



# TRUCKWEST

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Following the Humboldt Broncos bus tragedy, mandatory entry-level driver training has been thrust into the spotlight.

## Driver training in the spotlight

Associations have been advocating for mandatory entry-level driver training for a long time

By Derek Clouthier

### REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

The call for a mandatory entry-level driver training program is nothing new for the trucking industry.

The recent tragedy that struck the community of Humboldt, Sask., has shined a light on programs like Ontario's Mandatory Entry-Level Training (MELT) and the need for other provinces to implement their own standards for commercial driver training.

Several provinces in Western Canada – Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan – have taken steps following the Humboldt Broncos bus collision with a tractor-trailer, looking at adopting entry-level driver training requirements, and for many in the industry, it is an effort long overdue.

"Drivers have the opportunity to attend the quickest and lowest cost course just to have training on their resume," said Chris Nash, president of the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA), pointing out that entry-level driver training is not yet mandatory in the province. "This does not effectively train the driver. The AMTA looks forward to working with industry and government to find a mandatory solution to this problem."

The AMTA has been working with stakeholders and government on the groundwork of a mandatory

entry-level driver training program since 2017, and was pushing for the program for years prior to that.

"Considerations were to build effective ways to ensure driver competency by designing commercial driving as a trade, as a designation, or some sort of prerequisite to driving as possible solutions," said Nash.

At present, the legal requirements for a Class 1 licence in Alberta are to be at least 18 years of age, be on non-probationary status, have completed air-brake training, complete a written knowledge test, medical and vision test, and finally, pass a road test.

"The AMTA believes a MELT standard is a must," said Nash, "and effective competency assessments will be the backbone of the program."

The Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) has also been advocating for mandatory entry-level training for a long time, and has successfully advocated to the province for full funding to truck driver training.

As of April 18, the province indicated that more than 60 had taken advantage of that full funding, which was above expectations.

But as MTA executive director Terry Shaw points out, though there is funding and an accompanying training retention program for participating companies, it remains voluntary.

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## Full speed ahead for B.C. trucking industry

By Derek Clouthier

### ABBOTSFORD, BRITISH COLUMBIA

The trucking industry is thriving in B.C., with recent growth around 5%, and expected to remain at that level, which is well above the national average.

That's according to Helmut Pastrick, chief economist for Central 1 Credit Union, who told Truxpo 2018 conference attendees that the trucking industry would grow faster moving forward than it had in recent years, with employment numbers also expected to continue to rise.

"It does look promising," said Pastrick. "As long as we have long-term growth it should go well. In a growing economy there is a growing demand for the movement of goods, and that is certainly depicted here."

Pastrick highlighted that B.C.'s overall economy was much stronger than the rest of Canada, with recent growth around the 3.5%-4% range compared to 1.5%-2% in the remainder of the country.

He did anticipate B.C.'s economic growth to slow slightly in the coming years to the 2.5% range, but remain higher than Canada as a whole.

"I expect your industry to outperform the B.C. economy, which has typically been the case," Pastrick

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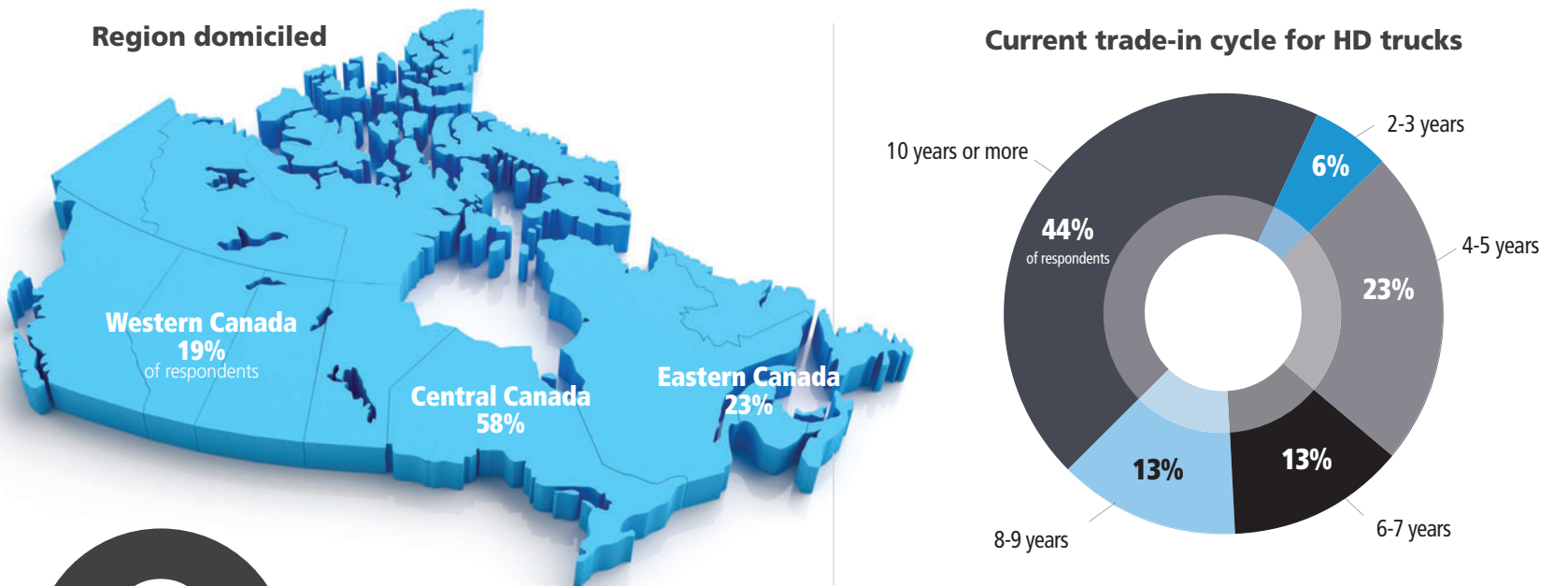
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What the numbers reveal about Canada’s owner/operators

Owner/operators are a vital part of the Canadian trucking industry. They often tackle runs that company drivers won’t due to the length and difficulty of the haul. Our Newcom Trucking Group Research sheds some light on the Canadian owner/operator. The first thing that jumps out is that as many as one fifth of those answering our annual survey consider themselves to be part of a minority ethnic group. The vast majority (84%) own 1-4 heavy duty trucks with the Paccar brands – Peterbilt and Kenworth – remaining their top choices. The research also shows they are hanging on to those vehicles a long time with 44% of respondents on replacement cycles of 10 or more years.



