bison drivers."

"A couple of years ago we had a much higher incidence of people who really struggled with English – we can attest to this getting much better. Some of the challenges are no longer there. We have to learn a lot about how we need to recruit and assess people – this is where governments have a very important role in helping industry," said Klassen.

The Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council has also been doing a lot of work this year around literacy and essential skills as part of its work on drafting sector-related occupational standards.

"One of the things we used as a guiding document was the human resources study of the supply chain completed by the predecessor to the Council. It was a research report that identified 26 HR issues brought up by employers/employees in the supply chain," said Kevin Maynard, executive director, Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council.

One of the intertwining themes, said Maynard, was the development of skills and competencies "because it affects the professional attributes of individuals in the supply chain, it affects the ability of the learning system providers to meet the needs of the community in general, and it impacts on the ability of individuals to

plan how they're going to develop themselves," he said.

In many cases, noted Maynard, employers aren't aware of essential skills. They may be aware of skills that are related to jobs but they may not be aware of essential skills used as tools.

"If you can identify the essential skills required you can use them as pre-screening for recruitment, you can use them for developing training plans for individual employees, you can even use an occupational standard for developing training and learning programs for an individual in a particular job. So we've been working with a number of employers now to do that," he said.

Beverly Myers, program manager with the Supply Chain Sector Council, said educational institutions are getting more familiar with essential skills requirements in the wake of job losses and retraining, and also because of immigration.

"A lot of these individuals have transferable skills from where they come from, but they might not have the language proficiencies they might need. From a college perspective I know they're looking at some of that right now. They're trying to work to make sure they're giving the individuals coming into the programs the ability to jump into a role and hit the ground running. Employers need people to be able to come in and use an Excel spreadsheet, to read and communicate with

other individuals, to be able to understand how business structures work, and to do whatever the task is they were hired for, so they are not spending time trying to engage them and going through literacy issues that may be coming up. The colleges in return are embedding essential skills in a lot of their learning outcomes for individuals who are internationally trained," said Myers.

In supply chain management, she said, the ability to speak to many different levels of an organization, from CEOs to people on the dock floor, is extremely important.

"In supply chain, a lot of the jobs now are so complex from a computer perspective, they have these very complex warehouse management systems, and different put-away and removal strategies. It's becoming more and more obvious that they need people who can do basic math, reading, and who can understand from a safety perspective as well, because if they're not able to do more than just move things from Point A to Point B, they'll have some serious hazards within the organization," said Myers.

"They're having to learn more and more things outside their area of expertise, and there's a lot of responsibility for people in the areas of purchasing," she added.

While a number of government programs are aimed at improving literacy levels among newcomers to prepare them for the workforce, still more resources should be allocated toward evaluating the effectiveness of these programs, said Craig Alexander, senior vice-president and deputy chief economist, TD Bank Financial Group, and the author of the TD Economics report *Literacy Matters: Helping Newcomers Unlock Their Potential*.

"Newcomers may also not appreciate how stronger literacy skills can open doors and unlock their potential. The fact is that most individuals with weak literacy skills-immigrants and Canadian-born individuals alike-do not recognize their level of proficiency and the impact that it is having on their lives," he said. □

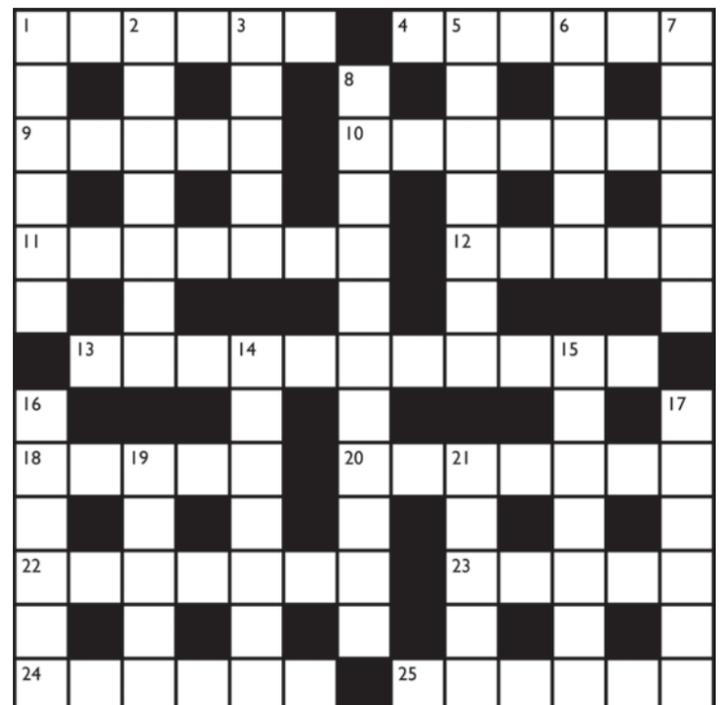
# THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

## Across

1. Up-and-down engine item
4. Truck goods into Canada
9. Power-boosting engine adjunct, briefly
10. Warning mark on tachometer
11. Certain running-gear assemblies
12. Possessed the pink slip
13. Truck-stop-restaurant quest, for some (7,4)
18. Circular-rubber sealing device (1,4)
20. Home of "Wild Rose Country" plates
22. Nickname for B.C.'s Coquihalla Hwy 5 (3,4)
23. Adjusted the headlights
24. Certain suspension parts, briefly
25. Big name in rental rigs

## Down

1. One of many trucked from PEI
2. Truck-stop offering
3. Atmospheric layer affected by auto emissions
5. Volvo sleeper type (3,4)
6. Mississauga bus maker
7. Groovy tire surfaces
8. Springtime road ripples (5,6)
14. Trucker's daily diary
15. Hwy 401 access points
16. Toll-takers accommodations
17. Trucker's CB-radio name
19. European big-rig brand
21. Windshield-wiper component



Answers on page 22

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## Product Review

# Hands off!

**As Ontario joins list of regions to outlaw handheld communications devices while driving, we go in search of the perfect hands-free device**

Ontario's new handheld cell phone ban means that just about half the country now prohibits texting, typing, e-mailing, dialing or holding a phone while driving. Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador have all gone this route, as have California, New York, and about 50 countries worldwide.

According to the legislation, you'll still be able to use your cell phone if you have a device that allows you to push a button to connect it to a headphone or speaker. The simplest form of hands-free talking can be accomplished with the little ear bud speakers and microphone that come with most cell phones.

Nothing high tech about it – and it's legal as long as you only use one earphone and click a lapel pin to connect with a caller. But the dangling wire is awkward and annoying for most professional drivers who are preoccupied with shifting gears and constantly moving their heads to get the big picture.

Truck drivers are no strangers to technology, and cell phones have been a part of their work and social culture for years. With more of them packing Blackberries and iPhones, headsets were becoming common among commercial drivers anyway.

But the new Ontario regulations have sent motorists and truckers alike scurrying to acquire hands-free devices.

So I wasn't surprised that the Flying J in Napanee was almost completely sold out of Bluetooth headsets when I stopped in one recent night.

Bluetooth is the technology that allows one electronic device to communicate with another with no wires or cables in between. It's the best way to achieve hands-free communication, and just about every cell phone these days is Bluetooth-enabled. In fact, most of the high-end headsets also have the capability of linking the cell phone camera to a printer, or to an iPod.

Hands-free communications technology is a big deal these days. There are hundreds of earpieces on the market with many more brands and models jumping in every day.

The prices vary widely, from about \$29 to \$159. Most of the cheap ones sound tinny or have a lot of echo, and are not much good for commercial drivers.

Another option is a Bluetooth speaker system which can be clipped on the sun visor and engaged with the push of the fingertip. The Parrot Minikit is an interesting product since it has a voice recognition feature which allows for less button pushing and more talking.

The Minikit is completely portable and can be moved between car and truck. It retails for around \$80-85. Three hours charging time is supposed to yield 10 hours talking time, or a week on standby mode.

The speaker kits come with an omni-directional microphone, but none of them appear to have a noise-cancelling feature which, in my view, is important when con-

versing hands-free in a truck.

Lots of ambient noise in a truck cab, from electrical interference and motor noise, to the thrum of 18 wheels on the pavement. Bluetooth speakers seem to be much better suited for motorists than truckers.

But if you do want to go with a Bluetooth speaker system, you might want to invest in the high-end Jabra or Blackberry models, about \$130-140 retail, and even then transmission or reception could be poor.

Cobra, the most famous name in CB radios, has also jumped on the bandwagon and introduced a

**On-road Editor**

**Harry Rudolfs**



Cobra in quandary: while Ontario wants hands-free CBs in three years, the opposite is true in the States.

"We are working on solutions for that since FCC rules do not allow a hands-free transmitter," says Ramon Sandoval of Cobra Electronics.

Most truck drivers who spend a

**'Most truck drivers who spend a lot of time talking on the phone while driving...prefer the full wrap-around headsets.'**

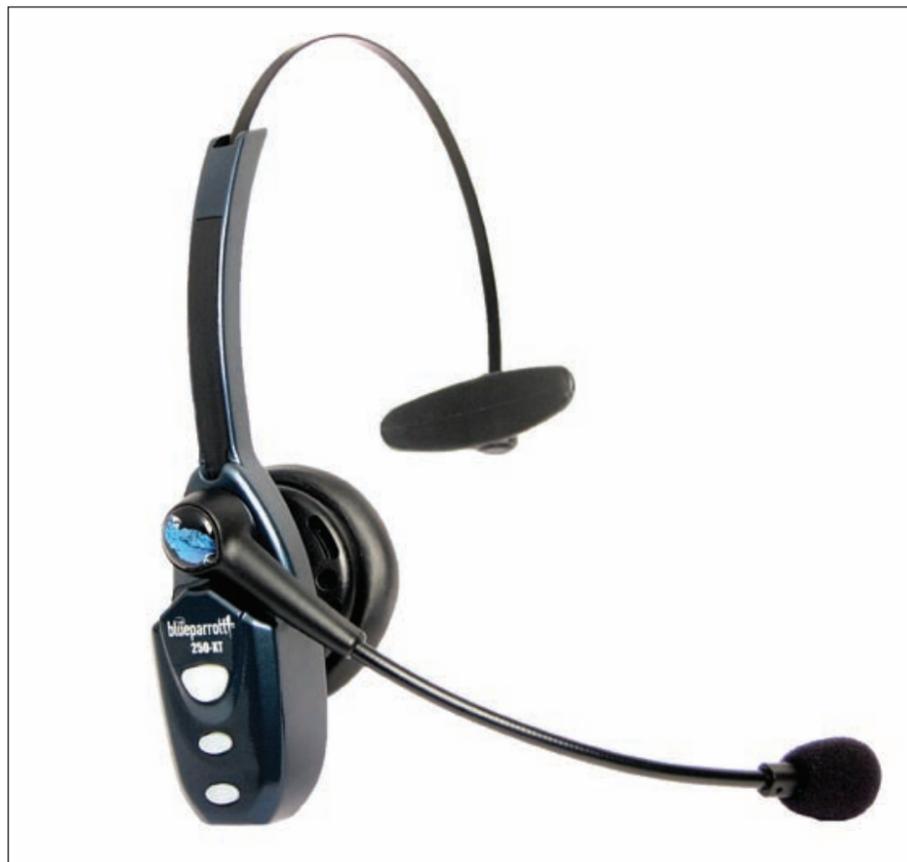
hands-free CB with Bluetooth. The 29LTDBT models costs about \$40 more than a standard CB and can be paired with a cell phone to handle calls.

When your phone rings, a click of the mic enables you to talk directly through the radio. Citizen Band radios and two-ways are exempt from the Ontario rules for now, "to allow a three-year phase-out period for hands-free alternatives to be developed."

But this leaves CB makers like

lot of time talking on the phone while driving, whether for business or pleasure, prefer the full wrap-around headsets to the cheaper ear clips. If you're spending long sessions on the cell phone you need something comfortable with long battery life.

Several manufacturers sent me samples of the top noise-cancelling headsets and I passed them out among my fellow line-haul drivers at Purolator who "road tested" them for me.



**BEST OPTION?:** Drivers we surveyed preferred the Blue Parrott Road Warrior B250TK because of its easily accessible controls and high volume.

If you'd rather go with an ear clip piece without a microphone boom, you might consider the top end Jawbone Prime which comes with a "noise assassin" feature. These are about \$135, and colleague Harveen Bajwa rates it as "excellent" for truck use. It's just a simple ear clip weighing a few grams, the lightest of all the models tested.

The Plantronics Voyager Pro rates a close look as it has several built in noise- and wind-cancelling systems. A high quality earpiece for about \$100, it sports a 90s retro-look, but is also extremely light with the battery pack mounted behind the ear.

