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Reach us at our Western
Canada news bureau
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TRUCK WEST

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Increased duties on softwood lumber exports entering the US will impact Canadian forestry companies and carriers that haul their product.

Softwood skirmish

Canada cries foul over increase in US-imposed duties on Canadian softwood lumber exports

By **Derek Clouthier**

VANCOUVER, B.C.

There's no question the Trump administration made some waves during its first 100 days in office, and imposing up to 24% duties on subsidized Canadian softwood lumber was one ripple that hit Canada's shores, making some in the industry uneasy.

"We are very concerned about the potential for the effects of these duties flowing down the supply chain to the logging contractors in British Columbia," said David Elstone, executive director of B.C.'s Truck Loggers Association. "Over 90% of the timber harvested in this province is done by independent timber harvesting contractors. The duties are unjust and we expect our industry will vigorously defend against them."

Elstone said he was waiting for the next shoe to drop on the softwood lumber dispute, with a preliminary

determination on anti-dumping duties expected to be announced June 23.

"The combined duties could potentially have a severe impact on our industry," he said.

This is certainly not the first time Canada and the US have had disputes over softwood lumber exports heading south of the border. The US has claimed for several years that Canada unfairly subsidizes lumber that is harvested on Crown lands, which in turn results in cheaper timber that US companies cannot compete with, as the majority of American lumber is garnered from private lands and is therefore not subsidized by the government.

In 2006, Canada and the US established the Softwood Lumber Agreement, which expired in October 2015.

"We appreciate today's actions by the Department of Commerce, which has examined massive amounts of evidence presented by the coalition, the Canadian industry and the Canadian federal and provincial gov-

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More can be done

More women are entering the trucking industry, but stereotypes remain

By **Derek Clouthier**

CALGARY, ALBERTA

The numbers are getting better, but Trucking HR Canada CEO Angela Splinter would like to see more women choosing the trucking industry as a career.

During the inaugural Western Women With Drive event May 10 in Calgary – a collaboration between the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) and Trucking HR Canada – 115 attendees became privy to the myriad of ways trucking companies could entice more women to come on board, and how a lack of knowledge could be playing a role in why the industry remains dominated by men.

As it currently stands, 27% of those working in the industry are women – 48% of Canada's workforce is female. Of those 27%, 18% are senior managers, 15% supervisors and only 3% are engineers or technicians.

"To me, these numbers mean more can be done," Splinter said. "We need to make sure we are reaching out to all talent pools. It's not about affirmative action, it's about not overlooking 50% of our labor pool."

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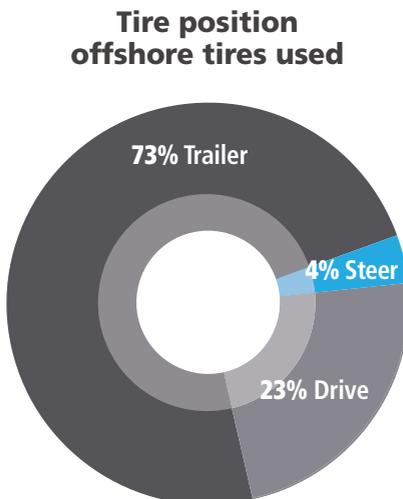
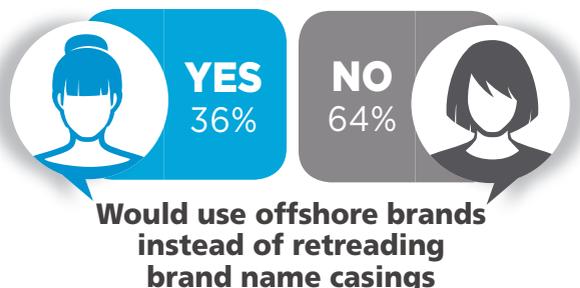
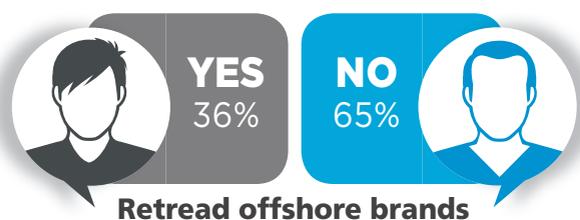
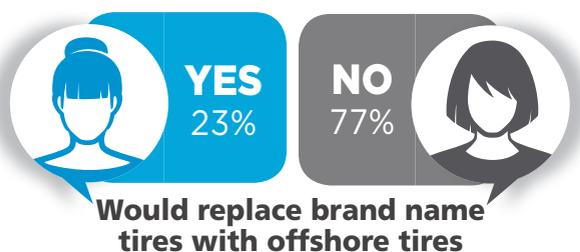
Tread carefully

Choosing tires by price is a dangerous proposition

Offshore tires from places such as China and India have made considerable inroads among Western Canada's motor carriers over the past decade. Our latest Tire Buying Trends Survey shows that more than half of the carriers surveyed have used such offshore tires in the past 12-month period, primarily at the trailer position with price being the primary reason for their use. However, 40% of carriers who have tried them do not plan on continuing to use them.



Follow Lou on Twitter @LouSmyrlis.



Plan on continuing to use offshore tires

Yes, to a greater extent	27%
Yes, to a more limited extent	13%
Yes, to the same extent	20%
No, will not continue to use	40%

Main reason would switch to offshores (scale of 1 to 5)



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Great Dane

Derek's deliberation

If family-first is acceptable, why not country-first?

I wonder how many people are going to get upset by what they're about to read. Keep in mind that editors write editorials and columns to stir people's emotions and get them to e-mail either a supportive letter to the editor, or preferably, at least in my case (which I know sounds strange, but I get an odd satisfaction from it), an angry letter telling me how off base I am.

Back to my controversial point: Is it just me, or is Donald Trump doing exactly what he said he would do during his campaign for president? And if you agree that he is, isn't it the weirdest thing to see an elected official do what they said they were going to do?

Take the softwood lumber issue. It certainly isn't a good deal for Canada to have up to 24% duties put on lumber exports to the US. It hurts Canada's lumber industry, and in turn, I can't see it not having some kind of adverse effect on the trucking companies that haul timber, particularly in B.C. They may not be hit with the tariff directly, but if the companies they haul for have to slow production in any way because of the extra duties, then it goes without saying they will be indirectly affected by the duty.



During the campaign, Trump said he would do everything he could to bring American jobs back to the US and stop them from going overseas, to Mexico, or elsewhere – and it appears now Canada has become part of that offensive.

You can of course argue about the side-effects of Trump's softwood lumber mandate – such as higher prices for lumber in the US resulting in increased housing costs – but there are many forestry and trucking companies down south applauding the new tariffs, saying the move

will help their businesses.

US dairy farmers said the same when Trump cried foul over the rules surrounding Canada's dairy system.

Say what you will about the manner in which Trump goes about getting things done, and some of the things he has said, but the US and Canada have had disagreements over lumber and dairy for many years. Former president Obama (and many before him) voiced those concerns on more than one occasion. But the fact remains, Trump is the only president who has actually followed through with those concerns.

People frequently complain that politicians make these threats but never follow through on them, or they say they will do something during a campaign just to get elected then renege on their promises. Trump, at least on the jobs front, does not seem to be that president.

In Canada (and half of the US), most of us will continue to criticize Trump and his administration, and will do so for many reasons, some personal, moral, political, and others simply because his policies are not good for Canada.

But how many people in Canada would just like to have their political leaders fight as hard for them as many in the US believe Trump is fighting for them?

Some of the largest US exports to Canada include automotive parts and accessories, computers, and agricultural products. I'm no trade expert, and I know it's juvenile to slap tariffs on the US just because they did it to us, but I wonder if those who work in the vehicle, technical, or agriculture industries would benefit from a Canada-first attitude. We live our lives with a family-first approach, why not country-first?

Or, maybe history will prove Trump's tactics will only alienate our neighbors to the south. **TW**



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Bigger and better

Canadian Tire and CP unveil 60-ft. container in Calgary

By Derek Clouthier

CALGARY, ALBERTA

Canadian Tire and Canadian Pacific (CP) unloaded the first 60-ft. container in Calgary April 26, marking the maiden voyage for the intermodal trailer in Alberta.

Canadian Tire said the container – seven feet longer than the standard 53-ft. trailer – is the first to be used in North America, and will serve as an intermodal solution to increase productivity and efficiency, as it allows the retailer and CP to transport more products – 13% additional freight – as well as reduce transportation costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

The larger containers are currently only regulated for use in Alberta and Ontario, and the demonstration of the 60-ft. container in Calgary was the kickoff for its first venture onto Alberta roads.

“Things like LCVs (long combination vehicles), the acceptance of those grows over time and I think this will be no different,” Jonathan Wahba, vice-president of sales and marketing for CP, told *Truck West*. “This is the next evolution of 53-ft. containers to 60s, and over time it will evolve.”

Wahba said when LCVs were rolled out in Ontario, there was engineering that was required for on- and off-ramps, but that will not be the case with 60-ft. containers.

“With LCVs there were certain routes that you could travel and only certain interchanges that were approved by the government where you could make the turn,” said Wahba. “With (60-ft. containers) that engineering is not going to be required.”

Neil McKenna, vice-president of transportation for Canadian Tire, said his company has one of the largest transportation networks in the country, moving more than 100,000 different types of products to 500 stores in Canada.

“Our supply chain infrastructure is one the most modern in Canada, capable of supporting growth and efficiently managing the increasing number of products we transport,” McKenna said. “This new configuration will enable us to increase the volume shipped in each container by 13%, which ultimately allows us to carry more goods per trip, resulting in an improvement in service to our stores and our customers.”

McKenna highlighted the non-extendable 60-ft. chassis that was on display at CP’s intermodal terminal in Calgary – six of which are currently on the road – as well as the expandable chassis, which goes from the standard 53-ft. length to 60-ft., takes seconds to expand and was revealed to *Truck News* late last year in Quebec.



CP had been testing the 60-ft. container for several months prior to its release, including using a prototype on existing 53-ft. containers in an effort to mimic the 60-ft. configuration in transit.

CP and Canadian Tire also collaborated to offer the first 53-ft. intermodal container in 1994.

“At CP, we are constantly looking for ways to do our business better, safer and more efficiently in order to serve our customers and the nation’s economy,” said Wahba. “In Canadian Tire, we have found an innovative partner that shares our passion for customer service, sustainability and safety.” **TW**



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ALBERTA

Smoother sailing

Alberta receives sizable investment into highways and road infrastructure

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

The governments of Alberta and Canada have announced funding for 10 bundled highway rehabilitation and improvement projects in Alberta to help improve the movement of people and goods across the province.

The federal government is providing nearly \$255 million toward the projects, while the Alberta government is allocating more than \$279 million, for a combined total investment of \$535 million.

“By working with our federal counterparts we are able to do even more to improve highways, connect communities, and enhance the movement of goods and services across Alberta,” said Brian Mason, Alberta’s Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, who made the announcement April 20. “This joint investment supports nearly 100 road and bridge projects from Taber to Peace River and dozens of communities in between as we work to make lives better right across the province.”

Lorraine Card, president of

“Rehabilitation and improvement... means increased safety for both our members and the public.”

Lorraine Card, AMTA

the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA), said she was pleased to hear about the governments funding announcement.

“Rehabilitation and improvement – particularly improving flow of traffic congestion on certain highways – means increased safety for both our members and the public,” said Card. “The AMTA and Alberta Transportation meet regularly to discuss member concerns regarding infrastructure improvements. The commitment by Alberta Transportation to address funding for highway rehabilitation and improvement in the province is commendable.”

Some of the project bundles that are part of the joint venture include improvements to Highways 2, 43, and 63, as well as various Southern, Northern and Central Alberta highway rehabilitation and a bridge renewal project.

“These infrastructure projects will help keep Albertans working at a time when the heavy construction industry is struggling with spending cuts in the energy and residential sectors,” said Jim Rivait, CEO of the Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association. “The proj-

ects will also pay long-term dividends by supporting new economic growth while reducing congestion and increasing safety for Albertans.”

Canada’s Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Amarjeet Sohi, said the country’s investment into trade and transportation will result in more efficient transportation corridors to regional and international markets.

“These investments in highway infrastructure across Alberta will support economic growth and provide safer and more efficient transportation routes for Canadians,” said Sohi. **TW**

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IN-BRIEF

Trucking HR Canada recognizes top employers

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Trucking HR Canada has recognized 48 trucking companies through its Top Fleet Employers program.