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|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Freightliner                    | 14% of respondents |
| International                   | 13%                |
| Kenworth                        | 18%                |
| Mack                            | 7%                 |
| Peterbilt                       | 19%                |
| Volvo                           | 11%                |
| Western Star                    | 9%                 |

| Main activities engaged in        |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Long haul (600+ km from terminal) | 40% of respondents |
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Derek’s deliberation

Let’s try harder to get those on the outside to start looking in

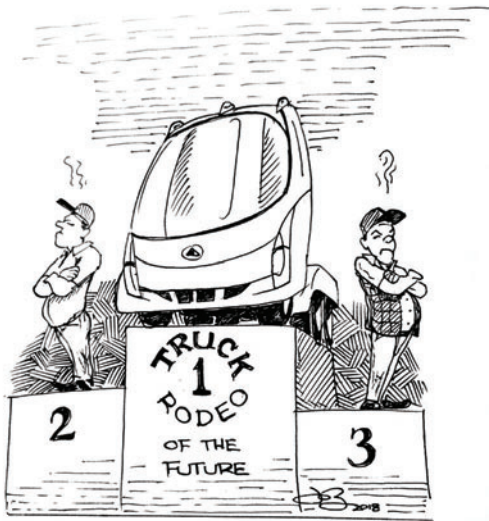
Trucking is not the only industry with a looming labor shortage knocking at its front door. Several sectors, specifically in the skilled trades, know they will be facing an uphill battle in the coming years as they attempt to attract new blood into their fields.

Attractive tech jobs are more enticing to young professionals for a variety of reasons – better hours, good pay, less physically demanding, and frankly, cooler for a 20-something to tell their friends and family when asked what they do for a living.

But all is not lost – and all is not what it seems. There will always be a need for drivers – at least for the foreseeable future, even with autonomous technology getting better each year – as well as the myriad of other positions on the trucking industry’s table.

During the opening conference of Truxpo 2018, Fiona Famulak, president of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association (VRCA), said her association was involved in a school outreach program in an effort to foster interest in young people for a career in construction. Like her

field, Famulak said trucking was cursed with new workers having the preconceived notion that a career in the industry did not have a whole lot to offer. Something she said was not the case, as both trucking and construction have come a long way since our parents and grandparents were in the workforce, and there are in fact several technology-driven aspects of both industries.



But with only one in 69 students pursuing a skilled trade upon leaving high school, according to Famulak, it is pivotal to get more students excited about careers in construction and trucking.

Hence, a school outreach program.

Famulak invited the trucking sector in B.C. to join her association in the school outreach program effort – something Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters have already done – to help get young people more educated about what a career in trucking would entail.

VRCA engages students and teachers through the program with industry volunteers who present all the various career opportunities in construction.

Trucking needs to do more of this. I know there are initiatives out there attempting to do the same, such as the Road Knights program, which sends drivers to schools to show students what truck driving is all about.

This is wonderful from the perspective of trying to provide a career path for students who would love a job behind the wheel, on the open road, draped with independence.

But to get tech-savvy students interested in a career in trucking or construction there needs to be a different approach. Nobody outside of the industry knows just how technical trucking really is. I was not involved in the industry prior to taking my current position two-and-a-half years ago, and I was completely unaware of what really goes on behind the scenes.

And having visited various head offices of carriers and OEMs across North America – like Bison and Kenworth – I see that you’d be hard pressed to guess those companies were in the trucking industry at all based on their modern office life.

Granted, there is a big difference between the big players and most of the smaller carriers that at times can play catch-up when it comes to technology. But that doesn’t mean it will be that way forever, and from my experience, it’s the younger generation that steps into situations like this and is able to make the necessary changes a business needs to progress and thrive.

And who wouldn’t want that? The industry could certainly do more to entice those on the outside not looking in to start taking notice. **TW**



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B.C. trucking

Continued from page 1

told trucking industry attendees. Pastrick also pointed to rising fuel prices and its effect on the industry, saying prices have reached the highest level since 2014. Despite an upsurge in demand in emerging markets, such as India and China, demand has declined in the U.S. and Europe, according to Pastrick. South of the border, the U.S. economy has seen growth around the 2% mark and is expected to swell to 3% in 2018 and 2.5% the following year. Pastrick said 2% growth is historically low for the world's largest economy, which is still recuperating from the largest recession since the Great Depression. "Whatever happens in the U.S. really matters to us," said Pastrick, adding that the U.S. economic recovery could stretch into 2022.

**Working together**  
Fiona Famulak, president of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association, said trucking companies must prepare for the City of Vancouver and province's zero-emissions mandate for new construction builds.

Starting in 2025, residential buildings constructed in Vancouver will be required to emit zero emissions once complete. Famulak said this version of the mandate is just the beginning, and discussions on a new version would include carriers bringing materials to site to also be emissions free, as well as the sourcing of those materials.

Famulak said when changes occur in the construction sector there is a ripple effect that trickles down to trucking, and zero-emission buildings were an example of that.

Carriers will see an impact due to the varying types of materials that will be needed to construct zero-emission buildings, such as the kind of vehicle and trailer that will be used to haul the freight. The new buildings will require the use of increased amounts of wood, panels, and solar panels, as well as modular buildings constructed off-site and transport to permanent locations.

Buildings in Vancouver emit 57% of the city's total GHG emissions.

In an effort to address the common labor shortage issue seen in many trade industries, Famulak said her organization was employing a school outreach program, and encouraged the trucking industry to join the effort.

She said many students are unaware of how sophisticated and technological the construction industry is, and said the same would be true with truck transportation.

Famulak said trucking should not be afraid of using technology as a recruitment tool.

Andrew Wynn-Williams, divisional vice-president of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, said his organization was also involved in the school outreach program, as it is getting more and more difficult to find good workers.

Wynn-Williams underscored that B.C. exports were no longer dominated by wood, pulp and paper, and metals, with technology and innovation now taking a lead role.

"We make cool stuff," said Wynn-Williams, adding that food is the second most exported product from B.C.

B.C. Trucking Association president and CEO Dave Earle closed the conference by highlighting the importance of sustainability for all of today's industries, including trucking.

"It is going to define and drive the next 20 to 30 years of how every industry operates," Earle said. **TW**

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# The kings of auctioneering

Ritchie Bros. has come a long way since its modest B.C. beginnings

By Derek Clouthier

**EDMONTON, ALBERTA**

From its humble beginnings in Kelowna, B.C., Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers have come a long way since Ken, John, and Dave Ritchie held their first unreserved auction in 1958.

One of the most recent auctions just outside Edmonton in Nisku, Alta., Ritchie Bros. sold more than \$207 million of equipment to over 14,000 bidders from 59 countries, including more than 9,750 online buyers.

“Our auction in Edmonton last week featured some of the cleanest, low-hour equipment available on the market today, attracting a huge number of global buyers,” said Brian Glenn, senior vice-president, Ritchie Bros. following the April 24-28 auction. “We once again saw strong participation from western Canadian registrants, bidding aggressively as they’re looking to purchase equipment for the spring construction season, resulting in strong pricing across most equipment categories.”