Only six hours talking time, but it doesn't take as long to charge as the Blue Parrott or Blue Eagle II. Fellow driver Dave Glidden likes the shorter boom mic that allows him to eat while wearing the headset, and he experienced no discomfort after wearing it for long periods. Greg Manchester would have liked more volume out of it, though.

The CBTH1 Deluxe Bluetooth headset is Cobra's answer to a heavy-duty headset.

According to the promotional video, you can talk on it while someone is operating a chain saw a few feet away. I'm planning on trying this next time I'm in the bush.

Adjustable to fit either ear, it features its own type of noise-cancelling technology, which would be useful when working outside with noisy equipment and it boasts up to eight hours talk time. Manchester found it comfortable with very good sound quality.

He also liked the fact that the Cobra can be charged while in use from the cigarette lighter (about \$90).

The Blue Parrott Road Warrior B250TK got the best marks technically from all three drivers. Manchester liked the easily accessible controls and, "It's the only set where I can turn the volume button way up so it's too loud."

Glidden thought the Parrott was very good in most ways, but found the sound got distorted on high volume and that the set hurt his ear after wearing it more than three hours. It's the leader in battery life with 16-plus hours talk time.

Blue Parrott is available from CTS ([www.corptel.com](http://www.corptel.com)) for \$119, but accounts manager Andy Bernier tells me they may have volume discount prices available for owner/operators or fleets.

Blue Eagle II was the only noise-cancelling headset that wasn't road-tested because I couldn't get one on short notice. By most accounts it's a very good headset with lots of talk time (up to 14 hours).

Some mixed reviews online, including grumbling about charging problems and quality control.

It costs US\$109 online, but Denis Dion of Pana-Pacific reminds us that Bluetooth products for trucks, including the Blue Parrott and Blue Eagle II, are readily available at Canadian truck dealers, who need our support as much as anyone during these tough times. □

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10:17 AM

Timmins:ON  
:nickel recovery

- flashlights
- gas detection
- chains & lifters



3:15 PM

Fort McMurray:AB  
:vehicle maintenance

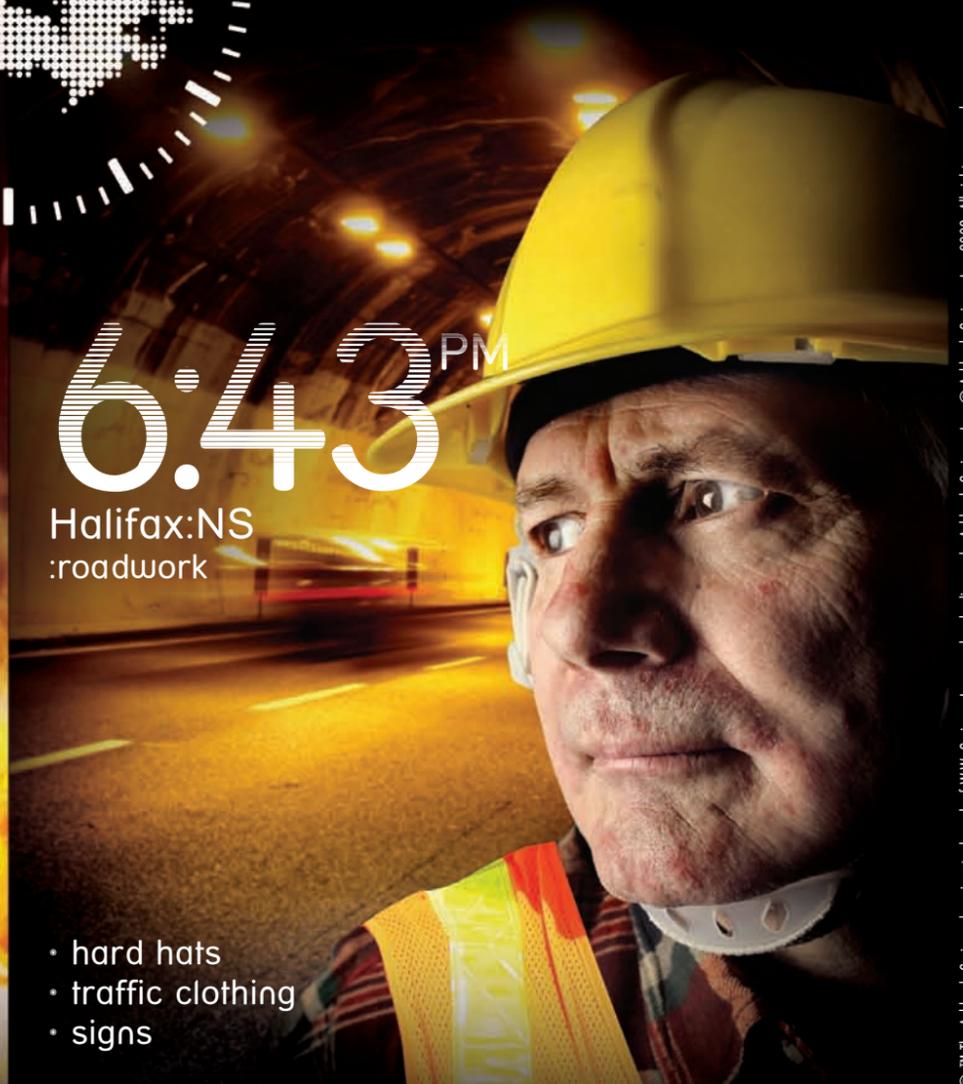
- vehicle lights
- fasteners
- batteries



8:39 AM

Yellowknife:NWT  
:industrial fire containment

- high heat clothing
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6:43 PM

Halifax:NS  
:roadwork

- hard hats
- traffic clothing
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## Industry

# Federal oversight of extraprovincial trucking going up in smoke

Two recent incidents – both involving the enforcement and application of provincial laws or regulations to federally-regulated motor carriers – underscore the undermining of the Canadian constitution and the fading role of the federal government on national trucking issues.

The first involves obstruction of justice charges laid under the provincial Highway Traffic Act against the Canadian subsidiary of US trucking company for failure to provide Ontario Ministry of Transportation auditors with the company's GPS records.

The carrier went to court seeking to have the charges quashed on the basis of the constitutional argument that the provincial hours-of-service regulations are not constitutionally applicable to a federal undertaking and to proceed would be a miscarriage of justice. (One area where the Ontario hours-of-service regulations appears to differ from the federal regulation is with regard to the "supporting documents" used to determine compliance with the hours-of-service regulations, that carriers are obliged to produce if asked).

The constitutional issue was heard before a Justice of the Peace earlier this year. The JP dismissed the constitutional question and the principles of inter-jurisdictional immunity and federal paramountcy out of hand. While it's unclear what if any precedent value the decision will have, it is a concern and a further indication of the way things seem to be heading. There have been other decisions in other provinces in recent years that have reached similar conclusions. The second incident involves the London-area driver

## Industry Issues

David Bradley



working for a federally-regulated carrier who was charged by the OPP in October for violating the Smoke Free Ontario Act (SFOA) for smoking in his cab. This one got a lot of media coverage.

Again, the legal/constitutional issues of whether or not the province can lay charges under a provincial act when federally-regulated companies and their employees – who are subject to the Canada Labour Code – are involved.

Again, we think not and it is clear to us from their public comments that not only did the OPP officer who laid the charge apparently not understand the constitutional difference between federal and provincial undertakings, but neither did the OPP's official spokesperson, local health unit spokespeople, or a number of Ontario cabinet ministers.

If all of these senior officials speaking on record in the media didn't understand the law, there's no reason to believe that front line enforcement staff have been properly informed of how to apply the SFOA in the case of trucking companies.

At the time of writing it was unknown if the charge against the driver would be dropped, but it should.

For better or for worse, the de-centralization of the Canadian federal political system and the

devolution of power to the provinces have been going on for decades now.

In the case of truck transportation, it all started in the 1950s when the federal government delegated the administration of extraprovincial trucking to the provinces.

However, it did not give up its constitutional authority. But, it has not chosen – at least recently – to exercise or defend this authority, either. The result, for the trucking industry, has been the proliferation of a hodge-podge, patchwork quilt of regulations and standards from coast-to-coast. Perhaps the best (or worst) example of this is the fact that not one of the National Safety Code standards has been uniformly adopted or enforced by the provinces.

In reality, the National Safety Code is neither national, nor is it a code. This is even true of the only NSC standard that has been codified (put into law) by the federal government – the federal hours-of-service rules – which has yet to be adopted in any form by at least four provinces. Transport Canada seems disinterested in defending its constitutional authority, preferring instead to remain a bystander.

The department seems disinterested in intervening on the legal issues. It has no interest in leveraging the infrastructure dollars it gives to the provinces as a way to get provincial cooperation on national standards as is the case in the US, for example. We all know and appreciate the Canadian political peculiarities. Still, as a result of all of the above, prospects for the harmonization of trucking laws and regulations around a common national standard

seem ever more remote. While we must continue to try and work towards national harmonization or at least compatibility, we must also face this reality.

The Canadian economy is increasingly a collective of quite different regional economies. So, it is not surprising that we should hear about regional trade and transportation agreements, of Memorandums of Understanding between provinces and of joint cabinet meetings.

Over the past year, we have seen various initiatives and agreements consummated by the Atlantic Ministers of Transportation, the Ontario-Quebec trade agreement, the B.C.-Alberta Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement and most recently the Saskatchewan-Alberta MoU. There are "gateway and trade corridor" initiatives in the West, in Central Canada and in the Maritimes.

Who knows where all of this will leave the country? If the courts and our political institutions cannot defend our constitution where does this leave our justice system?

Setting aside the legal issues, perhaps it will be easier to harmonize between three or four regions than between 10 provinces. Our track record has not been great up until now. Perhaps harmonization with the US on things like heavy vehicle configurations stand a better chance of success on a region-to-region basis than it does on a nation-to-nation basis. Only time will tell. □

– David Bradley is president of the Ontario Trucking Association and CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance.

# Nine billion and counting

In my October column in this space I wrote about the growing concern with criminals targeting and infiltrating the trucking industry. One of the people I quoted was Sgt. Rob Ruiters, national program coordinator of the RCMP's Pipeline/Convoy Program, which focuses on this type of underworld activity.

Attentive readers will recall Ruiters' view that the effect of having a truck or trailer stolen goes well beyond the immediate costs of lost product and equipment, delayed delivery to a customer, or even the financial impact. He is also concerned that the equipment can become a tool for organized crime in their smuggling of people or products or, even more alarming, as a weapon for terrorists.

I'm sure it is difficult for most fleet operators to consider that the theft of one of their trucks could be the prelude to a terrorist organization implementing an attack. And because most of us don't think in those terms, these incidents are most often considered as just an inconvenience.

In many cases, Ruiters told me, carriers don't even bother reporting the theft, preferring to simply accept it as a cost of doing business. And that lack of reporting leads directly to a lack of statistical data that would shed light on the magnitude

## Private Links

Bruce Richards



of the problem. And following the daisy chain, without some sense of the magnitude of the problem it is difficult to generate the will within the law enforcement and political communities to devote sufficient resources to the problem.

Among the many defensive measures that carriers use are equipment tracking, devices that bind the lock rods together on a trailer, well lit and fenced yards, and advising drivers on suitable areas to park when on the road. But Ruiters opined that one of the best preventive measures is thorough background checks on everyone involved in freight movement – not just drivers – and continuous monitoring of the 'temperature' of the employee group. Unhappy employees can lead to relationships with unsavory characters.

Some segments of the trucking community are a little more conscious of the need for security. For example, carriers that operate across the Canada/US border and participate in the C-TPAT or PIP

programs have implemented such security measures as controlled access to their yards, extra lighting, fencing and even security of their I.T. systems, because the Customs programs demand that type of security.

I followed up my discussion with Ruiters by speaking with Greg St. Croix, vice-president of Marsh Canada, a leading truck insurer who shared his views on a problem that has escalated to a point where it is estimated to cost Canadians around \$9 billion a year. And that number could be low since it is thought that only about one in four incidents are even reported.

In St. Croix's view, one that is shared by many, industry generally makes it pretty easy for criminals to operate. Despite the increased value of equipment and products, many companies haven't updated their security practices in years. For example trailers are still dropped in unfenced yards or at the rear of industrial complexes; drivers are not trained in awareness techniques that could help avoid theft or hijacking; and the yards of many shippers and carriers are inadequately protected. As well, many employers seem to be reluctant to conduct thorough background checks on all employees involved with the movement of goods, which of course can open the door to infiltration by criminals.

The irony is that advice on security and training is often freely available from insurance companies or bro-

kers, or from the local police force. All you need to do is ask.

Conversely, St. Croix suggests that criminals have gone upscale using such tactics as attaching mobile GPS tracking devices to trailers and then following those trailers at their leisure until they are left unprotected. Gangs arrange 'theft to order,' often using information gleaned from employees of shippers or carriers and dispose of the stolen material so quickly that it is difficult to trace. Equipment and cargo theft is understandably a lower priority for law enforcement than some other types of criminal activity, but it is beginning to gain some profile in the press and on the speaking circuit.