Fleets were rated on categories including: recruitment and retention strategies; workplace culture; compensation; training and skills development; and innovative human resources practices.

"We received a record number of applications this year, with a small increase in the number being recognized," said Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada. "These 48 fleets demonstrate a commitment to good people management and effective human resources approaches. We commend them for their leadership in showcasing the trucking industry as a great place to work."

Trucking HR Canada will recognize the 2017 Top Fleet Employers at its annual Gala Awards Dinner on Oct. 12 in Toronto.

For a full list of winners and details about the gala dinner, visit www.TruckingHR.com. **TW**

Over \$184 million sold at Ritchie Bros. Edmonton auction

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Ritchie Bros.' recent auction in Edmonton, Alta. saw close to 14,000 people bid on more than 8,650 items and spend \$184 million over the course of the four-day event.

"As activity levels are picking up in the Alberta market, and spring work projects get underway, we witnessed huge crowds and positive pricing across all equipment categories this week at our four-day Edmonton auction," said Brian Glenn, senior vice-president of Ritchie Bros. "Western Canadian buyers out-paced all others, demonstrating brewing confidence in the oil and gas sector. Last week's auction was a display of best-in-class customer service, as the team in Edmonton delivered solid returns for the hundreds of consignors who put their trust in Ritchie Bros."

Approximately 66% of bidders registered to participate online, purchasing \$105 million of equipment, with Canadian buyers accounting for 86%, including 50% from Alberta.

Equipment sold included more than 250 truck tractors, 135 flatbed trucks, 935 trailers, and 140 dump trucks.

Ritchie Bros. next Edmonton auction is scheduled for June 13-15. Contact 780-955-2486 for more information. **TW**



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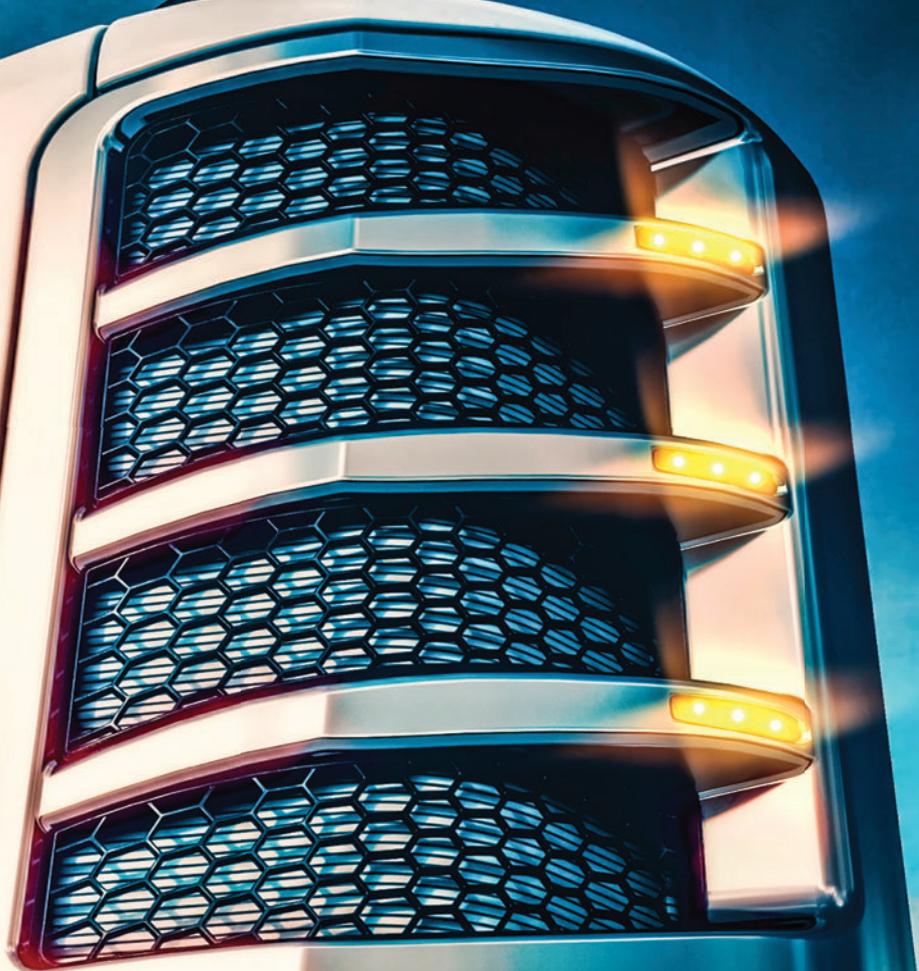
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Continued from page 1

High US demand

ernments,” said Cameron Krauss, legal chairman of the US Lumber Coalition, when the announcement was made April 24. “The coalition is hopeful that the duties imposed by today’s decision will begin the process of creating a level playing field for the future and allow for US manufacturers to make essential investments and expand the domestic lumber industry to its natural market and protect and grow the jobs that are so essential to our workers and our communities.”

But Canada has tried to address these concerns by holding auctions to better reflect the price of timber, and claims the US’s increased duties will only raise the cost of real estate in the US, as companies south of the border do not have enough softwood lumber to meet demand.

“American demand for lumber exceeds what the US lumber industry currently produces,” said Susan Yurkovich, president of the B.C. Lumber Trade Council. “And, with housing and construction starts on the rise, demand for lumber is expected to continue to grow in the years ahead. The fact is, Canadian lumber imports don’t pose a threat to the US lumber industry. There is enough North American demand to grow the US industry while also allowing Canada to supply its US customers as we have been doing for decades.”

B.C. is Canada’s largest exporter of softwood lumber to the US, and the B.C. Lumber Trade Council says it supports approximately 145,000 direct and indirect jobs in the province.

Jim Carr, Minister of Natural Resources, and Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, concurred, and in a joint statement said, “This decision will negatively affect workers on both sides of the border, and will ultimately increase costs for American families who want to build or renovate homes. The US National Association of Home Builders has calculated that a \$1,000 increase in the cost of a new house would put home ownership beyond the reach of more than 150,000 American families and jeopardize thousands of jobs in the American home construction industry.”

The four hardest hit lumber importers include West Fraser, which will pay duties of 22.12%, Canfor at 20.26%, Tolko, 19.5% and Resolute paying 12.82%. By comparison, J.D. Irving, which harvests its softwood from private lands, will be subject to much lower 3.02% duties.

The US is also imposing retroactive duties on some companies dating back 90 days, which will be a substantial cost. The US

Department of Commerce indicates that imports of softwood lumber from Canada were valued at an estimated US\$5.66 billion in 2016.

B.C.-based freight and distribution services company A & A indicates that around 80% of Canada’s timber production is intended for export, and much of that is on a truck.

Louise Yako, president and CEO of the British Columbia Trucking Association, said the association would likely not take an official position on the softwood lumber issue because, while the health of the forestry sector is important to the province’s economy, trucking companies in B.C. are not directly subject to the softwood lumber tariff.

“When the price of commodities increases to the point where demand for those commodities drops, it can have a cascading negative impact on demand for transportation,” Yako said. “Transportation providers voicing concerns about commodity price increases can’t undo the effect of the increases.”

Yako said the trucking industry in B.C. is already competitive, and the cost of transportation is a small component of the overall price of lumber, and any decrease in trans-

portation fees would have a minimal impact on the cost of lumber.

“In essence,” Yako said of the BCTA’s mandate, “we fight the battles that most directly affect our members and that we’re most likely to be able to influence and win.”

Canada’s federal government is in a position to influence the US’s decision and said it would reconvene the Federal-Provincial Task Force on Softwood Lumber to examine how it could help companies affected by the increased duties.

“The combined duties could potentially have a severe impact on our industry.”

– David Elstone, B.C. Truck Loggers Association

“The task force was formed to share information and analyze and assess the needs of forest workers and communities,” a government release stated. “The upcoming meeting will build on the progress we have made through this federal-provincial collaboration on the softwood lumber file.”

Elstone said it is too early to start making assumptions on what exact impact these new duties would have on the Canadian softwood lumber industry, but that they would be particularly painful on smaller, independent sawmills that export to the US.

In a perfect world, Elstone would like to see the free trade of lumber across the Canada-US border, but admitted that was an idealistic view.

“Realistically, we are likely going to have to settle for some form of managed trade,” Elstone said, “either within NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), given there are discussions on opening up that file, or within some form of a separate deal, which is how we have traditionally arrived at trade peace in our lumber war.”

At the federal level, the government says it will continue to fight for the Canadian softwood lumber industry.

“The Government of Canada will vigorously defend the interests of the Canadian softwood lumber industry, including through litigation,” a statement said. “In ruling after ruling since 1983, international tribunals have disproved the unfounded subsidy and injury allegations from the US industry. We have prevailed in the past and we will do so again.” TW

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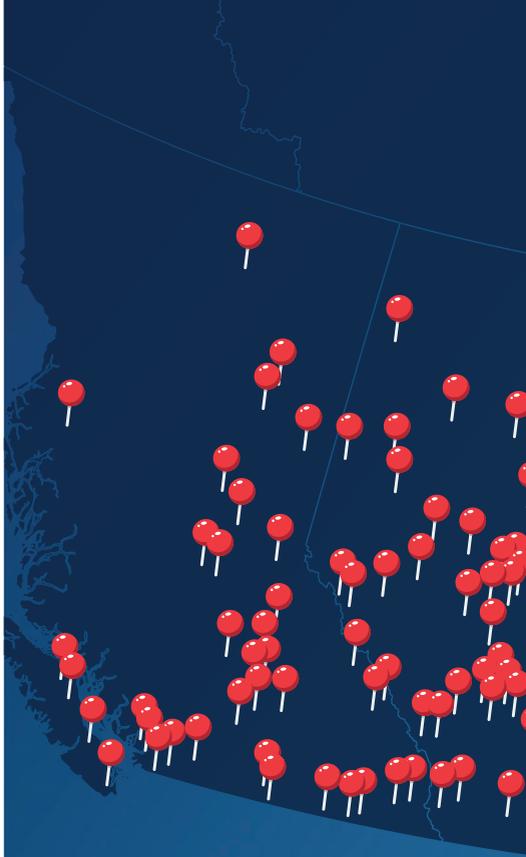
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ALBERTA



Don't hold your breath

Panel agrees that autonomous trucks a decade or more down the road

By Derek Clouthier

BANFF, ALBERTA

It's been settled – autonomous trucks will not be on our roadways anytime in the next decade.

That, at least, was the general consensus of a group of panelists examining the future of autonomous and platooning in the industry during the Alberta Motor Transport Association's (AMTA) Leadership Conference April 29 in Banff, Alta.

"We're all involved in this, and the question remains, 'What are we trying to achieve?' and 'What are we talking about?'" Stephen Laskowski, president of the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA), asked during the discussion. "We're at such an early stage of this technology that talking about autonomous vehicles really isn't even on the radar yet because it's not there."

Laskowski said OEMs and governments are instead concentrating on the types of technologies being created in an effort to achieve a truly autonomous vehicle, and those advancements are being used today to make drivers' jobs safer and easier.

"When you look at heavy truck crashes, it's typically driver-related," he said. "So what technologies can we put in our trucks that make our drivers better? That is what carriers are working with today."

But as for seeing autonomous trucks on North American roads, other than in Alberta's oilfields or a yard somewhere, Laskowski says not to hold your breath.

"Nobody in the public or a politician is going to let an 80,000-lb vehicle down that road with nobody in it right now or for the foreseeable future," he said.

Cindy Clark, dealer principal for Sterling Western Star Trucks Alberta, agreed, and said the current push for autonomous technology comes from a desire by each OEM to be first across the finish line.

"When you have five players with more money and they have investors, you're going to try and be the first guy in," Clark said, adding that the onslaught of new technologies is not because they are being pushed, but rather more readily available to the public, particularly when it comes to cost.

But cost is not on the side of autonomous trucks, Clark said, despite the fact that the technology is there. Clark said Daimler, one of the trucking industry's biggest players, has relayed that it would not be rolling autonomous vehicles out of its factories in the next 10 years because of the costs associated with such an effort.

"The technology is there, people want to try it, but until we have the structure in place – the

policies and the people's confidence – it might be starting in 10 years," Clark said. "And once it rolls, it will roll fast."

Clark believes in order to gain society's confidence in autonomous technology, there is a need for additional small test tracks, like the one located at the University of Alberta, where trials could take place.

Laury Schmidt, district sales manager for Volvo Trucks of Canada, said customers are driving the push toward autonomous because of one "killer" word – downtime.