The April auction was Ritchie Bros.’ largest Canadian auction of the year, bringing in more money and selling more items than the founding brothers could have imagined possible back in the ’50s.

“It would be really hard to make a comparison to what the business looked like in the ’50s to what it is now,” said Ryan Eacrett, regional sales manager, Edmonton east, for Ritchie Bros. “What we’re blessed with here in Alberta is that this is probably one of the most auction-savvy markets in the world. We have a very high level of familiarity with our business in this contracting and construction space, so this is just ingrained in the way a lot of guys manage their fleets.”

Ritchie Bros.’ location in Nisku sits on 250 acres, with 50 being added a couple of years ago to meet growing demand. The first location – situated across the street – opened in 1976, but with a need for more space, the auctioneers moved in 2002 to where it is now, east of Hwy 2 near the Edmonton International Airport.

“As the economy in Alberta has grown and boomed, so has the demand for equipment, which has fueled our growth,” said Eacrett, “so we’ve grown up right alongside some of the bigger contractors in the province and in Western Canada, which has been cool to be part of.”

Depending on the year and season, demand for certain types of equipment changes. Right now, construction equipment is in high

demand, such as dozers, excavators, and graders.

“There’s a known shortage of supply at the OEM level, which is obviously fueling demand for used resale in the market, which can be beneficial for us,” Eacrett explained. “But it could be a totally different story six months from now.”

Some of the equipment that sold during the recent Nisku auction included three 2014 Caterpillar D6T LGP crawler tractors for a combined \$1.29 million, and on the tractor side, a 2014 Kenworth C500 T/A bed truck that garnered \$410,000 and 2014 Kenworth C500B T/A tri-drive boom truck for \$355,000.



**Ritchie Bros. held its most successful Canadian auction of the year so far in Edmonton from April 24-28.**

Approximately 89% of the equipment auctioned was sold to Canadian buyers, with 55% from Alberta. Buyers from the U.S. and other countries, such as China and the United Arab Emirates, made up 11%.

Fifty-eight per cent was sold online.

“We’re constantly surprised when we look at where stuff goes and the strength of the local market,” Eacrett said. “A lot of what we sell is staying within if not Alberta, Western Canada, which is great because that means there are things happening locally as well.” **TW**

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## AMTA to continue being voice, standard, and resource for its members

By Derek Clouthier

### BANFF, ALBERTA

The person leading the charge may have changed, but the Alberta Motor Transport Association's (AMTA) priorities have not.

Recently appointed association president Chris Nash said the AMTA will continue to be the voice, standard, and resource for its members.

As the voice of the industry in Alberta, Nash pointed to the testing and acceptance of single wide-base tires as an advocacy win. Single wide-base tires help increase track width, improve traction, and make maintenance simpler with the elimination of unequal tire pressure seen with duals.

With full uptake today at 1.5%, or 260 trucks in Alberta, super singles also reduced CO2 emissions, use less oil in the manufacturing process, and result in fewer tires being disposed.



AMTA president Chris Nash.

Nash said he will endeavor to maintain and continue to grow the ATMA's high industry standards that have been established over the last several years.

In addition to the safety benchmarks set through the Certificate of Recognition (COR) and Partners in Compliance (PIC) programs, Nash said there has long been a need for a standardized driver training program.

"There is a need for standardized training in truck transportation," he said. "We want to ensure the training in Alberta and across the country is safe and consistent."

As an educational resource for its members, the AMTA will continue to offer its various training programs and safety conferences. Injury Reduction and Training, the Professional Driver Improvement Course, Certified Transportation Safety Professional program, as well as a continued push for a standardized mandatory entry-level driver training course will all remain top priorities.

Collaboration efforts with the government, enforcement, membership, and its board are other areas of focus for the AMTA. As is the con-

struction of a new AMTA office at the Edmonton airport, a five-acre facility that will include a training track.

Several other initiatives, such as Western Women with Drive and collaborations with Women Building Futures and Bridging the Gap in Alberta's Trucking Industry were also highlighted.

"Driving is not always seen as a number one career choice, but for myself and others in the room, that is not the case," Nash told attendees of the ATMA 80<sup>th</sup> annual Leadership Conference and AGM. **TW**

## Weeding out non-compliant carriers

By Derek Clouthier

### BANFF, ALBERTA

Alberta's Ministry of Transportation has been keeping itself busy trying to make life better for the trucking industry.

Shaun Hammond, assistant deputy minister of Alberta Transportation, outlined the efforts his department has been working on, including the newly-implemented Carrier Intervention and Discipline Policy.

Enacted March 1, the policy, which places the onus on a carrier to prove to the government it is being compliant – known as a "reverse onus" policy – has resulted in 57 carrier Safety Fitness Certificates (SFC) being suspended, and eight

being cancelled altogether.

Hammond said carriers that cannot prove they are compliant will be given 90 days to 15 months (depending on fleet size) to become compliant, and no extensions or excuses will be accepted, to which a room of Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) Leadership Conference and AGM attendees applauded.

Hammond also broke the news that a pair of "proper safety rest areas" will be constructed to the north and south of Red Deer, Alta., starting this year.

Discussions have continued on the implementation of a mandatory entry-level driver training program in Alberta. **TW**

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA



## Saluting women drivers in the west

### ABBOTSFORD, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Women drivers in Western Canada were recognized at Truxpo 2018 on May 12 for what they bring to the trucking industry.

The Owner-Operator's Business Association of Canada (OBAC) and Women's Trucking Federation of Canada (WTFC), along with the B.C. Trucking Association (BCTA), honored 23 female drivers with the first Western Canadian Salute to Women Behind the Wheel.

The event has been held annually in the U.S. by Women In Trucking (WIT) during the Mid-America Trucking Show in Louisville, Ky., and was held for the first time in Canada in 2016 during Truck World in Toronto. OBAC and WTFC have also partnered with WIT to host

a total of now four salutes in Canada.

During the event, Dave Earle, president and CEO of the BCTA, encouraged those being recognized to talk to the women in their lives who were in the industry or looking to enter the world of trucking.

"Hold your hands up and be that example that women want to talk to," said Earle.

Joanne Ritchie, director of OBAC, said the collaboration of groups involved with bringing the salute to Canada share a common goal of trying to get more women into the industry.

"We're making history here," said Ritchie, adding that the women being recognized showed how female drivers can thrive and enjoy a career behind the wheel. **TW**



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Group looks to lower the maximum speed limit for trucks passing through Salmon Arm.

# Reduced speed zone ahead

By Derek Clouthier

## SALMON ARM, BRITISH COLUMBIA

A group of concerned B.C. residents is hoping to slow down commercial vehicles passing through their city.

Jim Kimmerly, chairman of Plan4Prosperity, said commercial traffic has long been an issue in the Shuswap community of Salmon Arm, B.C., with an estimated 1,500 trucks going through the downtown area every day.