Partly as a result of that publicity, a forum was held in Ottawa in November during which representatives of the Canadian and US law enforcement community along with the trucking industry, including PMTC, discussed their concerns and tried to scope the magnitude of the problem. We all remain hopeful that the concerns aired at the meeting will help focus everyone's attention on the problem. It will require a collective and concerted approach from industry and enforcement agencies to deal with the problem if we are to enhance the security of our truck transportation network. □

– The PMTC is the only national association dedicated to the private trucking community. Your comments can be addressed to trucks@pmtc.ca.



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## Well-planned incentives will deliver rewards to everyone involved

There is one simple fact that explains why a well-structured incentive program can help to meet so many different goals: Everybody likes to be recognized for a job well done.

A 2002 study by the Canada Safety Council found that targeted incentives can be used to improve everything from fuel economy to employee retention, and even reduce the number of collisions or violations. After introducing cash rewards for a number of objectives, one 30-vehicle fleet immediately slashed driver turnover in half, saving an estimated \$56,000.

Within a year, it had also improved overall fuel economy by one litre per 100 kilometres – paying out \$6,100 in fuel bonuses while saving \$15,000 in diesel.

Goals like these will ultimately determine the nature of the programs that can deliver the desired results.

Traditional driver incentives tend to come in the form of financial rewards for working a period of time without a violation, or a bonus for the clean report from a roadside inspection, but the rewards do not need to be limited to cash. Recognition in the form of plaques, pins and certificates offer the opportunities to show off accomplishments to coworkers and family members alike.

Some fleets apply decals to the trucks that are steered by drivers who accumulate one million acci-

### Ask the Expert

Dave Roth



dent-free miles. Then there are jackets, hats and uniform patches, all of which will give successful employees a chance to showcase their achievements.

Still, the planning behind an incentive program is not limited to the types of rewards. The timing of a payment, for example, can have a dramatic impact on the way an incentive is perceived.

When the Canada Safety Council studied cash bonuses, the payouts were most effective when they were issued quarterly, coinciding with family events that involve special expenses, such as Christmas, the first day of school or summer vacation.

Frequent rewards have the added impact of keeping the program and its objectives at the top of mind, and regular evaluations give drivers the opportunity to enhance their habits or skills before a problem becomes too pronounced.

There is another benefit to distributing the rewards throughout the year. Annual payments can actually become a disincentive if a driver is fined for a minor violation early in the year and then effec-

tively blocked from the entire bonus that will be paid out many months later.

Consistent benchmarks can make a difference, too. If the process is perceived by employees to be subjective (“he only received the bonus because he golfs with the boss”), other employees will question whether they can ever achieve the goals. But objective measurements such as the data from an electronic control module or points on a driver’s abstract can give employees a clear understanding of the objectives and where they stand. An added benefit is that objective measurements are easier to monitor and administer.

When it comes time to set the goals, effective targets will be a matter of balance. If the benchmarks are based on the performance of the top 5% of employees in the fleet, the rest of the drivers might think the goals are out of reach.

In contrast, the drivers who require the most help will be enticed by the promise of goals that are regularly met by a larger number of employees.

The programs can even involve every department. I know of one carrier that circulates an evaluation form throughout the company, asking objective questions that pertain to every area of a driver’s job.

But keep in mind that some goals may also need to be refined to ensure that they reflect a driver’s true performance.

A program that focuses on the importance of on-time deliveries would probably need a review process to determine whether the operations department or dispatchers offered enough time to complete a shipment that arrived behind schedule. It would also need to ensure that the goals do not encourage risky behaviours such as speeding or aggressive driving.

Once a well planned incentive program is in place, fleet managers will have the tools to monitor performance, ensure drivers are rewarded for meeting business goals, and ultimately deliver a measurable return on the related investments. That will be a rewarding experience for everyone involved. □

– This month’s expert is Dave Roth. Dave is the Ontario regional manager of safety and training services for Markel Insurance Company of Canada and has more than 20 years experience in managing safety and operations in the trucking industry. Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance Company of Canada, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers. Send your questions, feedback and comments about this column to [info@markel.ca](mailto:info@markel.ca). To read about more industry hot topics, visit Markel’s Web site at [www.markel.ca](http://www.markel.ca) and click on the Articles & Essays section.

### Tax Talk

## It’s in your interest: Take care, get help when deducting loan expenses

For many owner/operators this past year has meant not only less revenue but more debt – not the kind of load you want to haul around. But if you signed new loan agreements or refinanced existing ones, be sure to account for the interest and finance costs.

Why? If you incur expenses to borrow money, and that money is used to help you earn business income – or to provide working capital for a business – those expenses are deductible. In addition, you can deduct expenses on loans used to acquire depreciable property for the business. The thing is, loan-related expenses aren’t like most business expenses. Interest and other fees may be amortized over the life of the loan and wrapped into monthly payments. Up-front administrative or documentation fees may be buried and easy to miss. The paperwork is notoriously complicated.

Make sure you’re taking every opportunity to capture and deduct these expenses. Here’s a four-part approach:

#### Review the paperwork with an accountant

Ask a qualified accountant to help you review your loan documents. Here’s what to look for:

Are the payments properly amortized and the interest calculated correctly? Identify the administrative fees and other charges.

Do you have complete copies of your documents? What should you

### Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



keep in your files?

You want to catch mistakes on the loan agreement before the deal is finalized. But it never ceases to amaze me: we find mathematical errors and other miscalculations; missing pages; and just plain gibberish. An accountant can help cut through the clutter.

#### Separate your business and personal loan expenses

When you finance a new truck, it’s pretty clear that the money is being used to advance your business. But what happens when a line-of-credit or credit card is used for personal and business transactions?

When your credit is mixed together, over time you’ll look at it as all business. But trust me, it’s not. I can see that and so will an auditor. As the business goes, so goes your life. When you make money, you have it to spend. When you don’t make money – which is the business’s fault – you spend less but you still have to spend.

In a perfect world you should have separate cards and credit lines for your business and personal use. We always advise our clients to keep dedicated accounts so the ex-

pensing of service charges, overdraft charges, interest, and fees is clear to you, to us, and to any auditor who happens to review your return.

#### When you can’t separate, apportion

If money is borrowed partly for business and partly for some other purpose, only the part of the expense that may reasonably be considered applicable to the business is deductible. So when you’re consolidating loans together, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) expects you to only expense the business-related percentage of interest and charges from a loan or debt. So if your debt load is a mixed bag, you must get out your calculator to determine the proper business percentage each year.

Again, ask your accountant to clarify what is business and what is personal. For instance, you might think your tax accounts (including personal tax, corporate tax, payroll source deductions, and GST account) are business-related. But CRA says you cannot deduct the interest charged to these accounts or any loans you may get from financial institutions to pay these amounts. Also any loans to buy RRSPs or fees charged within your RRSPs are not deductible.

#### Make your loan expense part of your tax strategy

Once your 2009 income statement is done, if your income is very low

or not taxable and you want to show a little higher income, here’s a little trick you can use.

If you borrow money for the purpose of acquiring depreciable property (for example, your truck), and incur deductible expenses in the course of borrowing that money, you can capitalize these expenses along with the interest paid or payable on the borrowing. When these costs are capitalized, they form part of the capital cost of the asset subject to capital cost allowance (CCA).

By doing this, your income will be a little higher to keep the bank happy and you are not giving up the expense. By adding it to the CCA, you’re just expensing it over time. By doing this one year does not mean you must do it in future years. Look at it each year to decide. This is the type of advice that a truck specialist accountant can give you.

As the year comes to a close, I want to thank you for reading. It’s been a tough 2009 for the trucking industry, and I hope you’ve been able to use this column for ideas to help you prosper. Here’s to your success and to 2010 – both can’t come soon enough. □

– 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.

Opinion

# Fifteen years and counting

## Will another two years give us HoS everyone's happy with?

Here we go again. The Obama administration has caved in to pressure from special interest groups and has agreed to re-open the rulemaking process on Hours-of-Service. When I first heard the news, my stomach did one of those flips, like when you arrive at the airport running late for a flight and suddenly remember you left the iron plugged in.

The last thing we need right now, on top of all the other uncertainties going into 2010 and beyond, is a rewrite of the most significant bit of legislation in all of trucking. Hours-of-service touches everyone who gets within 100 feet of a truck, and many more who don't.

Take the software developers who are working on EOBRs as we speak. All the programming work they've done to date just flew out the window with this latest pandering to the so-called safety lobby.

The deal crafted to dump the current rule requires the government to redraft new HoS regulations within nine months, and publish a final rule within 21 months. Yeah, right. In case you've forgotten, we've been working on HoS since 1995, and we still don't have a rule everyone can live with – apparently.

Frankly, I don't believe it's possible to write a rule that meets every-

### Voice of the O/O

Joanne Ritchie



one's needs and priorities, and I question the tremendous resources wasted in continuing to try. In addition to the fracas instigated south of the border by Public Citizen, CRASH, PATT, and a horde of others, serious friction exists in this country between Transport Canada and various provincial trucking regulators on differences in interpretation, enforcement, and application of our so-called federal HoS standard.

It could be years before we see harmonization up here – and we have only a handful of dissenting parties. To echo the words of former FMCSA chief Annette Sandberg, "HoS will never be settled in our lifetime."

The "safety advocates" have brought their case against the current rules to US courts on two previous occasions, and each prompted a review of the rule.

Except for forcing team drivers to now spend a full eight hours in the

sleeper, nothing much has changed.

There is still a contention that 11 hours is too long a driving shift, and that the 34-hour reset (US) provision allows drivers to work an excessive number of hours over a seven-day period. There's never any mention of the two extra off-duty hours drivers take each day as a fatigue-mitigating factor, but such is politics.

This latest deal may halt the third court challenge, but if the new rulemaking – promised within 21 months – again fails to meet with Big Safety's approval, they'll be in court again. But what's to stop trucking from pushing back with its own challenge? In other words, with this particular can of worms now wide open, and with the doubtfulness of crafting a rule that will satisfy everyone, maybe it's time for a different approach.

Don't get me wrong – I'm not advocating that we dispense with limits of some kind on how many hours a driver should have to (or be allowed to) work, but I can think of better ways of managing the process than through prescriptive and restrictive start and stop times.

With all the competing interests in this debate, it irks me that the drivers' point of view seems to matter the least. We have science, enforcement, safety, and motor carriers telling drivers how fatigue should be managed, but none of those others have to deal with the impact of fatigue or the effects of restrictive regulations.

I believe it's high time that a true fatigue management plan was

brought to the table, one that allows drivers to manage their own internal and very individual need for rest within the confines of a workable set of limits on drive time and prescribed minimums for daily rest.

Given the appropriate fatigue management training, drivers should be left alone to manage, say, 14 hours of work in a 24-hour period, with a minimum of 10 hours off-duty with at least six or seven consecutive hours off.

If drivers had the chance to rest when they felt they needed to rest – like during the late afternoon doldrums – rather than forging on because they have available hours and stopping to nap might compromise the available hours in their work shift, they might find themselves better rested than is the case today.

If the special interest groups have their way, we could be looking at something ridiculous like 12-on and 12-off, with a 10-hour driving cap. That's unsustainable in a long-haul operation.

Rather than another two years of uncertainty, how about some middle ground that actually serves the regulated parties rather than the regulators, the armchair quarterbacks, and those with nothing to add, only axes to grind? The implications of another failed attempt at an HoS rule are just too big to even consider. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Ready to try something new? E-mail her at [jritchie@obac.ca](mailto:jritchie@obac.ca) or call toll-free 888-794-9990.

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## Canada

## Alberta joins Convoy for a Cure

### Four Convoys for a Cure collectively raise nearly \$100,000

**SALISBURY, N.B.** – The sun was barely over the horizon when final preparations got underway at the Irving Big Stop in Salisbury, N.B. The first New Brunswick Convoy for a Cure had been in the planning stages for almost a year, and when Oct. 17 finally arrived, Roxanne Doran Smith, Jo Anne Phillips, and their crew of volunteers were in full flight.

Drivers were on the parking lot readying their trucks for the 40-mile trip to Aulac, N.B., and the cooks in the truck stop were preparing to feed nearly 50 drivers and their supporters. Even the weather was on their side; cool and clear, with just a light layer of frost on the windshields.

Fifteen female drivers and 31 of their male partners, supporters, and friends, from as far off as Brockville, Ont., and Summerville, Nfld. formed a mile-long truck convoy that Saturday morning, and they contributed more than \$42,000 to the quest to find a cure for breast cancer.

Smith had said some weeks before the event that in her wildest dreams she dared to hope for 50 trucks and \$50,000.