"Everybody in this room is haunted by downtime," Schmidt said. "Information is power. Timely and accurate information is a winner."

Schmidt questioned the social acceptance of driverless vehicles, particularly trucks, comparing the idea to a commercial airplane with no pilot. He said there are multiple ways the industry could reach the point of an autonomous truck reality, such as economic demands, driver shortages, technology advancements, and customer demands.

Wendy Doyle, executive director for Alberta Transportation's office of traffic safety, said government must play a balancing act when it comes to not stifling autonomous technology innovation, and admitted that government doesn't really know what to prepare for.

She said autonomous vehicles will have a huge impact on several government policies, such as driver training, where rules must be in place to continue testing drivers for the necessary skills needed to operate a vehicle on the road.

"Things like distracted driving legislation, impairment, and what type of licence they should have for what type of vehicle," Doyle said. "When you start examining it, there are obvious implications, such as having a vehicle without a driver in it, and does our legislation allow for that, and then the snowball effect of everything that happens as a result."

Doyle said in any given year, collisions in Alberta cost between \$5-\$11 billion, and technology can help minimize that.

"Looking at this technology and how it can reduce social costs of collisions and reduce fatalities and serious injuries, really that's what our incentives are," she said, "is to allow for this type of innovation and draw down those serious injuries and fatalities."

Despite tentativeness when it comes to autonomous vehicles, Schmidt believes platooning technology is strong and right around the corner.

Dan Duckering, president of Duckering's Transport, agreed, but said it wouldn't be an easy process.

"That's going to impact our industry, and for regulators, it's a huge deal," Duckering said.

◀ From left: Wendy Doyle, Cindy Clark, Laury Schmidt, Derek Clouthier, Lou Smyrlis, Dan Duckering, and Stephen Laskowski.

“There are a lot of factors at play there.”

In order to invest in platooning or autonomous truck technology, Duckering would need to see the return on investment, and where costs would be saved, such as fuel economy and no need for a driver, because the investment would come with a hefty initial price tag.

This is, however, the age of ever-changing technology, Duckering said, and carriers of the future will be the ones that embrace these new technologies.

Another challenge Laskowski pointed out on the drive toward autonomous is the fact that Canadian companies purchase their trucks from US OEMs, and there is potential for the Canadian government to impose different regulations than are in place south of the border.

But Laskowski emphasized that what the autonomous craze is trying to accomplish in 2017 was not a driverless truck.

“Right now, I would say that what we are trying to achieve is safer piece of equipment,” he said. “A better driver.”

Laskowski feels this effort is vital since a new crop of young, inexperienced drivers will soon

have to replace experienced drivers who are looking to retire.

“How can we make our trucks safer knowing that we are going to have to put less experienced people inside the cabs?” he questioned.

Doyle said government legislation of autonomous and platooning vehicles would be a mixture of revamping what is currently in the books and creating new rules of the road, as right now in Alberta, a vehicle cannot travel on a roadway without a human inside.

“It’s going to be a long process in trying to figure out where this technology is going to go with vehicles, how legislation is going to react and probably a lot of permits, exemptions and piloting in the meantime trying to figure out how that is going to look,” Doyle said, “so it won’t be a short policy process, that’s for sure.”

But before that point arrives, innovation must continue and society must be shown it works.

“Create the framework to allow the OEMs to thrive and the carriers to be creative by their own accord,” said Laskowski.

“Even the smallest pieces of technology needs to be accepted before the larger pieces can...they are integrated,” added Clark. “And if you don’t have people who want to take the small pieces to make the big pieces work, then that’s going to be a problem.” **TW**

Plate is full

Incoming CTA president, Stephen Laskowski, says industry must be able to adapt

BANFF, ALBERTA

Stephen Laskowski says the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) can only be as successful as its members will allow it to be.

“CTA will only be able to look as far as you’ll be able to let us,” Laskowski, incoming CTA president, told attendees at the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) Leadership Conference April 28. “We’re as good as the knowledge you give us and the direction you give us.”

Laskowski provided some insight into the state of the industry, highlighting how he intends to continue the work of outgoing CTA president David Bradley, including what he feels should be the top priority for the association and trucking companies moving forward into the future – adaptability.

Laskowski said despite the arrival of new product delivery modes, such as drones, freight will always get to its destination by truck, but new technology is certainly a wake-up call to the industry on how products can get delivered in the future.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is another area Laskowski will focus on as CTA president.

“We need to be in the middle of this,” he said. “Without our customers’ success, we have no success.”



CTA president
Stephen Laskowski.

Laskowski said carbon pricing, which the province of Alberta introduced Jan. 1, should be implemented in as simple a way as possible if provinces choose to explore the tax, pointing to the fuel surcharge system as a possible tool to be used.

As for government regulations in general, Laskowski said it’s not about the need for another rule, but rather what opportunity the rule could present to the industry, underscoring the upcoming electronic logging device (ELD) mandate as an example.

“ELDs will clean up this industry,” he said. “We need to look at the regulatory process moving forward to our advantage, because (regulations) are going to keep coming.”

Laskowski said Bradley has been relaying the importance of a Canadian ELD mandate to government for some time, and now with the US taking the plunge, Canada has fallen behind, with full enforcement of a Canadian law in his opinion not coming until late 2019 to 2020.

Bradley said the Canadian trucking industry is doing well compared to its southern neighbors, pointing to the plethora of safety awards bestowed on Canadian carriers each and every year, and that with the time it takes to get mandates approved and become law, the government is often playing catch-up with the industry.

Laskowski feels in order to overcome the driver shortage, the industry must shoulder the issue itself and try to attract professional drivers, not seat holders. This effort begins with changing the government’s National Occupation Classification to include driving, Laskowski said, and the implementation of the mandatory entry-level training (MELT) program is a step in the right direction.

Laskowski also said that today’s young people “like cool things” and the industry’s ongoing technology advancements can help “make trucking cool again to young people.”

The possible legalization of marijuana in Canada is another issue the CTA will be forced to deal with in the coming years.

Laskowski said the CTA is against legalizing marijuana until reliable testing is available to identify those who are impaired, and until that time, carriers should take a zero-tolerance approach. **TW**



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At 50, Western Star just getting rolling

By James Menzies

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

The Western Star truck brand turns 50 this year, which seems improbable, given the truck maker's humble Canadian roots and tumultuous past.

The company was launched by White Motor Company in Kelowna, B.C. in 1967 to serve the needs of the logging industry. White Western Stars soon found a home in the oilpatch, the construction and mining industries, and in other off-road sectors. Its claim to fame was that it was a custom-built truck, made to order.

"If you had something specific you wanted on that truck, you could walk out to the assembly line and tell the guys you wanted the bracket a different shape, or the air tanks mounted here, and they would do it on the line," said Kelley Platt, president of Western Star, when celebrating the milestone at a press event here April 27. "They could never repeat it twice in a row because nothing was documented, but you got exactly the truck you wanted."

After several changes in ownership – and some years in which the very survival of the brand was in question – Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) purchased Western Star in 2000 and moved production to Portland, Ore., but still maintained the custom-design philosophy.

"We took the same concept and made it more formal, so that it's repeatable these days," Platt explained.

After 16 years as part of the Daimler family, the Western Star brand is beginning to see some steady growth, thanks largely to the expansion of the product line. The 'Baby 8' 4700 was introduced in 2011, giving Western Star an ideal product to pitch to municipalities needing a lighter-duty vocational truck for plow, light dump, and other applications. And in 2014, Western Star brought to market an edgy, aerodynamic highway tractor in the form of the 5700XE. For the first time, the brand had a highway tractor that could compete with the Freightliner Cascadia on fuel economy while also appealing to those buyers who prefer the traditional styling of classic iron.

Peter Arrigoni, vice-president of Western Star sales, said the brand grew its market share to 3.4% in 2016, selling 7,323 units in the US and Canada.

continued on page 51

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When the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) was introduced more than 30 years ago, it provided an opportunity for fleets to change the way they manage fuel purchases. Potentially, IFTA can minimize taxes, decrease the risk of an audit, and help you make better decisions about your fleet and routes of travel.

I still run into fleet managers

who, even though they’re required to have an IFTA license, continue to think about fuel the same way they did before IFTA. They tank up at the same places or go out of their way for the lowest price because that’s how they’ve always done it.

This tells me two things. First, a lot of fleets are missing out on the benefits of IFTA, and second, people like me can do a better job explaining how IFTA really is a change for the better.

Burn, baby

Fuel tax distribution is based on how much fuel you consume in a jurisdiction less what you purchase there.

For example, let’s say you have a one-way trip from Calgary to Vancouver. It’s about 200 km from Calgary to the Alberta-B.C. border and another 800 km from the border to Vancouver.

If your truck averages 2.5 km/liter, you’ll consume 80 liters of fuel in Alberta and 320 in B.C. You can calculate the taxes like this:

- Alberta: 80 liters x 0.1835 = \$14.68
- B.C.: 320 liters x 0.2267 = \$72.54

You paid \$73.40 in fuel taxes at the pump in Alberta, but based on where you used the fuel during the entirety of your trip the total tax owing is \$87.22. So you still owe \$13.82 when you file your IFTA return.

Now let’s say you start your trip in Vancouver. You buy 400 liters and pay \$90.68 in fuel tax at the point of purchase.



Sandy Johnson has been managing IFTA, IRP, and other fleet taxes for more than 25 years. She is the author of the free book *7 Things You Need to Know About Fleet Taxes* and operates North Star Fleet Solutions, which provides vehicle tax and license compliance services for trucking operations. She can be reached at 1-877-860-8025 or www.northstarfleet.com.

Same distance, same amount of fuel, but you paid \$3.46 more in tax than you owe based on where you used the fuel. So you get that back when you file your IFTA return.

Before IFTA, it made sense to buy as much fuel in a state or province to just get you through it. That’s because when you filed returns, you paid in states and provinces where you didn’t buy enough to cover the tax. If you over-purchased, they had your money and most jurisdictions made it really tough to get it back.

“A good way to know what you’re actually paying for fuel is to take fuel tax out of the equation.”

IFTA did away with all of that. Now if you buy more fuel (and pay more tax) than you consume in a jurisdiction, that amount is credited to jurisdictions where you consumed more fuel than you purchased. And the jurisdictions do the heavy lifting when it comes to distributing the tax.

Fuel price, less tax

A good way to know what you’re actually paying for fuel is to take fuel tax out of the equation. If the tax rate in Alberta is 0.1835 cents per liter and it’s 0.2267 cents per liter in B.C., and the pump price in both provinces is the same, then fuel is cheaper in B.C. by about 4 cents per liter.

Just like that new route to work, IFTA can help change the way you manage fuel. When you look at the price, calculate how much the tax is in that jurisdiction and subtract it. Then you’ll know whether it really is cheaper to keep doing things the same old way.

You can download the tax rates from the IFTA website at www.iftach.org. **TW**



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Wading through the speculation

One of the many good things about spring is the dramatic falloff in those calls from Karachi-based call centers offering professional duct cleaning services by a crew that happens to be in your neighborhood next week. This is almost as annoying as the robocalls from Gladys (or whomever it is) informing you that you are the lucky winner of a free cruise, so come on down to our showroom and pick up your tickets!

This week we have had to bear the robo-rants of a US president who just doesn't take listening for granted, especially as he insists on talking. Seems to me, he takes policy advice from the first person to show up at his door each day – be it the milkman from Wisconsin, an American lumberjack, or the cable repair guy.

But he is not alone.

There are robo-speculators as well, especially those who house themselves in the energy commodity watchtowers of the business world.

The winners or losers in the, "OPEC versus shale oil, crude oil production" game, is determined by the weekly inventory and related data, as released by the industry-sponsored American Petroleum Institute (API) on Tuesdays and the Energy Information Administration (EIA) on Wednesdays. The former is voluntary as provided by the oil industry, and the latter is government directed and mandatory. Speculators take the more sensational of the two reports and tweak the futures prices, which then filter down to the racks and consumer pump prices. The divergence of inventory data can cause radical price movements over a 24-hour period.

Recently, the API told us that crude oil inventories increased by 897,000 bbls, so the end prices decreased. The next day the EIA said, "No, no silly, the crude levels dropped by 3.6 million bbls," so prices increased.

Personally, I don't regard the API data as anything but a self-fulfilling industry manipulation, so I rely on the non-biased EIA as a reliable tourist guide through the jungle of energy related data.