“Most of the drivers are good and take precautions while passing through,” said Kimmerly, “however, there are too many that speed and run red lights.”

One such incident occurred in December 2016, when a semi-truck ran a red light on the Trans-Canada Highway and collided with a bus.

Kimmerly said there have been several of these types of occurrences involving semi-trucks, some including fatalities “where the commercial drivers were at fault.”

Kimmerly pointed to a survey conducted two years ago by the Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce that looked at two intersections along the Trans-Canada within the city measuring speeding and red-light running commercial trucks.

The survey found that on average there are 15 violators per day, a number Kimmerly believes is a conservative estimate.

“Salmon Arm has eight traffic lights from the west to east side of town, so we know that the number of infractions is much higher,” he said. “The reason for the focus on large trucks is because of the level of damage that can result if something goes wrong.”

Lowering the maximum speed a commercial vehicle can travel through the city to 40 km/h is one way Kimmerly and his group believes would address this safety issue. The current speed limit for all vehicles is 50 km/h.

Dave Earle, president and CEO of the B.C. Trucking Association (BCTA), said though all association members are committed to road safety, some drivers and companies can lose their focus.

“The story of trucks moving through communities at inappropriate speeds is thankfully becoming increasingly rare,” said Earle. “However, in our view, decreasing a speed limit which is not

currently being obeyed does little to slow vehicles down.”

Earle said a more effective way to ensure drivers adhere to traffic laws is to increase enforcement of existing limits, both by local authorities and Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement. **TW**

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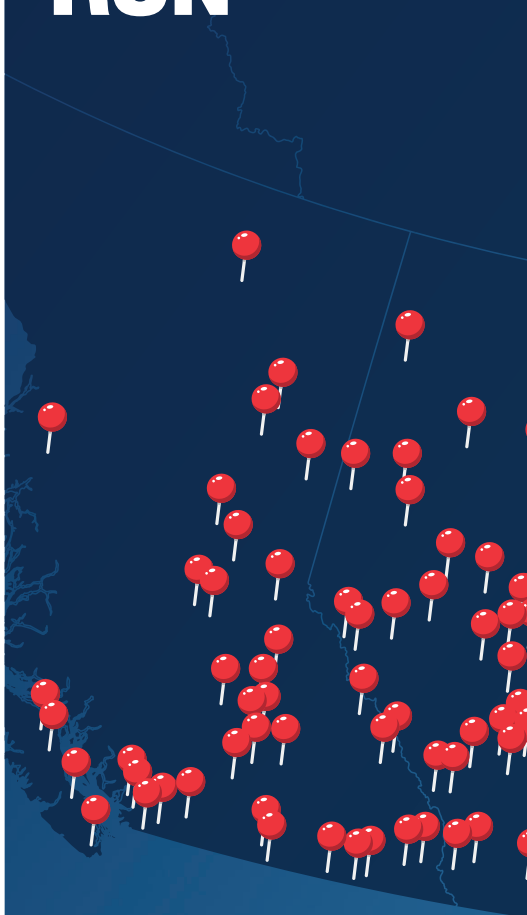




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## SASKATCHEWAN

### Driver training

*Continued from page 1*

“Trucking companies or future truck drivers are still not required to participate in pre- or post-licensing training,” said Shaw. “The vast majority of our industry does, but the minimum standards definitely needs to be raised.”

Even with years of lobbying efforts from all associations in the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) family, Shaw alludes that the profession of the commercial driver does not always get the respect it deserves.

“In Manitoba, the occupations of hair dresser and air-conditioning mechanic have higher pre-employment training standards than transport truck drivers do,” he said. “This is by no means a knock on other trades, but a simple recognition that the province already recognizes that value of pre-employment training standards and has a system in place to manage them.”

Current driver training in the province must be to the National Occupational Standard, but there is no requirement for new drivers in Manitoba to access the training.

“Based on the relative safety exposure as well as the skill and knowledge sets required of a transport truck driver,” Shaw said, “we remain committed to seeing that our government raises the bar.”

That commitment has resulted in some movement on mandatory entry-level driver training.

On April 26, the Manitoba government announced it was consulting on the implementation of a standardized system of training and certification for commercial drivers as a collaborative effort between Manitoba Infrastructure, Education and Training, and Public Insurance.

“Our first priority is public safety on roadways and that is why we are announcing that we have started work across government to consider how a standardized system could work for the trucking industry,” said Minister of Infrastructure Ron Schuler. “This is something the trucking industry has asked for and we want to work together in a collaborative way to see how this would work in Manitoba.”

Following the announcement, Shaw tweeted that he was looking forward to working with the government on the entry level driver training standard, and that “a very good first step was taken today.”

“It is clear that Manitoba needs to start this work to ensure that all provinces are moving together on a standardized system of training,”

Schuler added. “This work is beginning immediately and we hope to move forward with a plan of action as soon as possible.”

For a time, it also looked like mandatory entry-level driver training was set to be regulated in Saskatchewan by 2019. But though this remains a possibility, it is not yet set in stone.

Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) put the brakes on the reports alluding to a mandatory entry-level driver training program for 2019, saying its initial bulletin had “led to confusion.”

“We would like to clarify that no decision has been made regarding mandatory Class 1 training,” the most recent bulletin states. “We apologize for the confusion this has caused.”

In an April 27 release, the STA had voiced its support for what it believed would be a regulatory commitment from SGI to have mandatory entry-level driver training by 2019.

“The STA is proud to be able to announce that this will finally be a reality in our province,” the release stated. “The announcement is fresh and there are many details that still need to be worked out and the STA will be there every step of the way.”

But just days later, SGI clarified that its announcement was not a commitment to a regulation being place by 2019, but rather just a possibility.

Prior to the Humboldt tragedy, the Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA) had been working on a curriculum with SGI that included 70 hours of training. The program was set to be rolled out in 2019, but the Humboldt incident has since turned mandatory entry-level training on its head.

“The trucking industry has come under heavy scrutiny for the lack of training for drivers and regulations around how carriers receive their operating authorities,” Susan Ewart, executive director of the STA, said in a release. “There has been much controversy over whether the training should be mandatory or standardized and the push across the country has been to make commercial truck driving Class 1 licences mandatory.”

Ewart added that the STA will continue its discussions with SGI and SGI Crown Corporation on the next steps for commercial driver licensing in the province, and told *Truck West* that the effort is an important one.

“Mandatory training creates a standardized formal education for those wanting to be a professional truck driver,” she said, “and MELT forms part of the bigger picture that truck driving is a skilled profession and needs to be looked at as such.”

## Reaction to Humboldt

Notwithstanding feelings of remorse over the tragic events involving the Humboldt Broncos bus collision, western trucking associations have not changed their position when it comes to mandatory entry-level driver training.

“Despite the scale of that event, our position and work towards MELT have not changed,” said Shaw of the MTA’s long-standing push for mandated driver training. “We have supported mandatory pre-licensing training for years, and regardless of what is discovered in follow-up to the investigation, we know that pushing for MELT is in everyone’s best interest.”