“We almost achieved what I had only dreamed of. What a day. I cried, I laughed, I thought, I ran, and when I finally relaxed at the end I was utterly overwhelmed by the support I received from everyone,” Smith says.

You could hardly call the final tally a shortfall. The entry fee was \$75 per truck, so clearly many of the participants worked pretty hard to raise the stakes.

The top female fundraisers were Jo Anne Phillips of Midland Transport with \$5,405, Linda Harding of Midland Transport with \$2,638, and Joanne Menzies of Transport GTI with \$2,300. The top male fundraiser was Jake Cormier of Kent Building Supplies with \$2,270.

In addition to making a sizable contribution to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation – Atlantic Region, Smith says the Convoy also helped build bridges between the public and the trucking community.

“I was amazed to see the over-passes along the convoy route

lined with cheering, flag-waving supporters,” she notes. “I’m not sure how they heard about the convoy, but there were lots of people out cheering us on. That was just amazing. I was really proud, just then, to be associated with this industry. These drivers are an amazing bunch of people.”

Not even two weeks have elapsed since the event, and Smith and her co-organizer Phillips have assembled a team of seven volunteers to prepare for next year. Smith says she’s looking for three major sponsors to cover some of the administrative costs and overhead, including, hopefully, a really big tent for destination celebrations, and phone, fax, and Internet services.

“We’re going to make this one of the fundraising events in Atlantic Canada,” Smith says.

“Plans are now in the works for online donations and permission from CBCF to sell merchandise (t-shirts, hats and the like) on the day of the convoy with all net proceeds going to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation – Atlantic Region. And watch for a number of mini-fundraisers throughout the year.”

Next year, the event will be known as the Convoy for a Cure – Atlantic Canada, and they’ll soon have a new Web site.

Watch the current Web site for updates. You can reach them at [www.convoyforacure-nb.com](http://www.convoyforacure-nb.com).

Two other Canadian Convoy for a Cure events took place in October. The Ontario edition of Convoy for a Cure saw 41 trucks raise \$19,000, and the Alberta event brought out 21 trucks contributing over \$21,000 for the cause.

The first American Convoy for a Cure ran Saturday, Oct. 24 from Willie’s Place at Carl’s Corners, Texas. Organizers announced that 31 trucks brought in \$12,400.

Rachele Champagne, the visionary professional driver who dreamt up the Convoy for a Cure concept, said planning is already underway for 2010 convoys and she hopes more regions will come on-board.

There are already plans to add a second convoy in Ontario, which will offer more convenient access



**PINK PREVAILED:** Decorations adorning the trucks left little doubt what the event was all about.

for drivers in the Southern Ontario area.

“Obviously we want to get bigger and better every year, with more prizes and stuff like that,” she says.

For more information and tonnes of pictures of the events, check out the Convoy for

a Cure Web sites: Alberta: [www.albertaconvoyforacure.ca](http://www.albertaconvoyforacure.ca); New Brunswick: [www.convoyforacure-nb.com](http://www.convoyforacure-nb.com); Ontario: [www.convoyforacure.ca](http://www.convoyforacure.ca); US: [www.convoyforacureusa.com](http://www.convoyforacureusa.com).

You can also find the event on Facebook, by searching for the group ‘Convoy for a Cure.’ □

## CTA urges industry to properly dispose of bodily fluids, litter

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) and its provincial member associations are asking carriers and drivers to help the industry clean up its act when it comes to dumping bodily fluid along roadsides.

The CTA Board of Directors has decided to address the issue in response to mounting complaints from the public. The CTA referred to the dumping of bodily fluids on the sides of roads or in parking lots “inappropriate, unhygienic and harmful to the industry’s image.”

While it’s a potentially embarrassing subject to address, the CTA is calling for the following measures: carriers are asked to advise their drivers to always properly dispose of any litter or waste in the appropriate receptacles and facilities; drivers are asked to report illegal disposal and littering to local authorities; and local authorities are asked to enforce litter laws, regulations and by-laws. □

## OTA’s Bradley hails ON/QC trade deal

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Ontario Trucking Association president David Bradley has applauded the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between Ontario and Quebec. Bradley, speaking to about 100 policy-makers at a recent Public Policy Forum event, said the agreement “will help usher in a new era in terms of the competitiveness, productivity, safety and environmental sustainability between and within the two provinces.”

Bradley said that, prior to negotiations, the OTA had three recommendations for Ontario’s lead negotiator, Jim Peterson, the former federal Minister of International Trade:

1. For the two provinces to harmonize the introduction of legislation to mandate the activation of speed limiters on all trucks operating into, out of and within both provinces;

2. For Ontario to increase the allowable axle weights for trucks using the new generation of fuel efficient wide-base single truck tires to harmonize them with the allowable

weights for conventional dual tires and with the standards that already existed in Quebec; and

3. For Ontario to conduct a trial of the controlled use of longer combination vehicles (LCVs) that had been in use in Quebec and other jurisdictions for years.

Bradley told the audience that when Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that his province would be moving to introduce all three of OTA’s recommendations, “We felt like we had just scored a hat-trick.”

Since that time, both Ontario and Quebec have passed identical speed limiter laws, Ontario has increased the allowable weights for wide-base single tires to 9,000 kg per axle, and the Ontario LCV trial started in August. However, Bradley says Quebec still has some work to do. For example, he said that while Ontario is allowing the higher weights on wide-base single tires, Quebec has yet to remove its \$200 per axle permit for these tires despite promises to do so. □

# FMCSA to revisit US hours-of-service rules

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a surprise move, the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has agreed to revisit US hours-of-service rules, apparently succumbing to pressure from special interest groups that have repeatedly challenged the current rules that have been in place since 2004.

The FMCSA has agreed to review the current rules and perhaps even rewrite them from scratch.

Teamsters, one of the groups opposed to the current hours-of-service regulations, applauded the move.

“We will continue to push for a rule that protects truck drivers, instead of the greed of the trucking industry,” Teamsters president Jim Hoffa said in a release.

“Longer hours behind the

wheel are dangerous for our members and the driving public...It’s time for FMCSA to do what Congress has told it to do all along – protect drivers’ health and safety.”

The Teamsters and other groups including Public Citizen, opposed the move from 10 hours of driving per day to 11.

However, until now the FMCSA has successfully staved off challenges to the law, thanks in part to evidence truck safety was improving since the current laws went into effect.

Now, FMCSA has agreed to revisit its HoS rules and will take up to 21 months before posting a final rule.

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) which has steadfastly defended the rules, called upon the FMCSA to stick

with the current regulations, pointing to the industry’s safety record as proof they are working.

“Safety in the trucking industry has greatly improved while operating under the current hours-of-service rules,” said ATA president and CEO Bill Graves.

“Over the past five years we’ve seen a strong decline in truck-involved crashes on our nation’s highways.”

In fact, truck-involved fatalities on US roads have gone down 19% since the new rules took effect in 2004 and the number of injuries has decreased 13%, ATA points out. Meanwhile, the volume of heavy trucks on US roads surged during the same period.

For more on the subject of US hours-of-service, read OBAC executive director Joanne Ritchie’s opinion piece on pg. 17. □

## New FAST cards required by Dec. 1

WASHINGTON, D.C. – First generation FAST cards will no longer be accepted at the border as of Dec. 1, US Customs and Border Protection is warning.

The agency has been issuing new FAST cards since March 16, 2009. The new cards have enhanced security features that allow Canadian cross-border drivers to comply with Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative document requirements.

Members must activate their new FAST card within 30 days of receiving it by visiting <https://goes-app.cbp.dhs.gov/>. Old cards should be destroyed.

If you haven’t yet received your new FAST card, contact the Global Online Enrollment System (link above) or call 866-530-4172. □

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# UltraShift Plus tackles ultra-heavy loads

*Heavy haulers can now enjoy benefits of automated transmissions with no weight limitations*

By James Menzies

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – Automated mechanical transmissions (AMTs) have had some trouble gaining traction in the North American trucking industry for a couple of reasons. For one, many professional drivers find shifting to be just plain ol' enjoyable. And secondly, AMTs have had their limitations in the past, whether it be low-speed operability or weight restrictions that were too prohibitive for some applications. There's not much that can be done about that first issue, but in introducing its new UltraShift Plus, Eaton has effectively eliminated the latter concern.

Previous versions of the Eaton UltraShift were functional, if not spectacular. They certainly helped improve driver attentiveness while also bringing the fuel economy of poor or mediocre drivers in line with upper tier drivers.

But they did have their shortcomings. Drivers often complained the old UltraShift was finicky at low speeds, making coupling more challenging than it should be. Some even said they were embarrassed to use it because shippers would think they were lousy drivers when they backed into loading docks too abrasively. However, the new UltraShift Plus transmissions effectively address those issues and others, moving into the realm of the spectacular.

Perhaps the most significant improvements are the addition of an electronic clutch actuator (ECA) and two-plate ceramic clutch, which allow for higher torque ratings and smoother shifting. The centrifugal clutch used in the previous versions of the UltraShift was the source of many of its flaws.

"With the centrifugal clutches, we sometimes would get drivers who didn't like the engagement characteristics, it was a bit tough to do low-speed maneuvering," admitted Ken Moodie, territory sales and service manager with Roadranger in Manitoba and Northern Ontario. "With the electrically-actuated clutch, now we can open and close the clutch and feather it (into gear) more smoothly."

Coupled with more sophisticated electronics that make more intelligent shifting decisions, the new UltraShift Plus is superior to its predecessor.

The other advantage of the ECA is that it opens the UltraShift Plus up to a whole new world of trucking, including heavy-haul applications that were previously deemed too severe for automated gearboxes. Eaton claims its new UltraShift Plus line-up includes a transmission to fit about 99% of all known trucking applications, and

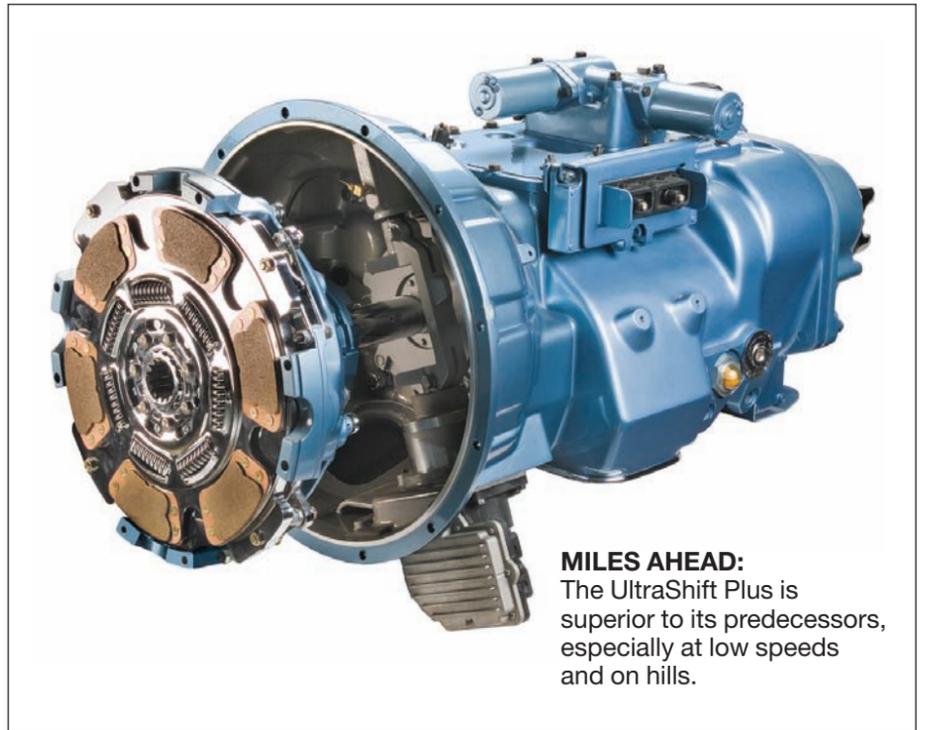
its heavier duty versions are not hindered by any weight limitations whatsoever.

Intrigued by that claim, I travelled to Winnipeg, Man. where Paul's Hauling was one of the first fleets to get its hands on a test unit. Paul's Hauling is a progressive fleet, and has long wanted to reap the benefits of automated mechanical transmissions, but alas there was simply none available that could handle its heavy loads with the exception of the three-pedal Eaton AutoShift, which still required the driver to work the clutch.

"Eighty-five per cent of our loads are over 100,000 lbs," John Erik Albrechtsen told me, before bravely handing me the keys to the fleet's pride and joy – a Mack CXU 613 with 485-hp MP8 engine, disc brakes all-around and of course the UltraShift Plus, MXP version.