I'll go a step further. I don't really care about crude oil inventories – whether they go up, down, or sideways – because the world is awash in the stuff.

OPEC can announce all the cuts they want, they are becoming an afterthought as shale oil, or tight oil, is not merely a US curio

and annoyance, but now a global matter of fact, and a threat to the cartel's existence, and they know it.

What I look at is the refined product demand side of the EIA data and the refinery runs. How much is needed and how much is being made.

Refineries are running at 94% of capacity, which is the highest on record for this time of year and unusual with a month to go before the driving season. Inventories grew by 3.4 million bbls last week. So, all of that is good for the consumer as far as summer pump prices go.

"I don't regard the API data as anything but a self-fulfilling industry manipulation, so I rely on the non-biased EIA as a reliable tourist guide through the jungle of energy related data."

But then it gets better, as demand for gasoline has not reached positive territory all year despite strong employment numbers in the US, and high consumer confidence levels in the new Trump administration, like him or not.

In the spring, the pump-price-panic-prediction calls by the speculators can be counted on, as can the calls from the duct cleaners in the winter.

No need for the consumer to listen to what either has to say right now, or for the rest of the summer. You'll have to listen to President Trump though; after all, he said so, didn't he? I don't know, I wasn't listening. **TW**



Roger McKnight is the chief petroleum analyst with En-Pro International Inc. Roger has more than 25 years of experience in the oil industry. He is a regular guest on radio and television programs, and is quoted regularly in newspapers and magazines across Canada.



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Baby steps

New CFTA hailed as better than previous agreement, but could be improved

By **Derek Clouthier**

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Many in the trucking industry are hopeful Manitoba minister of growth, enterprise and trade is correct when he said the new Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), along with the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA), will help bring regulatory harmonization to all provinces.

Minister Cliff Cullen announced the approval of the new CFTA April 7 during the Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) AGM in Winnipeg, and said it was an exciting day for both Manitobans and

Canadians, as well as those in the trucking industry.

“I think you will recognize that Manitoba is a trading province and we rely on trade for economic development,” Cullen said. “We think this new Canadian free trade agreement is another important tool in the toolbox to allow goods and services to be transported across Canada.”

Alberta Transport and Alberta Economic Development and Trade also relayed to *Truck West* how the CFTA will provide Alberta businesses, investors and workers with an assured level of fair treatment regardless of where in Canada they were working.



Minister Cliff Cullen speaks during the MTA AGM April 7 in Winnipeg, Man.

“The CFTA is comprehensive and applies to all trade in goods and services, investment and labor mobility,” the Alberta government said, adding that although there were no rules specific to transportation, it did apply to all economic sectors,

including the trucking industry. “The CFTA does not alter the Agreement on Internal Trade’s (AIT) basic commitments to the transportation sector but expresses them differently and in greater detail.”

Cullen elaborated on this, saying both the NWPTA and CFTA will help get the ball rolling on better harmonization, and that the new federal trade agreement does so by expanding on the 11 sectors under the previous agreement to nearly every sector across the economy, including new and emerging sectors.

“This is a negative list approach,” Cullen said, “which basically means that the agreement covers all economic activities unless specifically excluded, so it’s a complete reversal of what was in the previous agreement.”

The Alberta government said despite the fact that the new agreement provides a reconciliation process at the national level to address regulations that are seen to create barriers to trade, which could prove helpful over time in removing jurisdictional differences when it comes to transportation standards, trucking fleets in the west have been operating in a more seamless manner thanks to the NWPTA.

But the need to overcome the differences between the provinces will persist.

“In many respects, there is limited ability or even need to remove barriers in the trucking industry because mandatory federal regulations provide a consistent set of rules governing trucking across provincial boundaries,” the Alberta government said. “Also, jurisdictional differences are often based on differences in infrastructure and topography between jurisdictions, factors that further limit the scope of potential reconciliation on a broad scale.”

At the federal level, Sabrina Foran, media relations and parliamentary affairs officer for the department of innovation, science and economic development, said all levels of government will launch a new regulatory reconciliation and cooperation table to address regulatory barriers that impact trade within Canada.

“These barriers may include trucking regulations that are not already under the purview of existing federal-provincial-territorial mechanisms,” Foran said. “The CFTA reconciliation process will complement the work of existing federal-provincial-territorial initiatives that are focused on harmonizing differences in trucking regulations.”

Cullen said the trucking industry in Manitoba has voiced its concerns over the differing regulations that exit province-to-province, but those variances cannot be harmonized overnight.

“This isn’t the end all and be all,” he said, “but it’s certainly better than what we had.” **TW**



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Modern digs

MTA's newly-refurbished facility twice the size, much more functional

By Derek Clouthier

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Just as a family needs space to grow, so does an association striving to offer its members the tools they need to get the job done right.

The Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) is doing just that – continuing to expand its services and grow its membership – spurring the recent move into its newly-renovated facility, which executive director Terry Shaw believes will help make those goals a reality.

Shaw said the building, in its former state, had served its purpose and members well up to a point, but space was scarce.

“Once our board agreed on the creation of our RPM Trucking Safety Program, we knew that we would need more space for staff and classes,” Shaw said. “We looked at some other facilities that might fit our need, but ultimately decided that renovating and expanding our current space made most sense.”

And renovate they did. Looking at the new facility, not only does the building exhibit a sleek, modern appearance, it also offers twice the space the old format had.

“This allowed for more staff space, which was needed, but more importantly, it allowed us to separate our meeting rooms and classrooms,” Shaw explained. “Previously, we had one room, our boardroom, which was used for training and meetings.

“We also now have a new and improved physical presence that allows for us to host senior government officials and politicians at a facility, which represents our association members much more professionally.”

Prior to the renovations, the lack of space not only limited the MTA's ability to meet with its members and committees, and restrict what it could offer in the classroom, but a boardroom configuration was also not an ideal setting for classroom instruction.

Armed with appropriate meeting and classroom space, the MTA is now able to handle multiple tasks at the same time. RPM auditors working in the meeting room and two classes all going on at the same time.

The MTA's ability to train staff in its new pair of classrooms has been enhanced significantly.

“We trained in one day more people than we used to train in a week in our old facility,” said Shaw, adding that the MTA generates revenue, often from non-members, from some of its classroom offerings, which helps the association serve its members and supplement their annual dues.

As for the RPM program – which provides workplace health and safety services to the trucking industry in Manitoba – all member services are currently pre-paid, and demand is high for courses, which can now be offered on a daily basis.

With the RPM program being a large part of the need for the expansion, the MTA has hired more staff, who all required workspaces, to facilitate the service delivery of the safety program.

In addition to providing a superior facility with space for staff, the MTA said its doors are open to its members.

“The building doesn't exist simply to house MTA staff, it belongs to



Renovations to the MTA's head office in Winnipeg are complete, and the association now has the space it needs to provide the services it wants.

our members and we encourage them to use it accordingly,” said Shaw, pointing out that multiple members have used the facility as a remote office space. “For some of

our non-Winnipeg based members who find themselves in Winnipeg needing meeting or presentation spaces, they are welcome to use the facility.” **TW**

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Several industry issues on Alberta government's radar

By Derek Clouthier

BANFF, ALBERTA

The Government of Alberta has a full plate when it comes to how to best move forward with several issues facing the province's trucking industry.

Shaun Hammond, Assistant Deputy Minister of Safety Policy and Engineering for Alberta Transportation, addressed several questions during the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) Leadership Conference, including the contentious matter surrounding wide-base single tires.

The province of Alberta is currently looking at data it received from the AMTA from a wide-base single tire pilot project conducted during the last year with Rosenau Transport and Westcan Bulk Transport.

Hammond said results of the pilot project revealed fuel savings with the use of single tires compared to duals, but there were a couple thorns in the side of possible government acceptance of the single tire under full weights, one being the fact that the City of

Calgary has voiced its opposition to the tires being used on its roads.

Hammond said the government will continue to work with municipalities on the examination of possible pavement deterioration using wide-base single tires with full weights, something he said is a major concern for pavement engineers, who say paved surfaces are designed to have a 20-year lifecycle, but contend that the number would drop to 19.1 years if single tires with full weights were permitted on Alberta roads.

Alberta Transportation will also begin a dialogue with stakeholders about the implementation of the mandatory entry-level training (MELT) program in the province.

The training program is closely tied to the industry's efforts to have the government recognize truck driving as a skilled profession under the National Occupational Classification (NOC).

Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) president David Bradley said the MELT program would be the first step in that process and bring the occupation of driving to a more professional level.

Hammond said government must speak with the industry to see what makes sense with regards to MELT, but that there were no roadblocks toward the adoption of a policy.

As for electronic logging devices (ELDs), Carrier Services will soon launch stakeholder consultations on possible regulation, but the province is continuing to monitor progress on the matter at the national level. Hammond said Manitoba has aligned with Alberta on the weight threshold issue, and it appears that B.C. and Saskatchewan will follow.

Tied to ELDs is Alberta's possible adoption of the federal hours-of-service (HoS), with the provincial government recommending the move to a single HoS framework at that time if it achieves the threshold for ELDs to be increased to 11,794 kgs.

Partners in Compliance (PIC) is another area the provincial government will continue to examine.

"We really need to take a look and identify what PIC will look like in 2025," said Hammond.

Hammond voiced the need to sit down and figure out what the problems with PIC currently are and perhaps refresh the program's overall model.

"What PIC allows us to do is go after the bottom 5-10% of carriers," Hammond said, admitting that the program could better address many issues around carriers that

are repeat offenders when it comes to violations.

Truckers in Alberta looking for a safe place to pull over and rest will soon have more options.

The provincial government is presently looking at potential commercial rest areas within Alberta, and part of that review is to find economically feasible locations along the provincial highway network with ample parking and amenities for food and fuel.

Other initiatives Hammond pointed out during his question and answer with AMTA conference attendees included exploring government rebate programs as part of its climate change efforts, amending the commercial vehicle dimension and weight regulation to include tri-drive trucks and tractors and the completion of the Hwy. 43X bypass in Grande Prairie by fall 2018. **TW**

Transportation industry changing fast, says MLA Westhead

BANFF, ALBERTA

Cameron Westhead, Alberta MLA for Banff-Cochrane, says the transportation industry is on the brink of some major changes.

"We are now standing on the edge of a significant shift in the transportation industry," said Westhead, who kicked off an impressive list of speakers at this year's Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) Leadership Conference April 28 in Banff, Alta.

Westhead told attendees how the movement and safe transportation of goods is the backbone of Alberta's economy, reciting the old adage, "If you got it, a truck brought it."

Westhead said demand for electric vehicle options is increasing, particularly on the passenger vehicle side, but that demand must reach out to other segments of transportation, like trucking.

The Alberta government is currently looking at truck stop electrification, where drivers are able to maintain the operation of all systems on their vehicles without having to keep the engine idling, something Westhead said would help curb greenhouse gas emissions and help companies financially by reducing fuel consumption.

Westhead also highlighted the province's wide-base single tire pilot project, which the AMTA has been spearheading along with Westcan Bulk Transport and Rosenau Transport for the past year, and the role the AMTA has played in improving the functionality of the TRAVIS system, an online transportation service.

The AMTA collected the data from the wide-base single tire pilot project and Alberta Transportation is now reviewing the findings which will direct the government on how it intends to move forward. **TW**

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Wait-and-see approach to NAFTA for Mexico's trucking association president

By Derek Clouthier

BANFF, ALBERTA

In the face of increasing trade between Canada and Mexico, Rogelio F. Montemayor-Morineau, president of Canacar, Mexico's trucking association, said he would take a wait-and-see approach to the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

"What is going to happen in the future, I really don't know," Montemayor-Morineau said of the uncertainty surrounding NAFTA with the new Trump administration reviewing the agreement. "But I hope it's good for our three countries."

Montemayor-Morineau said changes to NAFTA could make wait times at the US-Mexico border longer than they already are, and could also have an effect on the price of goods and even the amount of product that crosses the borders separating Canada, the US, and Mexico.

"We don't know what to do or what to expect, so we will wait," admitted Montemayor-Morineau, who was speaking to attendees at the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) Leadership Conference in Banff, Alta., April 29. "(NAFTA) has been good to us, and it has been good to our economy."

Montemayor-Morineau provided an overview of Mexico's trade situation with both the US and Canada, and said since NAFTA was implemented in 1994, despite his country's hesitations at first, it has been good for Mexico, with numbers to prove it.

Total commerce between Canada and Mexico has continued to rise, with \$12.5 billion in 2006 and that number jumping to more than \$20 billion in 2016, a slight drop from a high in 2012 at \$20.8 billion.