With the investigation still ongoing, McGuinness said when tragic events like the Humboldt incident occur, some things get lost as a result.

“It’s easy to forget in our grief and sympathy for those involved that thousands of commercial truck and bus drivers operate daily without mishap across Canada,” said McGuinness. “Our own approach to the need for driver training is unlikely to change; we support a minimum standard and will continue to be proactive in doing so.”

Nash echoed this sentiment, saying tragedies like the Humboldt Broncos collision bring issues to the forefront, but that does not change the years of advocacy the AMTA has put in to mandatory entry-level driver training.

“At this point our goal is to do what we can to prevent this from happening again by working with government, enforcement, and industry stakeholders to find the necessary solution,” said Nash. **TW**



Further west, there has not been any movement on mandatory entry-level training.

Much like Alberta, in B.C. there is a range of different driver training courses people can take, but none are mandatory.

“Both provincial and federal governments should be supporting a mandatory, entry-level training standard for Class 1 licensing,” said B.C. Trucking Association (BCTA) communications specialist Shelley McGuinness. “The federal government should start by recognizing the skills required by commercial drivers as in the proposed National Occupational Standard (NOS) for commercial vehicle operators.”

McGuinness said some provincial driver training schools in the province provide more rigorous programs than others. There are also periodic government-sponsored programs offered through public and private schools.

“Some prepare trainees specifically to pass the ICBC (Insurance Corporation of B.C.) Class 1 road test without consideration for the range of other skills a driver requires on the job,” said McGuinness. “A few, to their credit, take the NOS into account. But, it’s still the case that you get what you pay for.”

McGuinness said that, in addition to safety, the driver shortage is an issue behind the BCTA’s push for better training.

“BCTA’s focus more than a decade ago was to deal with the perception that truck driving isn’t a desirable career, that it needs a higher profile to interest young people considering a profession,” she said, adding that the association, along with other partners, created the Human Resources Strategic Plan for the industry in 2006, an initiative that included driver training and improvements to ICBC’s certification requirements.

The program got only as far as the pilot phase with the province’s Industry Training Authority (ITA). Because of budget cuts it was discontinued.

“This was in 2011, and both the ITA and provincial government indicated in the past they are unlikely to mandate a training program,” said McGuinness. “We continue to advocate for a standard, however, including promoting adoption of a program similar to MELT in Ontario.”

Cindy Brewer is the driver instructor resource manager for Valley Driving School out of Langley, B.C.

Brewer said drivers who receive proper training are more knowledgeable, skilled, competent, and safe on the road.

“Mandatory entry-level driver training would ensure that all potential drivers would get that training and be better prepared for a professional driving career,” said Brewer. “Mandatory entry-level driver training in B.C. could also reduce road test failures, decreasing the wait time for an ICBC commercial road test appointment.”

Valley Driving School teaches its students how to operate a tractor-trailer in a variety

of real-life situations, including mountain driving, steep grades, and heavy traffic, as well as chaining up and load securement. They also offer an evasive maneuvering course on its closed-circuit training site that helps drivers avoid collisions.

Brewer said their students come from a variety of backgrounds and have differing levels of knowledge and skill behind the wheel, and their training is individually tailored.

“We are often correcting bad habits from years of driving cars,” she said. “One-handed steering, weak observation skills, and not using turn signals are just a few examples.”

It has been reported that the driver of the tractor-trailer involved in the Humboldt Broncos bus collision had completed 15 days of training approximately two week prior to the crash.

For many who have not driven a truck before, Brewer said it can be an eye-opening experience.

“The first lesson often provides students with a reality check when they realize that they have previously taken truckers for granted, cutting in front of them or stopping abruptly when a truck is behind them,” said Brewer. “A challenge for students is to change the way they think about their driving habits and abilities.” **TW**

## Investigation

As of May 3, Alberta Transportation’s investigation of the trucking company involved in the Humboldt Broncos bus collision – Adesh Deol Trucking Ltd. – is ongoing, according to assistant director of communications Bob McManus.

An assessment of the carrier’s National Safety Code (NSC) compliance has been concluded, and the next step is to send that report and associated information to the RCMP.

McManus said Adesh Deol Trucking’s safety fitness certificate remains suspended and Alberta Transportation will not lift the suspension or take further enforcement action until all active investigations involving the carrier is complete.

Saskatchewan RCMP officer Rob King reiterated that the investigation is still ongoing and only once it is concluded and determined to be releasable to the public will the information become available.

“We’re not going to be releasing any details as they come in,” King said. “We don’t want to be releasing little bits and pieces as we go along because that could potentially impact the integrity of the investigation by influencing interviews if we’re doing interviews a second or third time.”

One piece of information that has been released during an April 19 news conference by Curtis Zablocki, assistant commissioner for the Saskatchewan RCMP, stated: “The preliminary investigation has determined that the tractor-trailer unit was in the intersection at the time of the collision, and I can assure you that all of our efforts are dedicated to determining why the tractor-trailer unit was in the intersection.” **TW**

## A helping hand

The STA launched a national fundraising effort for first responders in the wake of the Humboldt Broncos bus tragedy.

“They are the men and women who are at the front lines after a disastrous event and deserve our support for their commitment and bravery,” Ewart said in a release.

With the assistance of the CTA, the campaign, titled All Roads Lead to Safety, is aimed at highlighting the industry’s continued efforts to promote safety.

Funds raised will be given to the Saskatchewan Volunteer Fire Fighters Association (SVFFA) to support mental health, counseling, and training for first responders.

“Once the dust settles from this tragedy, there will be a bevy of individuals who will need access to support services to cope with the traumas they have witnessed,” Ewart stated.

Donations were accepted until May 15.

“The trucking industry, which plays a vital role in our economy, values the lives of everyone who shares the roads with us,” said Ewart. “This is why our message of ‘All Roads Lead to Safety’ needs to be a strong one in the coming weeks.” **TW**

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Know when to hold 'em

Kenny Rogers got it right with his old country hit, "The Gambler." You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em.

You, my friend, are leaving money on the table when it comes to managing your fleet taxes. I see it all the time.

Let's start with IRP.

Every gambler knows that the secret to survivin' is knowin' what to throw away and knowin' what to keep. And every trucker should know that it's almost always better to transfer your plate instead of canceling it when you register a new truck.

It comes down to how jurisdictions handle the unused portion of your plate.

Canadian jurisdictions will refund most of the amount remaining, although Alberta Prorate does hold on to some U.S. credits when you cancel units with U.S. travel. You may be able to apply these credits to a new registration. U.S. states (with the exception of California) will transfer any remaining credit to a new truck. They do not issue refunds on cancelations.

If you qualify for a refund, the process for getting your money can take a long time. And if you are an owner-operator, the refund will go to the carrier because it's their name on the plate, not yours.