MXP stands for Multipurpose Extreme Performance, one of six new transmissions that comprise the Plus line-up. The MXP has an overall ratio of 20:1, features 18 forward and four reverse speeds and can haul pretty much any legal weight. Dave Medwid is the lucky driver who gets to call the truck his own. He pulls Super-Bs of fuel from a nearby Imperial Oil refinery to fuel stations around Manitoba and Northern Ontario.

Medwid is a seasoned driver who's been with Paul's Hauling for 17 years and like most drivers



**MILES AHEAD:** The UltraShift Plus is superior to its predecessors, especially at low speeds and on hills.

who have jammed gears for any length of time, he said getting use to the UltraShift Plus took a bit of an adjustment.

"It took me about two weeks to get used to it, but now I wouldn't go back," he said, as he maneuvered the double trailers through the yard. Medwid was accompanying me on the drive and would look after the finer details, like filling the tankers with 50,000 litres of dyed diesel fuel intended for farm use in the Portage La Prairie region.

The Mack I was driving was a test vehicle and as such the UltraShift Plus's console was jury-rigged onto a conventional stick. Production models will have the console less conspicuously mounted onto the side of the seat or on the dash itself.

The flat roads around Winnipeg were not the ideal place to demonstrate the Hill Start Aid capabilities of the UltraShift Plus, so before we left the yard Moodie suggested we test the new feature on the incline leading up to Paul's Hauling's in-ground scale. We climbed halfway up the short, steep grade and then challenged the tractor to hold us stationary with no application of the throttle or brake pedals. Using the anti-lock braking system, the transmission obliged, holding us there until the throttle was re-applied.

"If you're on a grade, it will give you a maximum of three seconds from the time the foot comes off the brake until it comes back on the foot feed," Moodie explained. "As soon as we sense the throttle input, we start slowly releasing



**IMPRESSED:** James Menzies (left) and pro driver Dave Medwid prepare to part ways after putting the UltraShift Plus MXP to the test under heavy load.

the brakes and it prevents roll-back on the grades.”

Medwid finds this feature useful at a stoplight he frequently encounters on an uphill portion of the Kenora bypass.

If you want to roll back for whatever reason, you can de-activate Hill Start Aid on a one-time basis using a switch on the dash or simply wait until the three-second interval elapses.

Another major improvement is the Creep feature, which allows for better control at low speeds – a feature I’m told is popular with cement company Lafarge and other customers that spend a lot of time in low gear.

This feature allows for easier backing, curbing and coupling/uncoupling and addresses perhaps the biggest beef drivers had with previous versions of the UltraShift.

Out on the road, starting from a complete standstill posed no problems and I was able to get up to speed quickly. The transmission felt third gear was an appropriate starting point and skip-shifted its way to 18th without impeding traffic flow; impressive, since even empty the truck and two trailers weighed about 44,000 lbs.

I’m not too proud to admit that I’d still be clumsily working my way through the lower gears by the time we were already cruising at highway speeds. That alone is a fuel saver – getting to cruise speed quickly and then maximizing the time spent there.

Moodie admitted previous versions of the UltraShift had limited skip-shifting capabilities, but the Plus jumped from third to seventh to tenth as smoothly as though it were hitting every gear along the way. Only the dash display revealed we were skipping gears two or three at a time.

After a short and uneventful drive to the Imperial Oil refinery in West St. Paul, Man., I turned the wheel back over to Medwid and climbed out of the truck, allowing him to continue into the secure area to load up.

Forty minutes or so later, the truck re-emerged and it was once again time to climb behind the wheel, this time of a fully-loaded combination that grossed nearly 140,000 lbs with 92,292 lbs of payload.

This is where the UltraShift Plus would either shine or stumble. Rolling from a complete standstill, I felt the weight of the load and expected the transmission to lumber through the gears. But surprisingly it once again launched in third, and then skip-shifted effortlessly through the gears exactly as it had when empty: third to seventh to tenth...

I asked Moodie if he was surprised by the UltraShift Plus’s skip-shifting capabilities while under such heavy load and he just smiled and shook his head. Noticeably absent while up-shifting was any side-to-side cab sway – an inevitability if I were shifting myself or probably even pulling heavy loads with the old UltraShift.

Moodie credited this to the way the throttle is precisely modulated – not “mashed,” a word some may

‘We need to have more people coming into this industry and we need to reduce the barriers of entry and allow them to get experience in a safe manner.’

John Erik Albrechtsen, Paul’s Hauling

use to describe my own shifting style.

On the highway, we explored some of the UltraShift Plus’s other capabilities. One of Medwid’s favourites is its integration with the vehicle’s cruise control.

I set it at 92 km/h and then on an open stretch of highway slowed the truck right down to about 60 km/h. When I took my foot off the brake I reactivated cruise control and the truck climbed smoothly and steadily to my previous speed.

Medwid assured me it works just as smoothly when pulling a grade – the transmission downshifts as required and then resumes its cruise speed when it’s able without any driver intervention.

Before setting out, I was warned about the sensitivity of the disc brakes on the tractor and trailers. However, I must admit the performance benefits were lost on me as I barely needed to touch the brake pedal at all.

The UltraShift Plus’ ‘Low’ gear did a wonderful job slowing the truck using the engine brake, which can only be a good thing for brake life and maintenance. When approaching an exit ramp, I flipped the UltraShift Plus into Low mode and let it rein in the 485 horses all on its own. Who needs brakes?

As we neared the Paul’s Hauling yard, it was time to pull over and relinquish the truck back to Medwid for the 70 or so kilometres remaining to Portage La Prairie. I was only half joking when I told him I’d rather continue on the drive.

My short experience with the UltraShift Plus MXP left me thoroughly impressed and I have to believe other versions from the Plus family are equally capable of serving their intended markets.

I was a fan of past versions of the UltraShift as well, simply because they allowed me to keep my eyes on the road and my hands on the wheel rather than continuously watching the tach and searching for the next gear.

It’s a more relaxed driving experience, and for a novice driver especially, the importance of that from a safety standpoint should not be underestimated.

Still, automated mechanical transmissions have been slow to catch on with a large segment of the professional driver population, who contend they can outperform an AMT and in many cases had trust issues – especially in bad weather and on steep grades. The newest version, however, should go a long way towards putting those concerns to rest.

Back at Paul’s Hauling headquarters, Albrechtsen seemed gid-

dy about the UltraShift Plus’s leap into the previously uncharted waters of 140,000 lbs.

He said the transmission will reduce stress on drivers, allowing them to focus on their external environment.

And he’s also confident it will produce better clutch engagements in the marginal traction conditions the fleet often encounters. Albrechtsen also has another reason for welcoming the newest generation UltraShift.

“The pool of drivers is getting

to be smaller and smaller,” he said, noting thousands of drivers have fled the industry throughout the recession.

“In this downturn, attention has gone away from driver retention. What has happened to those drivers who left? Have they found other careers? What percentage is coming back? It won’t be the old-timers, the experienced guys – it will be a mix. We need to have more people coming into this industry and we need to reduce the barriers of entry and allow them to get experience in a safe manner.”

The UltraShift Plus seems like the perfect tool for that, but it’s not just new drivers who will be impressed by its performance.

The UltraShift Plus is so much better than previous versions that it has the potential to win over even the most cynical gear-jammer veterans, if they’re willing give it a chance. □

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**READY TO REV AND ROLL:** Owner/operator Chris Hawker is the proud owner of this Harley-Davidson-inspired International LoneStar.

## O/O takes delivery of Harley LoneStar

**MILWAUKEE, Wis.** – It's no surprise that the very first professional driver to take delivery of an International LoneStar Harley-Davidson Special Edition tractor is a motorcycle enthusiast.

Owner/operator Chris Hawker officially took ownership of the truck during a special celebration last month. The truck will complement the black and silver 2003 Harley 100th Anniversary Edition FXSTD Softail Deuce motorcycle he already has in the garage.

Hawker was handed the keys to his new LoneStar at the Harley Davidson Museum in Milwaukee.

"The International LoneStar Harley-Davidson Special Edition is one of the coolest-looking trucks I've ever seen," said Hawker. "When I first caught wind of this truck, I knew I had to have one."

The Harley-Davidson-inspired International LoneStar was first unveiled at the Mid-America Trucking Show in March. It combines deep black paint and contrasting silver and orange striping and plenty of chrome.

Hawker hauls food products from New York to Florida and has more than 20 years of professional driving under his belt.

Hawker said he was already planning on purchasing an International LoneStar even before the Harley edition was introduced.

"Chris came in and expressed interest in a LoneStar before the Harley-Davidson Special Edition was even announced," said Randy

Leighton, sales manager of dealer Five Star International. "As a fellow motorcycle guy and Harley owner myself, we got to talking about motorcycles. Once I heard about the Harley edition, I called him and told him we have a 'dream truck' coming out – he couldn't get to the dealership fast enough."

When Hawker took delivery of his new truck, Navistar announced its new Drive for Jobs initiative.

For every mile Hawker drives in his new truck, Navistar will make a donation to the American Trucking Associations GetTrucking.com program, which provides training for US military personnel as they return from service and wish to explore a career in trucking.

Navistar issued an "all-points bulletin" when Hawker set out from Milwaukee which encourages anyone who sees him in his travels to sign up for the chance to win prizes and make a donation to the Drive for Jobs program.

"We appreciate Navistar's support for the ATA's GetTrucking initiative," said Bill Graves, ATA president and CEO.

"The men and women of the US Armed Forces are ideal candidates to become trucking industry professionals – they have all the motivation and tools necessary to move successfully from the military into our industry."

For more on the International LoneStar Harley-Davidson Special Edition, go to [www.international-trucks.com/lonestarhd](http://www.international-trucks.com/lonestarhd). □

## Volvo, Mack merge organizations

**GREENSBORO, N.C.** – Mack Trucks and Volvo Trucks North America are merging into a single organization. The new company, called North American Trucks (NAT), will be lead by Dennis Slagle, current president of Mack Trucks. Per Carlsson, current president of Volvo Trucks North America, will assume the position of chief operating officer in the new organization, reporting directly to Slagle. Officials say the move is being made to "improve profitability and efficiency in the Volvo Group's North American truck operation," to "more closely align goals" and "enhance the capability to rapidly implement approved decisions."



**STAY, DOG:** The familiar Mack Bulldog isn't going anywhere. As Mack and Volvo merge their organizations, they'll continue to offer two distinct brands.

At the same time, Volvo Powertrain and Volvo 3P in North America will be more closely linked to the North American organization through dual reporting of their North American leaders to Slagle and their global leadership. To further enhance coordination, the other business units in North America will be more closely aligned to North American Trucks. The new organization will continue to operate two separate sales organizations and work with two separate brands.

"To achieve sustainable profitability at acceptable levels, we are now moving forward with the integration of our North American truck business," said Volvo Group CEO Leif Johansson. "The new organization will speed decision-making and significantly improve the operational steering of sales and products, while allowing us to maintain our focus on global product platforms."

The new management organization was made effective Nov. 1 and financial reporting will be based on the new structure as of Jan. 1. □



**GRAND OPENING:** Pictured from left to right: John Bowen, new truck sales manager; Michael Hummel, dealer development manager; Grant Ward, deputy mayor, Township of Langley; Rob Owen, general manager, Harbour International; and John Whitnell, vice-president, dealer operations.

## Harbour International Trucks opens new facility

**LANGLEY, B.C.** – Harbour International opened the doors to its new location at 19880-96th Ave. last month, after a \$2 million investment into the facility.

The dealership says it's now poised to serve the medium- and heavy-duty truck needs of customers in the Fraser Valley and beyond.

"We are pleased to launch our newest facility in the heart of the Greater Vancouver trucking community," said Robert Owen, general manager of Harbour International Trucks. "The location in the Port Kells area of Langley was carefully selected due to its proximity to the trucking community and the location's situation on major Gateway Project transportation corridors. This facility is ideally situated minutes away from Hwy. 1, with access to the US border truck

crossing."

The new facility features a 12-bay service department, large parts warehouse, an indoor truck showroom and offers rentals, full-service leasing and medium- and heavy-duty truck sales. More than 300 guests attended the grand opening Oct. 8 which included the display of a limited edition Harley Davidson LoneStar.

"This is an exciting time for us. We are investing in expanding our operations at a time when many in our industry are focused on cost reductions in personnel and facilities," said Richard Ross, general sales manager for Harbour International Trucks. "We now have three facilities in Southwest BC with companies in Langley, Coquitlam and Nanaimo. We are incredibly optimistic regarding the potential for growth." □

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# Carrier Transcold offers 2010 reefer engines early to extend CARB compliance life

ATHENS, Ga. – Carrier Transcold says it is rolling out transport refrigeration units (TRUs) that comply with 2010 EPA and CARB requirements early.

As a result, customers will gain additional engine compliance life, the company announced. The models 2500A, 2100A and 2100 from the X2-Series trailer units and all Supra truck units will feature CARB-compliant engines immediately.