Trade between Canada and Mexico has increased an average of 11% each year, with Canada also ranking seventh in terms of foreign direct investment in Mexico.

Mexican trade with the US totaled \$482 billion in 2016, with a high of \$513.6 billion in 2014.

Mexico boasts 49 ports of entry, five of which are considered to be primary entry points with the US – Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez, Colombia, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Reynosa. Nuevo Laredo accounts for 34.25% (2.33 million) commercial vehicle crossings and Tijuana 16.2%.

There are a total of 19 ports of entry at the US-Mexico border.

But wait times at those points of entry are lengthy for truck drivers, amounting to a five to six hour process.

And once Mexican drivers enter the US, they must then drop their cargo within a 20-km distance

from the border, which is then picked up by an American carrier who completes the transport of the goods to its final destination in the US or Canada, a process Montemayor-Morineau said has created issues for many trucking companies in Mexico.

Montemayor-Morineau said approximately 80% of goods in Mexico are moved by truck, with the remaining transported by rail, and that like Canada and US, a driver shortage has impacted the industry.

Vehicle production is vital to the Mexican economy, as it is the seventh largest producer in the world and sixth largest for heavy vehicles with growth expected to continue. Freightliner, Cummins, Kenworth and Hino, among other truck and equipment manufacturers, all have factories in Mexico.

"When it comes to NAFTA and they say they are going to increase the taxes on automotive, that's one of the reasons," Montemayor-Morineau said of the number of vehicles produced and exported from the country. Over 8% of Mexico's exports are automotive, 5.7% are automotive

accessories, and 5.4% are transport trucks.

Despite the automotive industry's success in Mexico, Montemayor-Morineau said the southern region continues to struggle when it comes to industry, something the government is making efforts to change, with the vast majority of

"What is going to happen in the future, I really don't know. But I hope it's good for our three countries."

– Rogelio F. Montemayor-Morineau, Canacar President

industrial activity in the north and central regions.

Progress on making Mexican truck fleets more environmentally-friendly has also been lethar-

gic at best, with the availability of ultra-low-sulfur diesel and diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) non-existent, making compliance with recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations next to impossible; the country currently adheres to the EPA's 2004 standards.

Montemayor-Morineau said 2018 could be the year when ultra-low-sulfur diesel is readily available in Mexico.

Fleets are also aging rapidly, with the average age being 17 years, which makes greenhouse gas goals difficult to achieve, as well as new technologies like electronic logging devices, which Montemayor-Morineau said is years away in Mexico.

Rest stops for drivers are another contentious issue, with a lack of land, money and investment resulting in an absence of the much needed infrastructure. And though Montemayor-Morineau said security in Mexico is getting better, it would still be a matter that would have to be dealt with should any rest areas be developed.

Montemayor-Morineau term as president of Canacar runs from 2015-18. **TW**

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Communicating strategically

Be prepared for a social media crisis

Your company's reputation is quite literally priceless, which is why it is essential you be prepared to recover from a social media crisis.

Since the trucking industry shares its workplace with the public, taking social media seriously isn't just important, it's vital.

Be proactive and develop a plan. Here are a few things to keep in mind when developing a strategy:

Where are you vulnerable?

Begin by evaluating your brand's risk from every angle imaginable. Be methodical in brainstorming potential issues, the risks associated with each, and how long they might take to play out.

Also, map out hypothetical situations around those issues and detail how they may unfold.

Responders team

The ability to respond quickly goes a very long way to dampen negative chatter on social media. This means you must have a response team ready to step into action with virtually no prior notice.

Identify exactly who in the organization will respond. Who responds is informed by the severity of the situation and special knowledge required to tackle inquiries. It's also prudent to anticipate the point where a legal expert should be brought in.

Key messages

Once you've figured out where you are potentially vulnerable and mapped out crisis scenarios, you can begin shaping key messages. Pre-approved messages can greatly expedite how quickly you can respond to trouble, and timeliness is extremely important.

Hold fire drills

Once you have a crisis strategy mapped out, you should consider putting the plan into action by holding mock crisis response situations where you can practice the plan you developed.

Put your ears on

The Internet is a huge place and you must find a way to listen to what is being said about you at all times. Invest in solid social media monitoring tools, like Hootsuite or similar, that will help track social media chatter. Like most fleets, social channels don't stop after 5 p.m. or on the weekend, so make sure it's being monitored.

Manage a code red situation

When a crisis begins to brew as a result of a situation that has clearly gone really wrong, you need to implement your crisis plan and devote yourself completely to communicating.

Acknowledge what happened on social channels – starting with the channel(s) where the situation started. Don't choose to communicate on Twitter if things blew up on Facebook.

Say sorry and mean it.

Share what you know about the situation. Pull together the facts and be prepared to share them via a link to your website where a snapshot of the situation is summarized. Be methodical. This is important so the facts remain the facts and aren't fabricated.

Say what steps are being taken to address the situation. For example, are you working cooperatively with authorities, reviewing

your internal processes, or changing company policy?

Timing is everything

At some point once the crisis has unfolded and you've rollout out your response strategy, you need to decide when it's time to move into recovery mode and stop feeding the social media machine.

Evaluate

Once you've pulled the plug, it's time to review everything said and done and figure out what you would do differently next time.

One vital rule of thumb to remember is that participating in



Rebecka Freels, former CTA and OTA communications director, operates a Calgary-based marketing, communications, and events practice with clients in the transport industry. Reach her at Rebecka@beyondwordcommunications.com.

social media isn't about winning, it's about guiding conversations. If you are tempted to get into a tit-for-tat approach, you are going to lose big and drive yourself crazy. **TW**



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Why your chargeback looks Loonie

And why driving in the US is suddenly more expensive

You may be looking at your International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) chargeback from your carrier and thinking, "What the? Those people have finally lost it..."

And they may have, but the fact that your IFTA chargeback is greatly different from previous quarters is probably not your carrier's fault.

Blame US exchange rates and Michigan.

As our dollar tumbles, everything you buy on the US side of the line is more expensive. Whether you pay by cash or credit card, it's

essential that you and your bookkeeper distinguish between US and Canadian dollar expenses and make the appropriate adjustments on your business income statement.

But let's get back to fuel tax and why you should plot your fuel stops and find out what you really pay for diesel. It might change your approach to where you fill up your tanks.

When you buy diesel fuel, part of the price is tax. Canada and the US both levy a federal tax; in Canada, you pay GST or HST as well.

You also pay provincial or state fuel taxes. These really are fuel-use taxes, because what you owe is calculated based on where you burn the fuel, not where you buy it. If you travel 100,000 miles in Manitoba but never buy a drop of fuel there, Manitoba is still owed fuel tax on those 100,000 miles.

In order to make sure each jurisdiction gets its due, 48 states and 10 provinces are members of the International Fuel Tax Agreement, or IFTA. Instead of filing fuel tax returns with each state or province, you file one quarterly report



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with your base jurisdiction that reflects your net tax or credit, and it will apportion any tax you paid according to the number of miles traveled in each jurisdiction. If the net result is an overpayment, you'll receive one consolidated refund from your base jurisdiction.

If you're like most owner-operators, your carrier is responsible for fuel tax, licensing, and reporting for your vehicle. Who actually pays state or provincial taxes is another question. Depending on your contract, the carrier may pay all fuel taxes.

But if the carrier charges you when you owe fuel taxes or pays you when you're due a refund, you should be concerned with where you buy your fuel so you can maximize your refund.

The fact is, you don't really know how much fuel costs until you take the taxes out. Just because you have an IFTA refund doesn't mean that you have purchased in a cost-efficient way. The big picture goal is to pay the least amount for your fuel including the upfront purchase cost and factoring in the IFTA refund or payable.

If you buy most of your fuel in Canada then your Canadian-currency fuel tax refund must be credited against your US-currency fuel tax debt. This could put you in a payable or reduced refund. Even though it appears to be more money up front, buying more fuel in the US obviously could create the opposite.

So, why blame Michigan?

On Jan. 1 it upped its fuel tax rate by a little more than 11 cents per gallon. That's a one-time increase of more than 40%. Pennsylvania and a dozen or so other states increased their fuel taxes as well. So now every time you drive in the US, it costs more – and you're paying for it with a sliding Canadian currency.

It may pay to buy as much fuel as possible from states and provinces with the best net price. You can see our free and regularly updated fuel price comparison chart at www.tfsgroup.com/tfs/wheretobuyfuel.html. **TW**



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You hiring?

Industry's employment outlook for Western Canada strong with downturn in rearview mirror

By Derek Clouthier

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Despite recent struggles in some regions of Western Canada, if you're looking for a career in the trucking industry, opportunity can still come a-knockin'.

And according to many key players in the industry, that trend should continue in the coming years.

Howard Sired, recruiting manager for TransX, said he believes the employment outlook for Western Canada is strong and competitive, and that Alberta's oil patch, which as seen tough times of late, is experiencing an uptick, with service providers again looking for drivers, albeit, not at the "inflated" rates they were prior due to the drop in global oil prices.

"In other words, they are hiring drivers but they are not paying the insane amounts of money that they were three to five years ago," Sired said.

TransX, one of the country's largest carriers, is currently hiring, with Canada and US long-haul drivers in the highest demand.

"Demand is high because of very strong international freight

volumes," said Sired, "and the pool of drivers interested in being on the road for two weeks at a time is lower than regional operations."

Further west in B.C., Matt Berry, president of Berry and Smith Trucking, said his company is looking for company drivers, but the highest demand is for owner-operators who can provide a high level of customer service to their customers.

Berry agreed that the outlook for employment in Western Canada is encouraging.

"We believe the economy is picking up and the proof is in the volume of work that is coming our way," said Berry. "Trucking is one of the best early indicators of what is happening in the economy, so what we are seeing with increased volumes over last year is a good sign."

Berry believes confidence in the industry is greater now than it was before the economic downturn in Alberta, and that confidence has an effect on the business choices people make.

"Instead of ordering additional loads to have some surplus on hand, a company may choose to

reduce or even cancel orders to avoid the risk and the associated costs that come with inventory that doesn't sell," Berry explained. "Lack of confidence or tightening of spending happens often in cycles when perhaps there was excessive spending or a market correction that was due."



Shelley MacDonald, senior manager of HR and people development for Bison Transport.

Berry said steady growth that is manageable and sustainable offers better opportunities for success.

Shelley MacDonald, senior manager of human resources and people development for Bison Transport, another of Canada's largest carriers, said because trucking is so vital to the supply chain, employment in the industry normally remains stable.

"I would say the number of opportunities we have to join our business remains consistent year over year," MacDonald said. "This is a busy time of year, as we often have post-secondary students join our team for the next several months."

The Winnipeg-based company is searching for quality applicants, something it does on an ongoing basis. Positions in utmost demand at this time include those with an operational focus, such as fleet manager and dispatch, as well as licensed heavy-duty technicians. Owner-operators, teams and Canada/US drivers are also needed, as MacDonald said the industry continues to face a critical shortage in this area.

Sired added that he believes there is currently less demand for domestic drivers, something he said has been the case for some time now, but the need for Canada/US long haul drivers will remain strong – and in turn could spur companies to develop training programs to help new drivers get into the long-haul market.

He said drivers often look for positions offering higher wages with more home time, but those jobs are becoming harder to find.