A vehicle registration refund can add up to thousands of dollars

when the dealing's done. If you're gonna play the game, boy, you gotta learn to play it right.

Sales tax refunds

Sales tax refunds are another story. The rules for getting a portion of your sales tax back when you cancel or even transfer a unit are confusing.

Let's say you're an owner-operator who changes carriers three times a year. You're paying sales tax three times that year on your truck.

Depending on your circumstances it may not be worth it to chase down a refund on a single truck, especially if it's an older vehicle and the taxes don't amount



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

to much. But what if it's a brand spanking new ride? What do you do? Fold?

The bottom line is that buying a new truck or changing carriers in the middle of a registration year is usually a bad bet. It may be easier said than done, but only buy or transfer newer equipment at renewal time so you can avoid paying unnecessary fees and taxes on your vehicles.

**Getting into trucking can be a gamble but you can come out the winner if you play your cards right.**

If you can't wait until it's more convenient, then transfer the plate. You'll lose out on the sales tax, but if the move happens in, say, the last three months of the renewal cycle, then at least you aren't out a huge amount of either licence fees or sales tax.

IFTA and mileage tax returns

You've heard me say this time and time again, but really, people, get your IFTA return filed on time every quarter. It isn't just the penalty and interest that you trigger when a return is not filed on time, it's the immeasurable cost of time and effort.

Here's a way to simplify things. First, get a GPS in your truck to calculate your distance by jurisdiction. Then get 12 envelopes, one for each month of the year, and every time you fill up, put that fuel receipt in the corresponding month's envelope. At the end of each month, tally up your distance and fuel or, better yet, get that information to a reliable service bureau so they can get your IFTA return filed on time.

Getting into trucking can be a gamble but you can come out the winner if you play your cards right. There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealing's done. **TW**

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OPINION

Petrol Points

Pipeline to tidewater would curb high fuel prices

There's the fish that got away story, and then there's the story that just won't go away. The first is subject to harmless, outdoorsy embellishment, the second should be subject to a surgical, financial dissection – Vancouver area pump prices, which at \$1.60/liter are now the highest in North America.

Is this a localized price storm or will it spread across the country? I don't see \$1.60/liter becoming the national benchmark, and the key reasons behind the spike being pointed to are: excessive refining margins; supply questions concerning the operating level of the Burnaby refinery; and the cloud of uncertainty over the status of the Trans Mountain pipeline, complete with the political haggling going on between B.C. and Alberta, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau taking on the role of the reluctant referee who's lost his whistle.

As I see it, the key reason for the high Vancouver area prices over and above the ludicrously high tax structure is the increase in refining margins, that being the spread between the cost of crude and the wholesale price of gasoline excluding the retailers' margin.

In Vancouver, the refining margin has jumped from 11 cents per liter in April 2017 to 44 cents per liter in April 2018. That's a 300% increase. Yet, the margins in Montreal and Halifax haven't changed at all and remain at 18 cents and 13 cents per liter respectively.

As the wholesale price in Vancouver mirrors the day-to-day movements of those in Seattle, which really means that Vancouver has no control on that portion of the refining margin, that leaves the cost of crude as the possible reason for the spikes.

This past April, the weighted average crude input costs for B.C., the Prairies, and Ontario was 49 cents per liter, yet Montreal and Halifax costs were at 60 cents per liter. To me, this means that the Western Canada and Sarnia hub refiners are using a crude blend with a high level of discounted Western Canadian Select (WCS) crude in their runs, which would account for a significant portion of the dramatic spike in refining margins and pump prices in Vancouver, as well as the Prairies where margins are up 60% versus a year ago.

With the integrated oil companies, those with upstream and downstream operations beginning to publish their Q1 results, it



**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.

is interesting to note that Imperial Oil's downstream (refining and marketing) profits were up 36% and Steve Williams, Suncor's CEO said, "The value of our integrated model was front and center this quarter."

My interpretation of this statement is that what they are both indicating is that there is no money in upstream (exploration and production) with WCS being discounted to death, so we have to make it in the downstream by jacking up refining margins and pump prices.

Until WCS increases in value with a pipeline to tidewater, or anywhere outside Alberta, then the high pump prices in Vancouver will be the norm, and maybe not just in Vancouver. **TW**



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# Breaking up is hard to do

Last month, I talked about an unhealthy relationship with sugar-filled, processed foods and the negative effects they can have on your health. Now the big question – how do we change that relationship?

Anyone who has been to a truck stop knows choosing healthy food isn't easy.

Sugar and processed foods are everywhere, and it's hard to break up with someone when they are always around.

There are some healthy choices you can make but usually not many. Most stores will carry baskets of fresh fruit but you can't

live on that alone, so combine that with a handful of raw almonds (do not choose candied or salted). Pistachio nuts are also a great choice – you get sweetness and crunch in one delicious bite and it's good for you.

To deal with today's reality of truck stop food there are better than the alternative choices you can make that you'll notice on your waist and energy levels.

**Drinks**

If you like pop, switch to water. If you don't like plain water, add a little lemon or lime. There are

even packets available at your local grocery store called True Lemon or True Lime that is easy to add. Perrier and Vitamin Water (Zero) are also better choices, but their carbonation could make you feel more bloated, so drink in moderation. Two to three cups of black coffee a day is OK. Try adding milk instead of cream and either take the sugar out completely or try cutting the amount in half to start with. It could help you drop pounds and inches. Instead of another coffee, I challenge you to drink a bottle of water and I think you'll be surprised by the energy boost.



**Donna Benjatschek** is an experienced health and nutritional coach based out of Calgary, Alta. Her participation in the Healthy Trucker initiative has launched a passion for helping people in the transportation industry live the benefits of healthier food and exercise choices. Donna can be reached at [donnabenjatschek@shaw.ca](mailto:donnabenjatschek@shaw.ca).

**Deli**

Most truck stops have a deli with a choice of salads, veggie cups, and fruit bowls. Enjoy the dressings and dips they come with but don't drench your food in them. Choose whole wheat/grain bread over the white stuff but don't choose fillings with high amounts of mayo. Lean meats with veggies are a great choice and the protein will keep you full a lot longer.

**Munchies**

Yogurt can be a great choice but be careful. A lot of yogurts will say they are low fat but are loaded with sugar. Look for brands without added sugar. If you want a little sweetness, add a banana or other fruit and top that off with some cinnamon. Cinnamon is a natural sweetener that is easy to take with you. The fruit and cinnamon combo on your yogurt tastes great and the sugar is ignored.

Potato chips line the aisles and are very addictive. Instead, pick a bag of lighter popcorn (Skinny Pop or Pop Chips). Watch your portions, snack size is the best. And instead of that chocolate bar, choose a protein bar. I found the Simply Protein Bar and the Kind Bar are better choices, as they have less sugar.