“Fleets and operators do not have to wait until 2010 to take advantage of a 2010 model year unit,” said David Kiefer, director of marketing and product management. “This early phase-in allows them to get newer model year units now. For those who operate in California, this can provide additional compliance life for their TRUs.”

Typically, CARB only allows



**EARLY ROLL-OUT:** Carrier Transcold is greeting new emissions standards head-on with the early introduction of reefers with 2010 engines.

TRUs to be operated for seven years before the owner must upgrade or replace the unit.

“CARB’s Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM) generally allows a TRU to have a seven-year engine life before an owner

must either replace or upgrade the TRU,” Kiefer explained. “The seven-year engine clock starts based on either the manufacture year of the TRU or the emissions model year of the TRU engine, depending on which is most ad-

vantageous to the TRU owner. In the past, the engine emissions model year and the TRU manufacture year were closely tied. Carrier’s early implementation of 2010 engines means customers do not have to wait until 2010 to get that extra year of service out of their TRUs.”

A TRU manufactured in 2009 with a 2010 model year engine can be operated through the end of 2017 under CARB rules rather than 2016, Carrier pointed out.

“A customer who buys a Carrier Transcold unit with a 2010 engine and puts it into service in 2009 actually gets more than eight years of service out of that unit without any additional compliance action,” said Kiefer. “This is a substantial benefit.”

For more info, call your Carrier Transcold dealer or visit [www.trucktrailer.carrier.com](http://www.trucktrailer.carrier.com).

## FCCC eliminates landfill waste

GAFFNEY, S.C. – Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation (FCCC) says it has achieved Zero Waste to Landfill Status in the US.

The manufacturer claims to be the first company within the trucking industry to achieve the accomplishment.

It went from generating 250,000 lbs of solid waste per month in January 2007 to disposing zero pounds today, thanks to a number of environmental efforts instituted at the plant.

“Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation easily surpassed our corporate goal by realizing Zero Waste to Landfill status three months earlier than our original January 2010 target date,” said Roger Nielsen, chief operating officer of Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA), FCCC’s parent company.

“FCCC was able to achieve these results by the continued efforts and diligence of all employees within the company, and we continue to seek ways to reduce our environmental impact in our facility and through our products and alternative-fuel efforts.”

Nielsen said the FCCC plant will serve as a blueprint for Daimler as it aims to reduce waste at its other truck manufacturing plants as well.

FCCC accomplished its goal by first selecting a Green Team of employees who would identify opportunities to eliminate waste and implement recycling programs.

“I’d like to recognize the Green Team for its commitment to the Zero Waste to Landfill program,” said Bob Harbin, president of FCCC. “It’s the team’s tenaciousness and foresight that enabled our company as a whole to work toward a healthier environment and a cleaner community.”

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## New Products

## Freightliner updates Coronado highway tractor



**NEW LOOK:** Freightliner has tweaked its Coronado highway tractor to offer improved aerodynamics and styling as well as driver comfort upgrades.

**PORTLAND, Ore.** – Freightliner has introduced a new version of its flagship Coronado classic-styled highway tractor. The updated version of the truck was unveiled at the Chrome Shop Mafia headquarters in Joplin, Mo. It features enhanced aerodynamics, updated technology and improved styling, according to the company. The upgrades also promise improved fuel economy and enhanced driver comfort, Freightliner announced.

“The Coronado commands attention on the road – it is ideal for owner/operators who want a truck that not only turns heads – but turns

profits,” said Melissa Clausen, director of product marketing for Freightliner Trucks.

The Coronado was redesigned to improve aerodynamics while maintaining the truck’s classic styling.

“Our goal was to create a traditionally-styled aerodynamic truck that would help owners reduce fuel consumption and increase bottom line profits,” said Clausen. “Everything about the Coronado was carefully developed and built to keep it running and earning revenue.”

Its hood is constructed of one-piece fiberglass and the grille is

stainless steel. The chrome-plated hood handle has been designed to improve airflow over the truck, the company claims. The two-piece windshield has been sloped for better airflow and dual chrome steel intakes are standard.

“Every element on the Coronado – from the hood to the fender and even the mirrors – was tested in the wind tunnel to optimize airflow,” said Clausen. “This aerodynamic design, coupled with the latest in clean engine technology, enhances overall efficiency.”

The Coronado features a lightweight aluminum cab that allows

for heavier payloads and a 50-degree wheel cut improves maneuverability. New headlamps contribute to the Coronado’s styling and durability as well as improved nighttime visibility. The headlights use just a single bulb to simplify replacement, Freightliner announced. The hood opens nearly 90-degrees allowing easy access to underhood components.

“Productivity is the highest priority, so we designed the Coronado to enable owner/operators to easily make adjustments on their own, keeping repair costs and downtime to a minimum,” said Clausen.

Inside the cab, noise abatement materials on the floor, front wall, sides and back panel dampen road, wind and engine noise for a quieter ride. The interior boasts a classy finish with Oregon Burl Wood trim and accents on the dash.

The new Coronado also features an updated dashboard which Freightliner claims to be one of its quietest ever thanks to a single piece design that reduces rattles and squeaks. The sleeper features strategically-placed cabinets that maximize storage and a pull-out writing surface, clothing rack and separate control panel for heat, A/C and lighting round out a comfortable bunk area.

“Our customers spend most of their time inside the truck, so we wanted it well-appointed and comfortable,” said Clausen.

The new Coronado is available with the Detroit Diesel DD13, DD15 and DD16 engines as well as the Cummins ISX. □



Flo Components has introduced an **automatic lube system with remote notification** for fleet applications. The company’s P203 RemoteLinc pump is now offered as part of its automatic lubrication systems for fleets using telematics systems. Auto lube systems dispense measured amounts of grease at frequent intervals while equipment is operating, maintaining a consistent lubricant seal to prevent dirt and contaminants from entering bearings, the company claims. The system interfaces with OEM and aftermarket telematics systems. For more info, call 800-668-5458 or visit [www.flocomponents.com](http://www.flocomponents.com).

Fontaine Fifth Wheel has come out with what it’s calling the lightest **fifth wheel slider system** available. The Fontaine Ultra LT fifth wheel is as light as an aluminum fifth wheel, the company says, with the strength, durability and cost-effectiveness of

steel. The steel fifth wheel was built for fleets looking to save weight, particularly with impending EPA2010 emissions standards which in most cases will add considerable weight to the vehicle. Fontaine says its Ultra LT weighs about 100 lbs less than other fifth wheel systems. It is offered as a complete system including the top plate and one of a variety of mounting configurations. For more details, visit [www.fifthwheel.com](http://www.fifthwheel.com) or call 800-874-9780.

Thermo King has introduced a **new controller** for its TriPac Hybrid Auxiliary Idle Reduction and Temperature Management System (or APU). The new controller offers more programmability, according to the company, allowing customers to further customize their system. The TriPac can now be programmed to monitor the battery and coolant temperature only after the tractor on/off cycle, or a driver can set it up to monitor the cab temperature and automatically maintain the previously selected set point. Thermo King says the new capabilities allow fleet managers to ensure their APUs aren’t accidentally left running during downtime or over weekends. More info is available from Thermo King dealers.



Moving from the commonly-used 15W-40 **heavy-duty engine oil** to Chevron Delo 400 LE SAE 10W-30 could provide a 1% fuel savings, ac-

ording to extensive test results conducted by Chevron. The company says it has completed extensive lab and field testing in heavy-duty engines and has found its 10W-30 grade oil also boasts a 0.5% fuel savings over 5W-40 grade synthetic oils. Chevron said testing also showed wear levels and drain intervals provided by its 10W-30 equal what fleets would expect from leading 15W-40 motor oils. The tests included 2010 engines from Volvo with similar results. Chevron is crediting its proprietary ISOSYN technology for the improvements. The technology combines highly-refined base oils with advanced additives to create products that rival synthetic lubes in performance tests while maintaining the costs of mineral-based oils, according to the company.

A former truck driver, driver-instructor and commercial driver examiner has authored an **electronic textbook** on gear selection and shifting. *Practical Tips to Shifting for Students of Truck Driving Schools and Truck Drivers* (ISBN: 0-9684939-0-4), is a textbook featuring 140 pages and more than 100 graphics, covering comprehensive, step-by-step instructions on gear shifting in a wide range of applications, according to the author, who claims it will help drivers achieve a greater level of shifting proficiency. The book is being marketed direct online and is available as a .PDF file from the author. Payment of \$9.95 is accepted via PayPal. For details, e-mail [truckgearshiftingtips@gmail.com](mailto:truckgearshiftingtips@gmail.com).

Rotary Lift is offering what it has dubbed the first **nationwide heavy-duty lift inspection program** in Canada. The Inspect to Protect program complies with a growing number of provincial codes and regs that require annual lift inspections. The program puts customers into contact with qualified lift inspectors who will visit a fleet’s facility to conduct the inspection. Fleets just have to call 800-640-5438 to arrange an inspection, according to the company. Each participating Inspect to Protect company has inspectors on staff who meet all requirements as a qualified lift inspector. Customers will receive an inspection certificate following the inspection. Visit [www.rotarylif.com/inspect\\_HD.aspx](http://www.rotarylif.com/inspect_HD.aspx).



Peterson Manufacturing’s latest **Piranha LED Smart Lamps** now feature just 10 diodes for improved economy, while combining strobing LEDs with automatic turn signal override functions in one self-contained lamp. The latest four-inch models are SAE J845 Class 2 compliant and DoT-approved, according to the company, and they boast rugged wiring options for durability. Peterson says its latest Smart Lamps are the easiest, most efficient way to integrate strobing LED warning lamps into vehicles. For more, visit [www.pmlights.com](http://www.pmlights.com). □

Opinion

# It was a tough year, but celebrate small victories when you can



There's no sugar coating it, 2009 has been a tough year. But when times are tough, it's even more important to celebrate hard-earned victories.

I'd like to congratulate our editorial team for winning the first ever Canadian Online Publishing Awards' Best Video category.

The weekly WebTV show *Transportation Matters* they produce for Trucknews.com was recognized as the winner during a recent awards ceremony at the Gladstone Hotel in Toronto.

Our Web site was also a finalist in the Best Overall Magazine Web site category.

I know Adam, Brad, Julia, James and Lou (and all the IT support staff) put a lot of work into the Web site and it's nice to see their hard work is paying off.

We're also continuously striving to make the Web site better for you – our readers (and visitors). Just recently we removed the registration requirements, so you can browse through back issues and archives without registering.

I, for one, am very happy about this since I often forgot my own password – and I work here!

We're also working behind the scenes to improve the site layout to make it more user-friendly. Stay tuned for details on that project!

Like many of you, I've been reading all the economic reports in search of good news.

Finally, it looks like some rays of light are beginning to appear. (Don't just take my word for it, read Lou's column on pg. 3).

The OTA's fourth quarter Business Pulse e-Survey suggested 41% of Ontario fleets are now 'optimistic' about business prospects.

While it may not seem like much, it's much better than the 17% who were optimistic at the start of the year.

Again, it may be a small victory,

but it's worth celebrating nonetheless.

Now if we could only do something about the US economy and the soaring Canadian loonie.

As the curtain draws on 2009, I'm sure it was a year to forget for many of you. (As a Leafs and Argos fan, I can definitely say it was a year to forget for me in more ways than one).

But let's not forget to acknowledge the positives that occurred as well. If you look hard enough, I'm sure you can find some cause for celebration within your own business.

Meanwhile, here's hoping for a better year in 2010. □

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

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## People

# MTA awards industry's finest

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – The Manitoba Trucking Association held its fifth annual awards banquet on Oct. 29 to recognize excellence among the people in the industry. Individuals are selected for four different accolades: the RBC Royal Bank/MTA Service to Industry Award, the Volvo Canada/MTA Manitoba Driver of the Year Award, the Shaw Tracking/MTA Dispatcher of the Year Award, and the Payne Transportation LP/MTA Associate of the Year Award.

The Service to Industry award is given to an MTA member who has worked to further the development of the trucking industry. Candidates are nominated by the MTA's membership. This year's winner is Clayton Gording of YRC Reimer. Canadian-born Gording began his career in trucking with a minor clerical position, working his way up through sales representative and terminal manager of a series of ever-larger terminals before becoming a vice-president of terminal operations in 2001 and ultimately president of YRC Reimer in 2007.

The MTA said that Gording and YRC Reimer have supported them for years with time and resources. The association also praised YRC Reimer's participation in the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council's steering committees and working groups, saying it shows a commitment to human resources issues.

This year's Driver of the Year is Dennis Barkman of Penner International. The selection committee said that Barkman, with 27 years of driving experience and fantastic safety and community service records, was an easy choice. Barkman has driven almost every kind of truck, but has been a long-haul driver for more than 20 years. The committee also said Barkman takes the time to be a department leader at a Sunday school and has worked at a children's camp for 10 years – four as director. The driver of the year is selected from the 12 driv-



**DRIVER OF YEAR:** Dennis Barkman of Penner International (middle) was named the Volvo Canada/MTA Driver of the Year.

ers of the month, recognized for commitment to the industry, to safety, for customer service and outstanding acts.