"(Long-combination vehicle) operations in Western Canada has created some opportunities for

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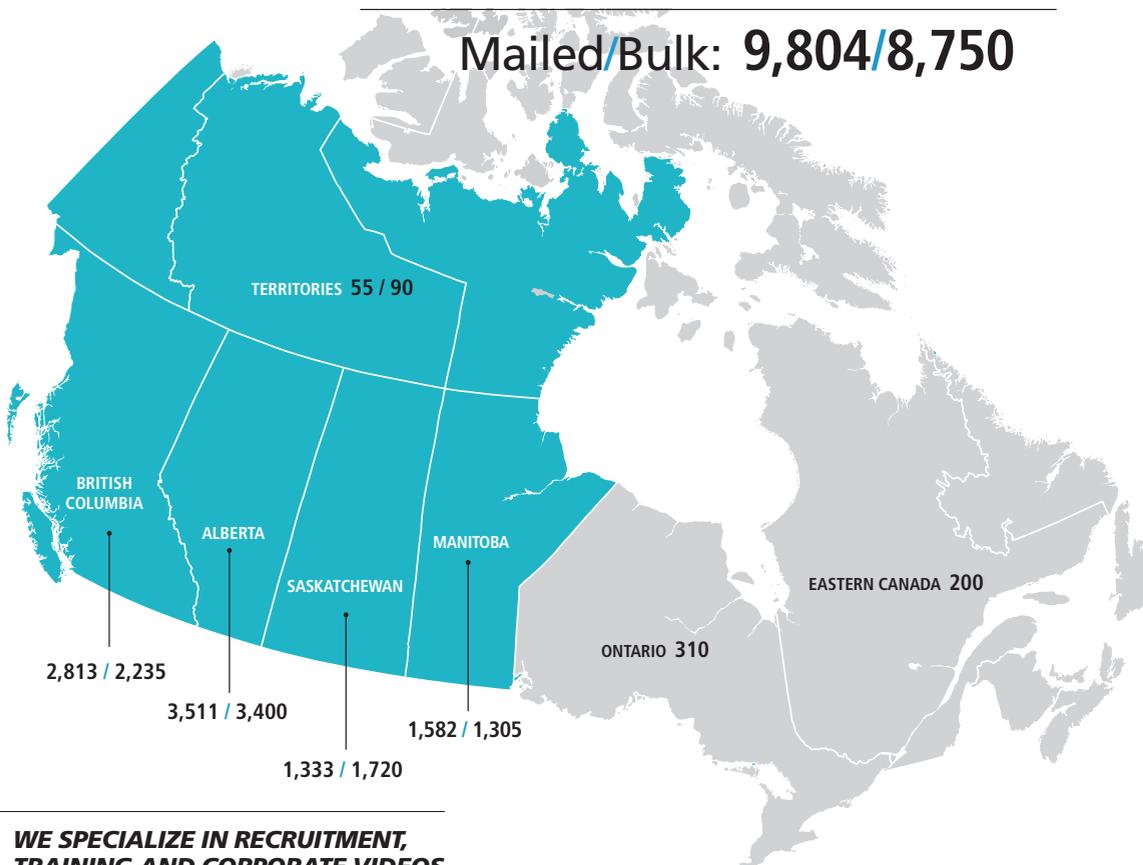
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Optimism returning to oil and gas industry: Mullen

OKOTOKS, ALBERTA

Mullen Group reported improved revenue in the first quarter of 2017 in both its trucking/logistics and oilfield services segments, but the markets remain “fragile,” according to chairman and CEO Murray Mullen.

The company posted Q1 revenue of \$284.9 million, up 4.9% year-over-year. The trucking segment grew revenue 4% while oilfield services saw revenue climb 4.8%. Drilling activity improved but Mullen saw a decline in pipeline hauling demand.

Net income was \$14.5 million, down 32.2% year-over-year, primarily due to a negative variance

in unrealized foreign exchange. Nonetheless, Mullen said he’s seeing optimism returning to the oil and gas segment.

“After two years of reporting declining revenues we are finally starting to experience some growth. The \$285 million generated in the first quarter of 2017 remains well below prior peak levels but the results are 4.9% above last year, representing that some early stage stability is returning to the battered oil and natural gas service industry as well as reinforcing our acquisition strategy,” Mullen said.

“I remain of the view that the markets we serve are fragile and that a period of adjustment is still

required before our financial performance improves in a more meaningful way but there is a sense of optimism returning to the oil and natural gas industry, which I fully expect will benefit our organization in the second half of the year. In terms of the overall Canadian economy, the story is very similar. Freight demand is starting to increase, which will ultimately lead to improved pricing later this year. In the meantime, however, the trucking and logistics sector of the economy remains very competitive.”

Mullen said the company continues to be on the lookout for acquisition opportunities.

“One of our stated strategic

initiatives for 2017 centered on growth through acquisitions. In this latest quarter we closed two transactions, the most notable being the acquisition of Envolve Energy Services Corp., opening up a new growth platform for Mullen Group,” said Mullen.

“For the balance of the year we will continue to identify new opportunities that we can benefit from for many years. In addition, we are announcing an increase of \$25 million to our 2017 capital expenditure budget in anticipation of a recovery in the energy sector. This is exactly why we took the necessary steps to strengthen our balance sheet in 2016. We are uniquely positioned to proactively pursue opportunities.” **TW**

Hiring

continued from page 29

the higher skilled and clean record drivers,” Sired said, “but there are less opportunities overall.”

MacDonald feels that Alberta will continue to be a western Canadian hub for the trucking industry, and that the need for solid people resources will also persist.

“We need to always be looking for ways to be more innovative, efficient and creative to meet customer requirements and build a sustainable future,” she said.

Though Edmonton trucking company Rosenau Transport is not currently hiring, Dillon Rosenau, Calgary regional manager, said experienced, professional drivers are always encouraged to submit a resume.

Rosenau said that in Alberta there are certain segments of the industry still reeling from the province’s downturn of the past couple of years, and layoffs in the oil and gas sector made it difficult for drivers to find work.

He added, however, that in major city centers, drivers remain in high demand.

“We’re seeing volumes pick up over the last year, but given the nature of our economy in Western Canada, we know how volatile things can be,” Rosenau said eyeing the future. “But we’re cautiously optimistic that if trends continue, we’ll be looking to add team members across our network in various positions.”

Rosenau feels the trucking industry will face a significant challenge in the coming years – making the profession attractive to the next generation.

“The average age of a professional driver is currently 47, with that number expected to be 49 by 2024,” said Rosenau. “Regardless of the economic situation, there is going to be demand for drivers in the coming years. And it is our responsibility as carriers to find new ways of incentivizing new recruits to join our industry.” **TW**

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Continued from page 1

Lack of understanding

Deborah Gee, an industry consultant and former driver who entered the industry through the Women Building Futures program, said during the *Women in industry* panel discussion that she started out driving with her brother as a team and eventually became the first solo female driver who traveled cross-country for her then employer. But it wasn't easy.

"In any trade you're going to take a little bit of razzing, and being a woman you might take offence to that," Gee said, although admitted that part of her enjoyed the attention she received and encouraged women to be strong and work through the adversity. "It's nice to see that there are some women getting into the industry and I'd like to see more."

Gee feels the reason more women are not entering the industry is simply a lack of understanding that they are as capable as men to get the job done and get it done right.

"I think it's got to just be a lack of communication on what the job entails," she said. "It's not something that just a man can do."

Judy-Lynn Archer, past president and CEO of Women Building Futures, said women looking to get into the industry need to first



Dan Duckering, president and CEO of Duckering's Transport, facilitated a panel discussion on 'women in industry' during the first Western Women With Drive event in Calgary, May 10. The panel included Sue Timmermans, Judy-Lynn Archer, Chelsea Herr, and Deborah Gee.

educate themselves on what the expectations will be.

Archer said the trucking industry "still makes my heart race" but she doesn't like seeing women working hard and not getting the same compensation as men.

"It just goes against the grain," Archer said, pointing out that the average annual full-time salary for a woman in Canada is \$32,000. According to Statistics Canada, the average annual income for all Canadians is just under \$50,000.

Women Building Futures was launched in 1998 and helps prepare female workers starting careers in industries that have typically been dominated by men.

Archer said women who complete the program enter the workforce

with high expectations and a desire to land a long-term career, two things she encourages.

"Employers are starting to see now that there's a lot there," Archer said of the female talent pool. "Even in this economy, we are the busiest we've ever been."

Chelsea Herr, a welder with Mullen Trucking, also took part in the panel.

Herr said there is a lack of awareness for young women when it comes to finding a career in trucking, as many believe it isn't even an option.

For Herr, much of her success stems from the support of her parents.

"Without that I wouldn't have continued with it," Herr said, including that fact that like Gee, it wasn't easy at first, as she was not always told

from the get-go what the demands would be.

"To some degree they were testing the waters to see if I could handle it," she said, recommending women in any male-dominated industry to seize any and all opportunities that come their way.

During another panel discussion – Road to leadership – the importance of leadership and sponsorship was a point of emphasis, and how both are vital cogs in getting more women into the industry.

"Sponsorship is mentorship married to action," said Linda Young, vice-president of HR and people development for Bison Transport, adding that often people need someone else to identify the qualities within them. "When I see the spark in someone, I make it a point to say 'I see this in you.'"

Grant Mitchell, president and CEO of Westcan Bulk Transport and AMTA chairman, said despite the importance of mentors and sponsors, everyone must discover and use their own strengths.

"Everybody needs to be themselves, everyone has something different and you need to be yourself," he said. "Find someone you can connect with and gravitate toward them. Take a risk and get outside of that comfort zone."

Westcan has partnered with Women Building Futures and will have 12 female drivers enter the program's new Class 1 driving session this summer.

"It didn't take us very long at all to get involved," said Mitchell. "What we need to promote in our industry is that it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman."

Mitchell said stereotypical perceptions of women in the trucking are an unfortunate reality, and in order to shed those images the industry must promote female success stories so women know what's possible and available to them. He also advised any woman who feels they are working for a company that does not appreciate them to go out and find one that does.

The Western Women With Drive event also included two keynote speeches, one from health and productivity expert Michelle Cederberg, and another by Karen Hamberg, vice-president of strategy for Westport Innovations. **TW**

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You say tomato, I say tomahto

Gliding in a new direction

Maybe I'm not ready to stop chasing my dreams just yet

No sooner had I submitted my last column to *Truck West* on maintaining the status quo in my career, when I saw something that caused me to reconsider everything I had written. My comfort zone suddenly felt a little too comfortable.

It was quite by accident. I was driving into Winnipeg to drop a trailer and passing one of the truck dealerships, when I saw a truck that caught my eye. A few days later, my wife and I were heading into the city for some more supplies in the seemingly never-ending task of "putting our personalities" into our house; this time it's a new family bathroom. Trucking is now something I do to relax in between major construction projects.

Anyway, I went to the dealership and had a closer look at the truck. It was not something I would ever consider running, but it was a thing of beauty. I spotted another truck on the lot that caught my eye and peered below to see which color engine it had, just out of curiosity, and was shocked to see that it was yellow. The truck I was looking at was a glider and this catapulted me right out of my comfort zone

and back to the normalcy of my 'what if?' life of imagining new possibilities.

The following Monday, I made a phone call and found out the details of the truck. It was as if whoever built this truck had read my mind and built my dream truck, just for me.

Like most dreams, it seemed at first that it would remain just a dream. But then I started crunching numbers and buying this truck started to make more sense, so I started to go through the motions and got approval to finance the truck. It all hinged on selling one of my current trucks though, and that's where things started to look a bit sketchy.

Now I say sketchy, but that's only part of it. The reason it's sketchy is because of the residual value of the truck I want to sell – in short it isn't enough, which underlines one of the main reasons why buying the glider truck makes so much sense.

It will never depreciate to the same extent as a brand new truck. In fact, it will almost be like a savings plan as the extra cost to purchase it over a stock truck will end up back

in my pocket at the end of the term.

So, I've convinced myself that it's the way to go and as long as I can sell my current truck for the price I want to get for it, I will be going for the new glider. Obviously, that is not a foregone conclusion.

Somebody could come along with a trunk full of cash and buy it before I do, or I may not get what I want – or more accurately, need – for my current truck. But that's life. The encouraging thing is discovering that I'm still me. I'm not content with just sitting back and watching the world go by. I still have the desire to constantly make improvements in my life and business.

Life is short and it's what you make of it that matters. I don't want to get comfortable, really. Well, I do, but not in the way that I become a passenger in life, especially as the clock keeps on ticking.

Soon, I will reach an age where I will be unable to exercise much freedom in certain aspects of life. Buying a truck with a projected 15-year lifespan is just one of those decisions.