Eating healthy as a trucker isn't always easy. While the best is preparing healthy meals at home for the road, you can't always do that. You can, however, make small choices that will make big difference towards feeling better and living healthier. My challenge to you is this: start with one choice this week and sustain it for the week. Want to know if it's working? Measure how you start feeling beginning an hour after eating a healthier food choice. Do you feel as tired? Do you have more energy? Feeling better and getting trimmer will motivate you to make additional healthy choices and create new eating habits. No more diets – just simple lifestyle changes.

Remember, you are worth it. Next month we will expand on some healthy choices you can bring from home. **TW**



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WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

The location of this year's Manitoba Professional Truck Driving Championships has moved to the Headingly Husky Gas Station, with an awards banquet to follow at The Victoria Inn Hotel.

The competition is open to both Manitoba and Saskatchewan drivers, and will include navigating a prescribed obstacle course,

a timed pre-trip inspection, and a written test.

Winners in each category will become the provincial champion in their respective class and receive a trophy and prize.

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# Oil's doing well with CK-4

Transition has been “seamless” for fleets that have changed over to the new oil category



Chris Iveson, director of maintenance for Challenger Motor Freight, says the switch to lower-viscosity CK-4 oils has been seamless.

By James Menzies

The transition from the CJ-4 to CK-4 heavy-duty engine oil category in December 2016 has been seamless for fleets, but the education campaign must continue.

That’s according to Barnaby Ngai, category portfolio manager for heavy-duty engine and driveline oils at Petro-Canada Lubricants. He gave an update on the new category oils to *Truck West* during an interview at Truck World in April, saying that while the transition has been smooth, there are still many owner-operators and smaller fleets that are unsure about the changes.

“There’s still more work to be done,” Ngai said. “Be it education on the newer oils and why they’re good, and what they can do. That’s why you’ll notice we still kept up our education campaign. When you look at the data, the consumption, the engine players in particular, there’s still a lot of folks using CJ-4.”

While CK-4 and FA-4 (a new low-viscosity specification developed to optimize fuel economy) hit the market in December 2016, there was no requirement for oil suppliers to end the distribution of CJ-4. As a result, while new trucks came from the factory requiring CK-4 oil, not all fleets have made the transition.

And not all oil suppliers have ended production and distribution of CJ-4.

“There are still products that are CJ-4 (in the market),” Ngai said. “We’re all-in, we’re all converted, but we’re seeing some laggards and still seeing CJ-4 in the marketplace.”

CK-4 is fully backwards compatible with older engines, but since the changeover to CK-4 was not forced, some small fleets and own-



Trucks evolve, and so too must the engine oils they require.

er-operators – particularly those who haven’t purchased new trucks of late – have delayed adopting the new oil, despite promised performance benefits. But larger fleets that have made the switch say it has been smooth sailing.

Challenger Motor Freight adopted CK-4 across its entire fleet, including older engines.

“We made the decision to move to a semi-synthetic 10W-30 long before the oil changeover, and it was very seamless for us,” Challenger director of maintenance Chris Iveson told *Truck West*.

At one point, Iveson considered using the fuel economy FA-4 oil, but decided against it. Ngai admitted the uptake of the FA-4 category oils has been slow.

“The fleets that are using it are seeing the fuel economy, which is great,” he said, noting many fleets are waiting to see more data on engine protection and drain intervals before making the change.

“I’d say towards the tail end of this year, we should get a better feel (for FA-4 adoption),” Ngai said.

Iveson said there have been no issues related to engine protection when switching to a lower viscosity 10W-30 product from the 15W-40 weights that continue to be prevalent in the industry.

“With our 10W-30, I’ve seen no viscosity-related issues whatsoever,” he said. “We have run and completed a 5W-30 test as well, and our testing was extremely successful. We saw no issues whatsoever.”

But Iveson said he’s going to wait for the industry to gain more experience with 5W-30 oils before dialing down the viscosity level another notch.

“If we were to go to 5W-30 in the future, I believe at this point there would be certain applications where we would stay at 10W-30,” he said. In addition to the linehaul fleet, Iveson also oversees heavy-haul and construction trucks.

Erb Transport has had a similarly uneventful experience transitioning to the CK-4 engine oil category.

“It’s been completely seamless,” said Erick Buhr, corporate parts and warranty manager for the Erb Group of Companies. “The CK-4 oil we use is backwards-compatible. We didn’t have to add a different tank to look after the older equipment.”

Erb has also transitioned to lower-viscosity engine oils without issue on its new Cummins X15 and Navistar A26 engines.

“Everything older than that – Navistar N13, Cummins ISB6 and ISX15s – we are still using 15W-40.

We also have a significant amount of Cat C12s and C13s and some older Detroit 60s in the fleet. So, 15W-40 will be around for a while for us,” he explained.

But on newer equipment, Buhr said 10W-30 oils have presented “no issues” and the company is achieving 60,000-km drain intervals on those engines using a semi-synthetic. Erb has opted against running FA-4, since its engine manufacturers don’t call for it.

Buhr credits the oil suppliers for making the transition to CK-4 as smooth as possible.

“They did a really good job in handling the pressures they had,” he said. “There have been no issues at all with the oil itself.”

Iveson emphasized the need to work closely with your fleet’s oil supplier to ensure a smooth transition. This includes running oil analysis programs before making a change to a new viscosity, or changing oil drain intervals.

“We actually do oil analysis on every single one of our trucks at every single drain interval and we use a third party to provide us with feedback on not only how well the oil has lasted during that oil drain interval, but it’s also detecting coolant leaks or other minerals that may be in there, indicating engine wear,” Iveson explained.

Asked if he’s seen any fuel economy benefits from the CK-4 oil category, Iveson felt there has been some improvement, but it was difficult to isolate, as the fleet also rolled out some other fuel-saving initiatives at the same time, including air tabs and flow-through mud-flaps. Collectively, the fleet saw about a 1-1.5% improvement, some of which Iveson feels is attributable to the new oil category.

He sees first-hand some continued concern about the new oils. He recently visited a small service center where the technician was vexed about which oils to use on which trucks.

“There’s a lot of worry surrounding the changeover to the new oil and I don’t think there’s any real need for it,” he said. “Buy the right one up-front and then you don’t need to worry about it.”

Petro-Canada’s Ngai agreed, but acknowledged it will take some time yet before the industry completely transitions to the new category oils, noting it took three to five years for the industry to fully move from CI-4 to CJ-4. However, he added there’s no reason to fear the new oils.