Dale Bjorklund of Payne Transportation is 2009's Dispatcher of the Year, his nomination supported by a sea of letters written by co-workers and colleagues, including one letter from Tom Payne Jr., the president of Payne Transportation. The award is given to a dispatcher who not only excels in customer service, safety, driver well-being and teamwork, but also in community or volunteer work. The MTA said that Bjorklund has organized runs for charity, Christmas hampers and company barbecues at Payne.

The MTA also recognizes one of its members who has worked towards the growth of the association, and is esteemed by the other members. This year Grote Industries' Roger Gagne has been granted the title of Associate of the Year. Manitoba-born Gagne, who worked his way up through the industry from shipping and receiving to accounts manager, has also worked for over eight years on the executive committee of the MTA's associated trades division. MTA also said he was instrumental in the staging of several MTA event dinners and golf tournaments, acting as co-chair. □



**NEW DOS:** It seems cooler heads have prevailed in Yanke Group's fight against breast cancer. As part of Breast Cancer Awareness month in October, top Yanke executives had their heads shaved after the company's employees raised a total of \$42,150 for the cause. The one-week initiative, titled 'Shave the Bosses Head,' was organized by a Saskatoon local radio station C95 during its C95 Radio Marathon for Breast Cancer Research. The deal dictated that if Yanke staff were able to raise \$25,000, five Yanke executives, including president and CEO Russel Marcoux, would be donning buzz-cuts this winter. Not only did Yanke raise \$25,000, it raised the second highest individual donation for the C95 Radio Marathon. Pictured in front row (left to right): Bryan Richards, Marcoux and Craig Bailey. Back row (left to right): Brett Marcoux and Dale Booth. □

## OTA stalwart Bud Barr passes away

**COBOURG, Ont.** – Trucking industry veteran and long-time Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) stalwart Bud Barr passed away Oct. 15.

Barr passed away at Golden Plough Lodge in Cobourg.

"On behalf of the Ontario Trucking Association, I would like to express our deeply felt sadness on the passing of Bud and our sympathies to his family," said OTA president, David Bradley. "Bud was an institution at OTA, an organization I know he loved and in so doing inspired us all. There was not a voluntary position at OTA that Bud did not hold. He was indeed as much a part of our group as the association staff. He will be greatly missed."

The OTA Education Foundation also expressed its sadness over the passing of its former executive director. Barr ran the OTA Education Foundation from 1992 to 2005 when he retired for health-related reasons.

"Bud Barr will always be remem-

bered by those who worked with him during his tenure with the Education Foundation as an individual who took on his position with heart and soul," said current foundation chairman Scott Smith, of J. D. Smith and Sons.

"I think that he really got a kick out of handing out scholarships to students of the Ontario trucking industry, and he certainly wasn't shy about going after the industry for the much needed donations to fund the scholarship program."

"This is a sad day for all of us," added George Ledson, long-term director for the Foundation and president of Cavalier Transportation Services. "Bud certainly had his heart in the right place, and he really cared about the foundation, its scholarship program, and most of all, the students."

Donations in his memory can be made to the OTA Education Foundation. □

## Announcements

**Paul Harper** has assumed the role of dealer principal of Harper Truck Centres, replacing former dealer principal **John Nelligan**, the company has announced. Harper already served as co-president of the company. Harper will be charged with commercial, operational and strategic growth responsibilities for the Harper Truck Centre operations in Mississauga, Oshawa, Milton and Woodbridge, according to the company. Harper is co-owner of the Harper Group of companies and has 25 years experience in the truck service and support business.

Arrow Truck Sales has added automotive industry veteran **Jerry Jarosz** to its Toronto sales team. Jarosz can be reached at 416-566-8405 or [jjarosz@arrowtruck.com](mailto:jjarosz@arrowtruck.com).

Continental Tire North America has appointed **Deborah Whiton** as regional manager for Continental Tire Canada. Whiton previously served

as a territory sales manager, district manager and regional manager for Continental, covering the US western region. In her new role, Whiton will be responsible for overseeing replacement commercial tire sales to dealers and commercial vehicle fleets throughout Canada, including further development of the Continental dealer and distributor networks. She will be based in Toronto.

ATBS Canada continues to round out its management lineup, most recently hiring industry veterans **Stan Morris** and **John Groot** to lead sales and marketing efforts. Morris has been in the trucking industry for 47 years, working for companies such as Taggart Service, Listowel Transport Lines, Sureway Transport and TST Truckload Express. Groot has been in the trucking industry for over 35 years, working for companies such as Huron Grain which later became Greenway Transfer. □

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# The realignment of Stars

## Western Star executives discuss the future of the brand

By Paul Hartley

**LAS VEGAS, Nev.** – The simple, overarching message Western Star officials delivered at the company's recent dealer meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., could be summed up as a paraphrase of Mark Twain's famous line: "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

The company is very much not dead, executives told reporters during a press event, nor are there any plans to kill it.

In fact, Western Star has apparently been given the opportunity to chart its own strategic course, without clearing every budgeting and marketing decision with its corporate parent, Daimler Trucks North America. The change would put it on par with the status of Freightliner Custom Chassis Corp. and Thomas Built Buses.

At first glance, this reorganization seems to be a mere shift in accounting practices.

Managers stressed, however, that their newly found freedom would affect everything from dealer relationships to market-segment expansion to research and development. Heading up this charge is a fresh, independent management team composed of: Michael Jackson, general manager; Ann Demitruk, director of marketing; James Looyen, sales manager; and Richard Shearing, director of product planning.

Many of the company's detailed plans for the future – some based on suggestions gleaned at the dealer meeting – are still a bit fluid. Nevertheless, the four top executives laid out their near- and long-term goals for Western Star during an hour-long chat with members of the trucking industry media. Here are the highlights from that conversation:

### On overall plans:

*Jackson:* "We are renewing our interest in Western Star. We want to get people pumped up about the brand again...and to put the emphasis on the segments where we really play well."

*Demitruk:* "From a marketing strategy, we intend to partner with our dealers to host (ride and drive) events that bring in customers and put them behind the wheel." These events will be held at dealerships, truck stops and customer facilities.

*Looyen:* "We've previously focused on our historic markets. We now plan to expand (into other segments), putting more emphasis on body builders as well. We think our product line fits well there. It's very body-builder friendly, but it's often been overlooked in the past."

*Shearing:* "Like everyone else, we're very much focused on EPA2010 in the near term, making sure we have a complete product line-up to carry through from EPA07 to '10. And even though we are really close to the change-



**NOT GOING ANYWHERE:** Executives recently assured the trade press that Western Star isn't going to disappear and that organizational changes will benefit the brand – good news to Star enthusiasts in Western Canada. Photo by Paul Hartley

over date, there is still a lot of work to do. Beyond that, we're monitoring the activities of the California Air Resource Board, the EPA's SmartWay program and Canada's enviroTruck program. We're taking a hard look at our products to determine what we might need to do, in terms of aerodynamics and fuel economy."

### On the benefits of greater corporate independence:

*Looyen:* "To be a true premium brand, you need to be flexible and quick, and the new organizational structure will allow that. The processes you have in a big corporation are good for a company like Freightliner. But for Western Star to retain its premium identity, we needed to break away to offer customers a quicker, more nimble approach."

### On challenges in preparing for 2010 and beyond:

*Shearing:* From an engineering standpoint, "mining trucks have probably been one of the toughest (design challenges), for both the 4900 and 6900. We have our Tier III off-highway engine to supplement that business, but there are plenty of applications requiring EPA2010 on-highway certification." Some of these operations are quite remote so the hardware must be particularly robust, and the dealer organization needs to be capable of providing support wherever customers are located.

*Jackson:* "As we mentioned, we're also adapting our products for SmartWay certification. We need to better understand that process and, maybe, change a little bit of the aerodynamic packaging

of the Western Star product to make it a little bit more competitive in the on-highway business as (future) regulations start kicking in."

"In terms of pure aerodynamics, I think Freightliner's Cascadia is probably the leader. Western Star isn't going to introduce a truck that will compete with the Cascadia. Our roll is within the traditional market. At the same time, we need to be sensitive to some of the changes coming along, then create aerodynamic improvements based on a traditionally-designed truck."

### On product line expansion

*Looyen:* "We're looking at everything. There might be a place for a lighter Western Star, but I don't know that 'medium-duty' would be the best definition of that. We are, however, trying to determine if we can be a little more competitive in a somewhat lower GVW. If we did build something lighter, it would have to be in line with segments where we're already strong or plan to be strong. Western Star will never be an overall market share leader. We're targeting only those applications for which our trucks are best engineered."

*Shearing:* "It's safe to say that we're not going after the 'commodity' markets of the medium business."

### On Sterling's departure from the market:

*Jackson:* "Some dealers were greatly affected by Sterling's closure. Our goal is to ensure that Western Star offers those (Sterling) customers a complete product line-up that fulfills their

needs, allowing (dealers and buyers) to be profitable. Right now, we're looking at the former Sterling dealers and trying to determine what voids Western Star can fulfill. At this point, we don't yet have all of those solutions."

### On builds with 2010 engines

*Shearing:* "We'll be building trucks with 2010 Detroit Diesel engines when the new year starts." Cummins engines will be available a little bit later, and some of the specialty vehicle engines are expected to arrive about mid-year.

*Looyen:* "We can continue to build trucks using 2007-compliant engines through the first quarter of next year, as long as the engines are already assembled (by Jan. 1), and we have firm orders for the trucks."

### On the owner/operator market

*Jackson:* "From a numbers standpoint, we haven't seen anything suggesting that the owner/operator market will go away. That will continue to be one of our focus markets."

### On buyer behaviour

*Demitruk:* Enthusiasm for square hoods "has tapered off a little bit since 2007, but the numbers aren't significant. That might be telling. A lot of our buyers are in vocational markets where fuel mileage isn't (as critical) as it is in long-haul trucking."

There is some overlap with Western Star and Freightliner products in certain market segments, "but we know that a typical Western Star buyer would rarely consider a Freightliner, and the opposite is also true." □

By Edo van Belkom

**The Story So Far...**

**Before making a delivery of hardwood flooring to a big warehouse, Mark jumps from his cab and injures his knee. Working through the pain, Mark is told by the shipper that all the warehouse workers are gone, so if Mark wants his truck unloaded he'll have to do it himself. Mark wants another load so he unloads himself. His knee aches.**

**Mark's knee is sorer than ever, but he keeps working. He gets another load to the same warehouse and there are still no workers to unload his truck. Unhappy, Mark unloads his trailer wondering how he could be so unlucky to make two deliveries when no one was around.**

**Mark's knee is worse than ever. A doctor explains how so much damage can be caused by a small jump. He also suggests Mark maintains three points of contact with his truck at all times when climbing in an out. Later, at a nearby Tim's, Mark learns that there are no workers at the warehouse and the shipper there depends on truckers to do all the heavy work themselves...**

Mark limped back to Mother Load and took his time climbing into the cab, making sure that he had three points of contact between himself and the truck at all times.

When he was inside, he sat behind the wheel for several minutes, thinking about his last couple of loads...

How could it have happened that he had been duped by a shipper to unload not one, but two loads of heavy goods by himself? Each delivery had taken him roughly an hour to unload, easily saving the shipper over a hundred dollars in wages and benefits that should have been paid to a worker for that time.

Time.

Mark thought about the word.

Time was money, and like plenty of other drivers he knew, he'd rather unload a trailer himself than waste time waiting for someone else to come by to unload it for him. And for what? Just so he could squeeze in another load, make another delivery, or put a few more miles under his wheels.

At what cost?

It only took a second longer to climb down from his truck than it took to jump down, but he'd jumped plenty of times, all in the name of getting things done faster. He'd been in a hurry with that first load and as a result, he'd been slowed down to a crawl by an injury that could have easily been avoided. And he'd probably aggravated his injured knee getting the load off his truck just so he could hurry back to the depot to get another one.

Well, no more.

From now on he'd climb down from his truck, walk to the end of his trailer, and take the stairs one at a time. And if there wasn't a worker around to unload his trailer, then he'd wait until there was one available. After all, there was no point risking getting hurt doing someone else's job, especially if he wasn't covered by insurance while he was doing it.

Safety first. It was an old saying, but right now it had a whole new meaning for Mark. Another old saying with a new meaning was, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." Only in Mark's case there was a third line to the saying that went, "Fool me three times, I don't think so."

But while he wasn't in any shape to make another delivery – especially one he'd have to unload himself – Mark did want to take one last load to the flooring warehouse.