There's not much point doing that if I'm only going to be working

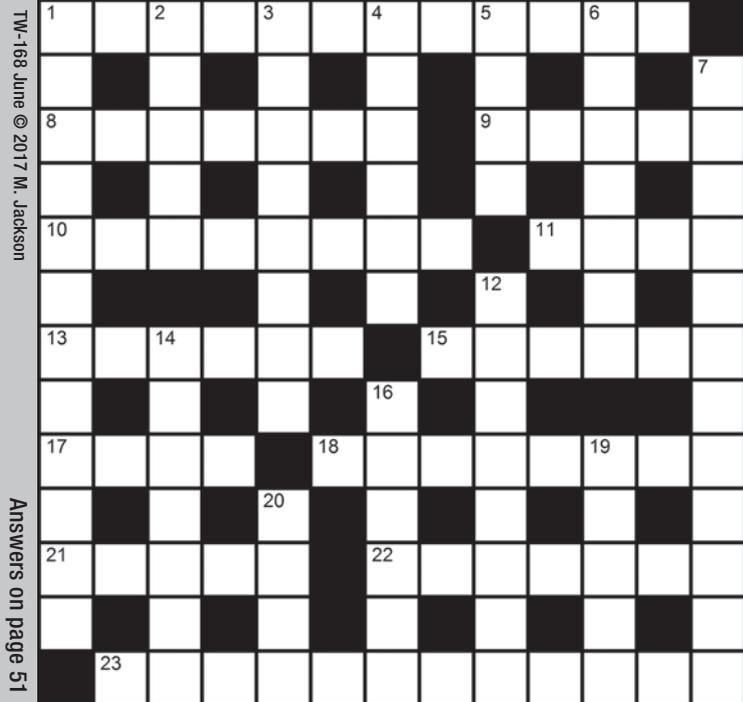
for another 10 years. That's a ways off just yet, but as that clock ticks away, it draws closer. So, I need to be thinking about that and coming up with a strategy that allows me to continually challenge myself and improve.

The first step towards that goal is to do just that, turn my dreams into targets. The new truck is just the first step in that direction and if it doesn't work out, then I'll just move on to the next step, whatever that may be. **TW**



A fourth generation trucker and trucking journalist, **Mark Lee** uses his 25 years of transcontinental trucking in Europe, Asia, North Africa and now North America to provide an alternative view of life on the road.

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



TW-168 June © 2017 M. Jackson

Answers on page 51

Across

- 1 Daimler Trucks NA brand
- 8 Castrol diesel engine oil
- 9 Highway hill top
- 10 Hot shot, in other words (4,4)
- 11 Slangy abbr., a PACCAR truck
- 13 A in CBSA
- 15 Espar bunk comfort equipment
- 17 Fictional Truck News driver Dalton
- 18 Day & Ross NB HQ town
- 21 Pre-metric weight unit
- 22 Obligatory CB adjunct
- 23 Employers' offerings, perhaps (7,5)

Down

- 1 Service station handouts, long ago (4,4,4)
- 2 Highway offramps
- 3 No movement traffic jam
- 4 CB, slangily
- 5 I in PSI
- 6 Great Dane reefer model
- 7 Certain big rig tires (5,7)
- 12 Mid-trip pause (4,4)
- 14 On the way, in QC (2,5)
- 16 "Aloha State" plates home
- 19 Driver's sleep problem, perhaps
- 20 Slowest engine speed

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Performance and protection

New category engine oils are better, but CJ-4 isn't yet extinct



New heavy-duty engine oils are packaged at Total's blending facility in Montreal, Que.

By James Menzies

December 2016 ushered in a new category of heavy-duty engine oils, giving fleets improved performance and additional choices. The previous category oil, CJ-4, is still in production by some oil suppliers, while the new CK-4 and FA-4 oils offer better performance and are recommended for new engines. In addition to the new American Petroleum Institute (API) standard, the various OEMs have also issued their own, often more stringent, specifications. Clear as a bucket of used oil? Here's what you need to know to make the right decision for your trucks.

The case for sticking with CJ-4

One misperception about the category changeover, is the idea that the new categories would completely replace CJ-4 on Dec. 1, 2016. That's not true and some oil providers have chosen to extend the offering of CJ-4 product indefinitely, which can be safely used in pre-2017 engines.

The boldest of these is Chevron, which is still producing and offering CJ-4 with no firm end date in place.

"Initially, going into it, a lot of people expected there would be a mandatory conversion to CK-4 or FA-4 and that hasn't been the case," Rommel Atienza, commercial brand manager for Chevron in North America told *Truck West*. "To that point, we still have a 15W-40 CJ-4 product available in the market today. That decision was made when we started to hear about the direction OEMs were going and the hesitation some of our customers had in that conversion. They really wanted to see the benefits of CK-4 and FA-4 products before they made that transition."

Castrol also continues to provide CJ-4 product, for now. Hasan Zobairi, commercial marketing manager with Castrol distributor Wakefield Canada, predicts Castrol

will complete its changeover by the end of the year. It opted to extend availability of CJ-4 in response to customer demand.

"We decided to do a gradual transition and make sure all customers were comfortable with the change rather than doing an abrupt change," Zobairi said.

But not all oil companies see a benefit to maintaining CJ-4 oils in their portfolio, when the new category oils are simply better.

"We don't feel there's any benefit

"From our perspective, by continuing the production of previous category engine oils – namely CJ-4 – customers are faced with unnecessary confusion and complexity."

– Brian Humphrey, Petro-Canada

to keeping CJ-4 around," said Dan Arcy, global OEM technical manager with Shell. He cited better oxidation control, improved shear stability, and the opportunity to extend drain intervals as a few of the benefits of moving to the new category oils.

Andre St-Jean, MSC chemist, lab and technical service manager with Total, said the company has transitioned completely to the new category oils, a decision that was made easy because it was able to upgrade its portfolio without passing on much, if any, upcharge to customers.

"The cost of the two products is nearly the same, so we decided we will discontinue the CJ-4 as soon as possible," he said.

And Petro-Canada took a similar approach, removing CJ-4 from its portfolio.

"From our perspective, by continuing the production of previous category engine oils – namely CJ-4 – customers are faced with unnecessary confusion and complexity," said Brian Humphrey, OEM technical liaison with Petro-Canada Lubricants.

The benefits of CK-4

Even those oil companies that continue to offer both the new and old oil categories acknowledge that CK-4 and FA-4 oils perform better, making a compelling case to upgrade. The new category oils deliver "better overall engine protection and longer drain intervals," according to Petro-Canada's Humphrey.

But while the tighter specification may bring more parity to the performance of CK-4 oils, not all are created equal, Zobairi cautioned.

"Some companies have gone ahead and reformulated, or uptreated, their CJ-4 oils to transition to CK-4 and other companies have taken a different approach, started from scratch and re-engineered the oil," he explained. "Those companies would see even better performance in moving from CJ-4 to CK-4."

When choosing a CK-4 oil, don't just look for the API donut that identifies the category, but also ensure the oil has met all the OEM specifications as well. In many cases, according to Total's St-Jean, those OEM standards are much more stringent than the tests the

carry one oil, maybe you will have to buy all one brand of truck."

How about FA-4?

FA-4, the new lower-viscosity oil optimized for fuel economy thanks to its high temperature high shear properties, has seen little interest among fleets since its introduction. This is mainly due to a lack of OEM support and a lingering conviction among fleet operators that lower-viscosity engine oils offer inadequate protection.

Among the OEMs, Detroit has been the most vocal cheerleader for FA-4 oil. It factory-fills new engines with FA-4, recommends it for continued use and has even eliminated the backwards compatibility restrictions the industry was expecting, allowing FA-4 in engines as far back as model year EPA2010 engines.

"Not only do we recommend the continued use of FA-4 in our GHG17 engines, but we also recommend switching to FA-4 for EPA10 and later Detroit engines to fully achieve their fuel economy potential," said Ed Byk, Detroit heavy-duty engine product marketing manager.

After extensive testing, Detroit is convinced engine protection isn't compromised when moving to a thinner weight FA-4 oil.

"Our testing shows that FA-4 performs the same as CK-4 from a durability and reliability perspective and both perform better than CJ-4," Byk said.

Humphrey said FA-4 oils can deliver a fuel economy improvement of up to 2% compared to a 15W-40 or 1% versus a 10W-30, "so there can be real cost benefits to switching to the new FA-4 category."

Zobairi wonders why more progressive fleets aren't taking advantage of the fuel economy performance of FA-4 oils.

"I'd like to understand why customers are hesitant, especially those using Detroit Diesel trucks, where FA-4 is backwards compatible to 2010," he said.

But not everyone is surprised the uptake of FA-4 has been slow.

"We kind of knew it would be," Arcy acknowledged. "Not 100% of the OEMs have elected to use FA-4 at this time. From Shell's standpoint, we planned the uptake would go this way, that it would be slow at first and then ratchet up."

He compared the adoption of FA-4 to when 10W-30 was introduced in 2007. At that time, Arcy pointed out, there was a gradual adoption by the OEMs and it wasn't until 2013 that 10W-30 became a fast-growing viscosity grade.

"The rate at which the industry embraces FA-4 oils will be determined by a variety of factors, including the OEM recommendations and the purchase of the newer 2017 engines," Humphrey agreed. **TW**

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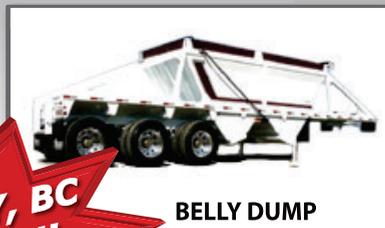
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38" ACFT FLAT TOP SLEEPER SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; 500 HP, ULTRASHIFT TRANS; TANDEM AXLE(S), 4.3 RATIO, AG 460 SUSP; 425,378 KMS, STK#FJ970646. -874025 **\$119,900**



2009 PETERBILT 386
63" ULTRA SLEEPER, CATERPILLAR ENG; 470 HP, 13 SPD TRANS; TANDEM AXLE(S), WHITE IN COLOR, PRESTIGE INTERIOR, 1,501,703 KMS, STK#9D788490. -874046 **\$37,500**

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2000 DAYCAB **\$47,500**
 YS857312 1,214,234 KM, Dump Box, 18 Spd
2007 72"ACAD..... **\$79,900**
 7J989850 1,341,227 KM, 18 Spd, Consignment
2013 72"ACAD..... **\$79,500**
 DJ961328A 907,583 KM, 13 Spd

- KENWORTH T800**
2013 EXTENDED DAYCAB..... **\$72,500**
 DJ959268A 1,034,621 KM, 18 Spd
2012 GRAIN BOX **\$96,500**
 CJ954463 861,455 KM, Manual 13 Spd
2010 62"ACFT **\$72,500**
 AJ943863A 649,282 KM, 18 Spd
2013 62"ACFT **\$75,500**
 AJ960652 902,957 KM, 18 Spd
2015 38"ACFT **\$119,900**
 FJ970646 425,378 KM, Manual 18 Spd
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 DJ957521 852,313 KM, 18 Spd
2013 72"ACAD..... **\$59,000**
 DJ962541 796,891, 18 Spd
2013 72"ACAD..... **\$67,000**
 DJ964129A 707,773 KM, 18 Spd

- 2013 72"ACAD**..... **\$62,500**
 DJ964132A 772,918 KM, 18 Spd
2013 72"ACAD..... **\$62,500**
 DJ96433A 792,226 KM, 18 Spd
2013 72"ACAD..... **\$62,500**
 DJ964134A 773,724 KM, 18 Spd
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 CJ956162 907,365 KM, 18 Spd
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2014 72"ACAD 388..... **\$92,500**
 ED232002 556,925 KM, 18 Spd
2009 63"ULTRA 386 GRAIN BOX
 9D788489 1,447,901 KM, 13 Spd

- 2009 63"ULTRA 386GRAIN BOX**
 9D788490 1,501,703 KM, 13 Spd
2009 63" ULTRA 386 GRAIN BOX
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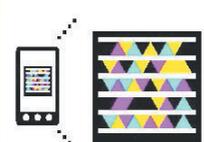


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Mark Dalton: Owner-Operator

By Edo van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

Mark agrees to take on a student driver as a favor to his Aunt Mary. When Mark meets the young man, Kevin, he's unimpressed by what he sees.

Kevin is a quick learner and has some natural driving ability, but he likes to cut corners a bit too much and Mark wonders if he's already tired of wanting to learn how to drive long haul...

Mark let Kevin drive as much as possible along the Trans-Canada, hoping that hours behind the wheel would make it easier for him to drive in stop-and-go city traffic later on. From what Mark could see, the young man was comfortable behind the wheel and picked up on things even before Mark had to instruct him. But Mark was most impressed when they finally reached their destination in Calgary. The warehouse was right off the highway and Mark figured it was a good opportunity to see how Kevin was at backing up. It was one thing to be able to drive an 18-wheeler forward, it was another thing altogether to back it into a loading dock – even one that was wide open – when left is right and right is left.

"Put it there," Mark said, after checking with the receiver. "Loading dock number 18."

"You want me to back it up?"

"Are you unsure?"

"Not at all," Kevin said. "Just get out and spot me, if you don't mind."

"You won't always have someone to help you back up, you know."

Kevin looked at Mark and smiled. "I know, but you're here now, so I might as well use you."