So Mark called up Bud, this time not giving his dispatcher a chance for any fun and games. "Bud this is Mark Dalton," he said. "I want another load to that flooring warehouse."

"Aren't you supposed to be hurt?" Bud asked. "I thought the doctor said you had to take it easy for a while."

"He gave me a prescription. I'll be alright."

"I don't like my drivers being on the road while they're on medication."

"It's non-drowsy stuff," said Mark. "I made sure."

Bud still wasn't convinced. "You know at that warehouse you're probably going to have to unload your truck yourself."

"I know. I'm sort of counting on it."

"Ahhh," Bud said, understanding. "Mark Dalton has a plan. Well, who am I to stand in your way?" A pause. "What do you need?"

"Another load," Mark said. "A real heavy one."

Mark knew just where to find the trailer he needed to carry the load, but it took most of the day to convince its owners to let him use it to make the delivery. But once they'd agreed on a fee, Mark had the trailer hooked up to Mother Load by three that afternoon. And an hour after that he had the load all strapped down and ready to roll.

If he played his cards right, he'd arrive at the warehouse just before five. That would give the shipper an iron-clad excuse as to why no one was there to unload it, and that was just what Mark wanted.

He was unloading this shipment himself, and he was going to enjoy every minute of it – bad knee and all.

Mark backed up to the loading dock at quarter to five and left Mother Load

idling at the door. He knew he was wasting a bit of fuel letting the engine idle, but he needed the noise it made as cover.

He climbed down from Mother Load – making sure he had three points of contact every step of the way – then climbed the few steps to the shipping entrance and opened the door.

"Hello?" he said.

No answer.

Perfect, he thought.

He made his way to the office, noting that there wasn't a worker anywhere to be seen. That was fine with Mark since he didn't want anyone showing up to interfere with his plan.

"Hello?" he said again as he neared the office.

"Oh, hi there," the shipper said. Then, recognizing Mark, "You again?"

"Yeah, I got another load."

The shipper looked at his watch. "Ah, geez. I wasn't expecting anyone and it's so close to five, I let my guys go early."

"Not a problem," Mark said. "I can unload it for you."

"Oh, thanks. That would be great."

"In fact, I thought I might be a bit late so I brought some help with me. Hope you don't mind."

"No, not at all."

Mark nodded. "If you could sign for the load now, it'll save me a trip back here when I'm done."

"Sure, sure," the shipper said, signing for the load. "There's an empty aisle..." he began to say, but Mark cut him off.

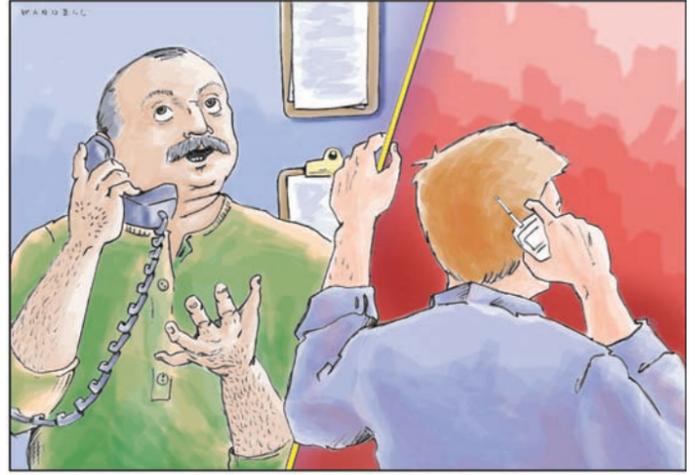
"I saw a great place for the load on my way in."

"Okay, sure. You did a good job with the other loads."

Mark left without another word, and with a big grin on his face.

Outside the warehouse, Mark considered driving away with the load since it had already been signed for, but decided it would be more satisfying all around if he carried on with his plan. And so he started up the auxiliary power unit on the trailer and put his hands on the set of controls that operated the dedicated crane on the end of it.

He'd borrowed the trailer from a local brick company and couldn't wait to put the thing into action. The crane on the trailer had two large forks on a C-shaped rig that allowed the forks to slide under a



skid and pick it up from above. When it was used to deliver bricks, the crane allowed the operator to gently lower a heavy skid onto the ground next to the truck, and that's exactly what Mark wanted to do now.

The load was 10 skids of 16"x16" porcelain floor tiles made in Spain. Each skid weight more than a tonne and each individual box weighed at least 80 pounds.

And all of it was going to be unloaded onto the pavement in front of the loading dock.

As the first skid touched down beside Mother Load, Mark laughed under his breath.

"Take that, 'I let my guys go early.' You have to have employees in order to let them go home early."

If the shipper used a forklift, he'd first have to get it onto the pavement, then use it to lift each skid onto the loading dock. Then he'd have to use a pump truck to get the skid out of the way, then go back down to the forklift to put another skid on the dock. And he'd have to do that 10 times.

Mark continued to pull and shift the levers of the crane, setting down the skids in two neat rows of five.

His knee never felt better.

And if the shipper couldn't get a forklift to do the job, the man would have to move the boxes one at a time.

The thought had Mark laughing out loud.

"Fool me once, shame on you," he said. "Fool me twice, shame on me."

He locked up the crane and headed back toward Mother Load, being careful to walk around the load of skids next to his truck. When he climbed up into the cab, he had three points of contact all the way in. "Fool me three times," he said, putting Mother Load into gear. "I don't think so." □

**– Mark Dalton returns next month with another exciting adventure.**

The continuing adventures of *Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator*  
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Fleet News

# Bruce R. Smith files for CCAA creditor protection

**SIMCOE, Ont.** – On Oct. 9 Bruce R. Smith filed for protection from creditors under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA). The company filed with the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, which will give it time to restructure its business affairs.

KPMG is the court-appointed monitor and Hamilton, Ont.-based law firm Scarfone Hawkins LLP will assist the carrier in its restructuring efforts.

Bruce R. Smith has been trucking since 1947 and celebrated its 60th anniversary two years ago. It operates about 250 tractors and

1,100 trailers out of six locations in Ontario and one in Montreal, Que.

The company currently employs about 325 people.

"As a result of the severe North American economic recession, and particularly its impact on the North American automotive/manufacturing sectors, Bruce R. Smith's revenues have declined significantly, and the corporation now has more equipment and equipment carrying costs than can be supported by its decreased revenue base," the company's representatives acknowledged in a statement.

"While its revenue base is show-

ing early signs of recovery and Bruce R. Smith has taken every possible step to address the necessary restructuring issues outside of formal legal proceedings, it has determined that it is in the best interests of its shareholders, employees and creditors to seek protection

pursuant to the CCAA in order to restructure to bring its short- to mid-term cost structure in line with a lower revenue model."

The company said its creditors are supportive of the application. Bruce R. Smith says it's business as usual while it restructures, as far as its customers are concerned. It also said it will try to retain as many of its employees as possible. □

## Caravan provides happy Thanksgiving

**HAMILTON, Ont.** – Caravan Logistics has partnered with Feed The Children Canada (FTC Canada) to provide food for 1,500 needy Hamilton-area families. This year marked Caravan's first time being involved with the annual food drive, which took place Thanksgiving weekend at Ivor Wynn Stadium in Hamilton Oct. 11.



In addition to providing two 53-ft. trailers for transporting food from the FTC Canada warehouse in Guelph to Hamilton, Caravan also provided more than 35 volunteers for the afternoon event, hosted under tents at the outdoor stadium facility. Employees and their families prepared for the event by setting up tables and supplies, handed out food boxes and bread, and also carried the 22-lb. family food boxes to waiting vehicles.

"If we can offer a helping hand for 1,500 families on Thanksgiving and it puts a smile on their faces, then it's good for everyone involved," said Denis Iwaniura, manager of corporate accounts for Caravan.

"We heard directly from families on Saturday that they were so grateful for the box of food," said FTC Canada president, Ken Dick.

"In some cases this helped supplement a Thanksgiving meal, for others this was the meal altogether." □

## Bison Transport develops GHG calculator to promote LCV benefits

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – Bison Transport has developed an online greenhouse gas emissions calculator so customers can measure the benefits of using long combination vehicles (LCVs).

Bison, one of the country's biggest proponents of LCVs, estimates turnpike doubles reduce GHG emissions by as much as 40% compared to single trailer over-the-road operations. In addition to operating LCVs in Western Canada, Bison is a participant in the Ontario LCV pilot project.

The calculator, available at [www.bisontransport.com/environment](http://www.bisontransport.com/environment), compares the carbon emissions of LCVs to that of single trailer operations over any given length of haul.

Bison's own LCV fleet operates more than 15 million miles per year. The company says its GHG calculator is the latest component of its Sustainable Transportation Strategy, which also includes a speed reduction policy, idle reduction technologies and fuel-efficient components including trailer skirts.

"For Bison, our Sustainable Transportation Strategy guides each of us to seek improvement throughout all our operations and the services we deliver to our customers," says Jeff Pries, vice-president, sales and marketing.

"It is our commitment to corporate social responsibility and our means of ensuring that we do what is right to protect our business, our jobs, our customers and our environment." □

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**BOWMANVILLE, Ont.** – An Ontario truck driver gained mainstream media attention in early October after a police officer fined him for smoking in his cab – an apparent affront to the province’s Smoke Free Ontario Act, which considers a truck cab a workplace and, therefore, a smoke-free zone.

Both fellow truckers and members of the public came to the driver’s defense through a variety of means, including op-ed pieces, on-line comments, tweets and other social media.

While most supporters of the smoking trucker claimed the officer was making an unfair example of the driver, the government is standing by the decision, claiming that the law is purely a health issue and should be viewed as such. But is this tough stance going too far? *Truck West* stopped by the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont. to see if truckers think smokers should be able to light up in their rigs.

**Dave Parent**, a driver with R & G Transport in Sussex, N.B., said the law is just one more thing the government has done to take the enjoyment out of trucking.

“The government, especially in Ontario and Quebec, has taken away just about everything there ever was to enjoy in trucking. I’ve smoked all my life, and I’m not about to stop now for them or anybody unless I want to,” he told *Truck West*, adding he would take the case “right to the Supreme Court of Canada” if he had been



**Truck Stop Question**

**Adam Ledlow**  
Managing Editor

*Should drivers be allowed to smoke in their trucks?*



**Dave Parent**

fined.

**Ron Thompson**, a 30-year veteran driving for Kemira Waters Canada out of Varennes, Que., said he thinks drivers should be allowed to smoke in their rigs – provided they’re not running team.

“If they’re all alone in the cab, I don’t think they should be forced not to smoke in a truck. I think it should be the driver’s preference whether to smoke or not, and the law should not be forced onto a driver. We’ve got enough laws to follow now without having that – that one’s pretty ridiculous,” he said.

Thompson noted that Ontario’s new hands-free law is something

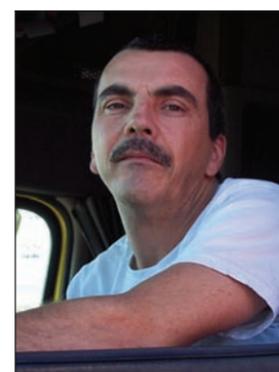


**Ron Thompson**

he definitely supports and police should be spending more time enforcing laws like that instead (see the November installment of the Truck Stop Question for more on that topic).

**Nick Schmidt**, a driver with Sunbury Transport out of Mississauga, Ont., says asking drivers to butt out in their cabs would be no different than asking someone not to smoke in their own house.

“I just quit smoking, but if I was (the trucker who was fined) and I had a cigarette and the cop pulled me over I would have said, ‘Well you better start pulling over all these cars that are company



**Nick Schmidt**

vehicles’,” Schmidt said.

“I’ve seen millions of cops smoking in their cars and doing their laptops while they’re going down the road. I don’t think it’s right. I wouldn’t pay the fine. I’d fight it all the way.”

**John Moon**, an owner/operator for CRST Malone in Eldridge, Iowa, says he disagrees with the law, but admits that non-smokers’ rights need to be taken into consideration.

“I think you ought to respect non-smokers’ rights. If you have a non-smoker with you, that’s between you two. But I think (the law) is going overboard on it. I can see if I go in there and it smells smoky, alright, I’ll obey that law, but in my truck I should be able to smoke as long as I’m not on a petroleum site property or something where there’s a ban on the property. But for all of Ontario, that’s absurd.” □

– Adam Ledlow is now on Twitter! Join today and follow his tweets at [twitter.com/adamledlow](http://twitter.com/adamledlow).

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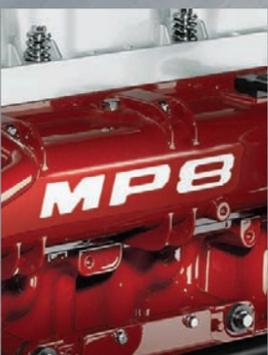
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