Mark nodded and hopped out of the truck, happy that the young man took safety so seriously. His reversing was a bit wobbly and he had to make two tries at it, but when he finally had the line right the trailer backed up to the loading dock perfectly with barely a bump.

"Nice job," Mark said. "Where did you learn to do that?"

"We had a cottage when I was growing up. I backed our boat into the water just about every weekend in the summer for years."

Maybe this guy might work out after all, Mark thought.

But for all the good Kevin had done behind the wheel early in their time together, over the next few days Mark noticed there was still a lot the young man had to learn about driving for a living. On one occasion, when they were taking on a new load headed for Montreal, Kevin spent all of his time in the coffee shop across the street from the warehouse playing video games, and didn't even bother to look inside the trailer to make sure everything was secure.

"But you were here," he said. "And the guy loading the truck looked like he knew what he was doing."

"You're training," Mark pointed out. "You have to act like I'm not here. And besides, no matter

The Mark Dalton Project, Part 4



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

how well anyone loads your truck, you're the one who will be on the hook when something shifts and breaks while you're driving, or falls out the back end of the trailer as you're going up a hill."

Another time Mark had Kevin do a circle check just after he'd done one himself. Mark had noticed a few things wrong and wanted to see if Kevin could spot them on his own.

"All good," he said after he'd done a cursory check.

"Are you sure?" Mark asked.

"Why? Is there something wrong?"

"You tell me."

He looked the truck over again and when he was done, he said, "There's a clearance light broken, and one of the tires on the trailer is flat."

"Can we continue?" Mark wanted to know.

"The trailer's got plenty of tires. We should be alright."

Mark just shook his head. The light was a minor defect and could wait, but the tire had to be serviced right away. And then there was the morning they got underway after a cold night of rain. Mark allowed Kevin to start the day because he wanted to see how he would handle the truck's iced-up windows. Instead of waiting until all the windows were cleared, Kevin insisted on getting underway with just a small patch of the front windshield clear of ice.

"It'll warm up in a minute or two," he said, pulling out onto the highway. "Besides, we're just driving in a straight line for the next hour. I can see good enough."

Mark was stunned by how easily Kevin cut corners, especially when he was still training. He said nothing about the window incident, but he had just about formed an opinion about Kevin and he would have to do a complete turnaround if he was going to last more than a few more days. In the middle of their second trip out west, Mark was slowing Mother Load down so the engine could

cool off properly before shut down. He was looking for a spot just off the highway to rest for the night, but Kevin was having none of it.

"Another night in this truck?" he said.

"It's what we do."

"How about a night in a motel?" Kevin asked.

Usually Mark would immediately say no, but they'd been making good time on all of their loads and as a team had earned more than enough to justify a night's sleep in a real bed. In addition, they could do laundry, get in some exercise, take a nice hot shower, and check their e-mails.

"Alright," Mark said. "We could use a decent night's rest."

"As long as the motel has a bar, we'll be alright."

"Whoa!" Mark said. "There's no alcohol on the road, especially if we're driving the next day."

"Okay," Kevin said, the disappointment thick and heavy in his voice.

Mark awoke just after one in the morning to go to the bathroom. The television in the motel room was on, but Kevin wasn't in the other bed. "Don't tell me," Mark said.

He put on his clothes and headed to the motel lobby. Kevin was in the bar, closing the place down along with two young men who looked to be in college.

"What are you doing?" Mark asked as he approached.

"Just having some fun, unwinding. Why don't you join us?"

"No thanks," Mark said. "You have fun. I'll see you in the morning."

Early the next morning, Mark was doing a circle check of Mother Load when Kevin trudged out toward the truck looking like something the cat had pulled out of the garbage.

"Morning," Kevin said.

"Morning," Mark said. Then he held out an envelope and said, "This is yours."

"What is it?"

"It's your pay."

"I thought I got paid on Fridays?"

"You won't be with me on Friday."

"Where will I be?"

"Probably explaining to your mother what happened."

Kevin didn't seem to understand.

"I told you not to drink, but you did."

"But I'm not driving today."

"And if something happened to me and you had to take over, then you'd be driving with alcohol in your system." Kevin looked into the envelope.

"There's only \$200 here. I've earned more than that."

"Yes, you have," Mark said, handing him another envelope. "I put the rest of it toward this bus ticket."

"Huh?"

"And I called your mother. She's waiting for you, and I can't say she's proud." **TW**

Mark Dalton returns next month in another adventure.



BECAUSE EXTREME CONDITIONS IS YOUR REALITY, RELY ON MICHELIN



continued from page 19

Western Star celebrates 50 years in business



Western Star is offering a 50th anniversary paint scheme as it celebrates the milestone.

“In 2016, we had a market that dropped significantly (year-over-year) and we were the only OEM that was able to retail more volume than in 2015,” Arrigoni said. “So, that was a big accomplishment for us. We’re expecting in 2017 to have a smaller market than in 2016, but as of today, we are on track to meet these numbers in terms of build volumes.”

Longer term, Western Star plans to capture more than 8% of the market by 2025 and beyond. Sales in Canada have been fairly flat, but in the US, they’re growing.

“The 4700 gave us the tool to go after the lighter-duty markets, a lot of what the US buys, in applications that require a lighter-duty product,” Arrigoni explained. “That has helped us drive some of our US growth. The US continues to pick up steam in terms of our overall percentage of sales and we expect that to continue.”

Sales of the new 5700XE highway tractor are also growing, while demand for the 4900 has been declining, in large part due to the lack of activity in the Canadian oil patch. But Platt said Western Star is seeing some signs of life in the Canadian oilfields, and orders are beginning to trickle in.

Large fleets are choosing the 5700 to offer as a reward truck for their best drivers, while small and medium-sized fleets are buying it to enhance their brand image. Platt noted some fleets have even adjusted their own branding to

match the lines and design of the 5700XE.

But Platt said the company is not yet satisfied with its modest growth and has a plan to further expand its presence.

For inspiration, the company looked to its sister company Freightliner to see how it has become the market share leader in the on-highway segment of the Class 8 market.

“What is it that made us really, really good and what is unique about the on-highway market?” Platt asked.

She credited Freightliner’s success with a product design that she said resulted in the most cost-effective vehicle in the marketplace to operate, and an unsurpassed dealer network.

But the vocational truck market is different. Platt noted many of these customers keep their trucks for 10 or more years, they’re usually serviced by the selling dealerships, and customers require more help from their OEM to optimize the spec’s. Reliability is also crucial in the vocational truck market, she added.

“We have to build trucks that are going to last,” she said. “The bodies are so much more expensive than the cab chassis portion of the trucks, so they want to be able to use them for a long time – frequently 10 years or more. They can’t be disposable. It has to be something that is going to last, in order to make it a good value proposition for our customers.” TW

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PART II

A DEEPER LOOK
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The Adventures of NEWLAND TRANSPORT

By Edo Van Belkom

Vic calls the city and asks about special parking consideration for his truck.

"What kind of truck is it?" the person on the line asks.

"It's a big one," Vic says. "A semi."

"Oh, I'm sorry sir. consideration is for cars only. It lets you park your car on the street a specified number of nights out of the year."

"So, I can't park my truck on my driveway?"

Vic's wife has taken the kids to Montreal to visit family and Vic is forced to bring his truck home overnight because he has another load to pick up early in the morning and there's no car to take him to the truck yard and back.



"So, I can't park my truck on my driveway?"



"Our by-law officers may, or may not ticket your truck overnight. But if someone complains about the truck being parked in your driveway, they'd be dispatched to investigate."

But by the time Vic is off the phone, a by-law officer is out in front of the house looking at his truck.



"That didn't take long," Vic says when he gets outside.

"I'm just responding to a complaint from one of your neighbors, sir."

"Which one?" Vic asks, looking up and down the street.

"I can't tell you, sir, because I don't even know."

"Can't I just keep it here for one night?"

A pause. "If you move it now, I'll consider this a warning, but if I find it here later tonight I'll ticket it. If that's not enough, it could be towed."



Vic goes to several different places in his neighborhood asking everyone if he can park his truck on their property. They all want money... much more than Vic thinks it's worth, but in the end, he needs to park his truck and get home because he has to work in the morning.

The place he finally decides on is a small shopping plaza three blocks from his house.

Vic walks home the three blocks in the rain.



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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Managing the ups and downs and sticking to a winning formula

By Derek Clouthier

SURREY, B.C.

You would have a strong argument if you said continuous growth and profitability are the primary goals of any company in the business world, and by those measures, Len's Transportation Group is a B.C. trucking industry success story.

When Leonard Kane Sr. started the company in 1964, it brought in a cool \$511.80 in its first month. This would have got you a bit further at the grocery store in the mid-'60s than it would now, but thankfully for the Kane family, growth and profitability came immediately. In 1965, Len's revenue swelled to \$1,500/month, then \$4,000/month in 1966, \$7,000/month in 1968, \$13,000/month in 1970, and finally, by the 1980s, the company was hauling in around \$100,000 every month.

The company, which was called Len's Lift Truck Delivery, launched to fill a need delivering lift trucks, something Leonard Kane Jr., who has taken over running the company for his father, said was not even on his dad's radar.

"He basically took a suggestion from a shipper in the industry to personally fabricate from scratch a tow-behind trailer that would allow for a forklift to be driven onto the trailer and up to the deck of the truck mechanically," said Kane Jr. "Basically, my father created something that was efficient to load and unload equipment with superior efficiency to move the forklifts around the Vancouver area. Word got out and his business started to boom."

Kane Jr. has been around the business since he was in diapers, literally, but didn't officially come on board until 1995. He became operationally involved after getting his post-secondary education and then took over the position of director in 2008, which proved to be a challenging time.

"Just in time for the Great Recession, where I think I really learned the most about my business," Kane Jr. said. "When you



A Ranger Transport truck delivers freight in the US.

have to lay off half the people in a small business who you worked with for years, it's something that I will never forget."

But in 2012, the company really started to pull away from the downturn, and demand was strong.

"It wasn't uncommon to tell customers it would be four to six weeks before we could tackle their orders," Kane Jr. said. "The demand for new equipment to be hauled from Washington and B.C. to Alberta was constant."

Constant, at least, until the price of oil and gas crashed in 2015.

"We saw a dramatic decrease in the volume of freight heading to Alberta in 2015, in some cases non-existent for the prices offered. Alberta was in shock, which affected us," Kane Jr. explained.

"In 2016, volumes to Alberta never returned. Price for freight was extremely low and you had to always be very sharp with the pencil and almost always work a backhaul. Customers cared more about price than service."

Kane Jr. said revenue for Len's Transportation was down 20% year-over-year from 2014 to 2016, and he was forced to reduce not only the number of trucks he was running, but also his staff. But 2017 appears brighter for Len's, as Kane Jr. said economic signs are looking up.

Over the past couple of years, Len's has become a Certificate of Recognition (COR)-certified company, and has even started to embrace the scary world of social media. But nothing has helped bring the company back to its high level of success more than its staff.

"From the heart, my team of office staff, mechanics and excellent drivers are what really makes



An original truck trailer Leonard Kane Sr. started the company with in the mid-'60s.

this company successful," said Kane Jr. "Honestly, the best chance you will have working for me is if one of my team members refers you to my organization. I only hire people who are hardworking, highly skilled and want to work in a team environment."

Seeing his father's original month-to-month revenue journal must have inspired Kane Jr. to stick to a winning formula, because the services Len's Transportation provides have not changed since the company was birthed 53 years ago.

Len's, along with Ranger Transport, a heavy-haul carrier, mostly transport construction and material handling equipment.

Len's boast five trucks that focus on moving equipment within the Greater Vancouver Regional District, usually with payloads not exceeding 50,000 lbs. Ranger, which is made up of 15 trucks, transports equipment locally, provincially, nationally and internationally, including all of the lower 48 US states, with payloads between 40,000 lbs. and 150,000 lbs.

Outside the everyday business, Kane Jr. sponsors the Langley Xtreme 2000 and 2005 girls' softball teams and donates silent

auction items to help benefit the Learning Disability Association, North Shore Neighbourhood House and the Finning United Way Campaign, to name just a few.

Other than his multiple charitable efforts and continuous search for quality employees, Kane Jr. said his hopes for the future are simple – to remain profitable, just like his father did back in the Swinging '60s.

"I would prefer to remain small with a great group of people I consider family," he said. "We have always grown when we need to. If we can stick to our core values of professional transport, excellent service, fair pricing, and a dedication to safety, I would be more than satisfied." **TW**



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