“With the benefits (of CK-4) over and above CJ-4, there’s no reason to have a CJ-4,” he said. **TW**



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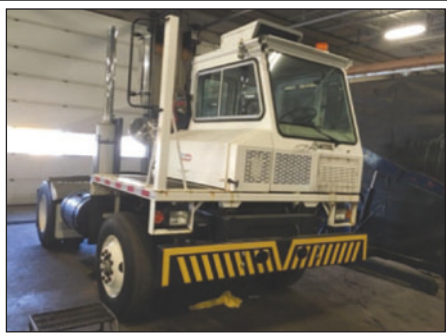
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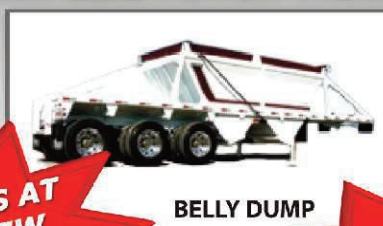
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# On a mission to serve

Highway Star of the Year urges industry to improve outreach to military veterans

By James Menzies

**MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO**

After a 25-year military career leading some assignments of monumental importance, Douglas McGowan thought his transition into civilian life would be simple. He began his military career driving heavy vehicles and had piloted almost every type of vehicle possible while in uniform, often under challenging circumstances.

That's why a career as a truck driver made sense to McGowan, but his optimism soon faded as resume after resume was ignored. After submitting 101 resumes – about 40 of which were for truck driving jobs – McGowan took a different approach.

"I told myself I was going to stop at 101 resumes, and I stopped at 101 resumes and never got any jobs," McGowan told *Truck West* in an interview. "With the training I had, running the people, having the highest level of security clearance you can get in the Canadian government, and I got nothing."

McGowan took a more aggressive approach when he saw a marquee sign advertising trucking jobs for Can West – a Calgary, Alta.-based propane hauler.

"I went in and I applied with a totally clean resume and abstract, and I never got a call," he recalled. "I went in again two weeks later because the sign was still up. I went in again after that, because they kept that damned sign up. I went back four times, and finally, I pretty much forced them to hire me because I wouldn't go away."

On April 21 in front of a large crowd at Truck World, McGowan was named the 2018 Highway Star of the Year. His truck driving career – like his military career before – has seen him progressively tackling more challenging jobs. At Can West, he hauled propane and then a picker truck. He then got his crane certificate. He spent a little time working in the office, but the call of the road was too difficult to ignore.

"I like the freedom of driving and of really being on the road and not having my phone ring," he said.

He also liked the solitude and peacefulness of hauling propane into remote parts of Western Canada.

"I'm getting paid to go and drive into the (Rocky Mountain) foothills for the day, deliver some propane, and drive home. I would do this for free," McGowan recalled.

When he decided it was time for a change three-and-a-half years ago, a trainer urged McGowan to get his dangerous goods certificate and apply to pull Super-Bs



Highway Star of the Year Douglas McGowan promotes the hiring of military veterans, claiming they make excellent professional drivers.



Douglas McGowan is named the 2018 Highway Star of the Year at Truck World.

at Westcan Bulk Transport. The training culture there and focus on safety appealed to McGowan.

"They care about the people driving," he said. "It was almost like the military. They wanted to make sure you understand and everything's going to be safe. They took the time (for training) and I respected that."

As per usual, McGowan soon found himself tasked with increasingly complicated jobs.

"I just seem to get these challenging jobs," he said. "I didn't really ask for them. I did ask to go to Norman Wells and drive from Fort Simpson. That is difficult driving. I liked the challenge of it. It reminded me of driving for the military again. The drivers up there are all excellent guys and really good drivers. When you get into that heavier stuff, you get that camaraderie that comes back that I'm used to with the

military, where you just really rely on each other."

McGowan brought with him a willingness to help others – and not just fellow drivers. Once on a run hauling propane, he offered to teach the enforcement officers at the scale the intricacies of the equipment he was running.

"He did a complete inspection on me," McGowan recalled. "Then, getting to know him over the hour that he inspected me, we were talking and he said, 'I do really well on the trucking stuff, but the dangerous goods, I don't really know.' I said, 'Well, I can show you how the valves work and how the shutdowns work on the truck.' I'm not looking to get anyone into trouble coming in behind me, but as far as I'm concerned, if somebody can't shut their engine down and they're hauling propane, you should catch them anyways, because that's just unsafe."

McGowan's selflessness was on display at Truck World, where instead of talking about his own career achievements, his acceptance speech focused on the need to do a better job of reaching out to ex-military men and women for careers in the trucking industry. He said military veterans have many skills and attributes that make them good professional drivers.

"Your operational commitment to getting the job done," he listed. "You can give them a task, they'll complete the task. Their communication is excellent. They're trained to communicate and they're trained to self-start. I think there's a lot of inherent training in the military that's applicable to logistics and to driving."

McGowan also disputes any notion that military veterans may not be interested in a trucking career.

"There needs to be education out there for people to go into the second career assistance program and to promote (trucking jobs)," he said. "Companies need to say, let's have a rider program. Let's have a ride-along program. Let's show them what the job is like and what we do. You're going to have more awareness on both sides."

He said most people still think of trucking requiring long days and extended stretches away from home, which isn't always the case. Asked why trucking does such a poor job attracting military veterans, McGowan said he believes there's a stigma in Canada against veterans.

"There's some sort of prejudice against hiring ex-military people, because I think there's a misunderstanding about their capability, about stability, about maybe trying to take over a situation or maybe being too aggressive," he said.

In the U.S., by contrast, there's been a concerted effort by trucking employers to reach out to military veterans as they transition back into civilian life.

"But the Canadian military isn't promoted the same as the American military is," he said. "The American military has a more aggressive type of national pride, whereas Canadians have this understanding that we're supposed to be polite, and not be militaristic."

The Highway Star of the Year Award is sponsored by Freightliner, Eberspaecher, and OBAC. The winner receives \$10,000, travel to Truck World and accommodations for two, a computer tablet, a one-year OBAC membership, and special-edition leather jacket. **TW**



Mark Dalton: Owner-Operator

By Edo Van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

Mark is in a coffee shop outside Calgary where a trucker is on the phone with a company that's late in paying. The man makes a spectacle of himself and Mark offers to give him a few pointers on how to collect money owed...

The man got up from the table he was at and walked over to join Mark. "Would you like a coffee?" he asked.

"No thanks," said Mark. "Already have one."

He sat down and slid in close to the table. "So, tell me how to get paid."

Mark was surprised at how eager the man was to hear what Mark had to say. Judging by the way he'd been on the phone, he expected the man to be sarcastic and contrary, but he appeared to be open to suggestions.

"Well," Mark said. "I'm assuming you're making sure all the pre-invoice stuff is done in a timely manner. You know, like, confirming delivery and sending out your invoices."

"Like clockwork," he said. "I don't want any late payment to be even partly my fault. I submit my stuff within a day or two."

"That's good," Mark said. "What kind of window do you give them to pay?"

"What do you mean? I want them to pay right away."

"Of course you do, but have you ever thought of giving anyone a discount for paying early?"

"Now why would I want to do that?"

It was a fair question. Why give anything away for free when it took so much to earn it in the first place.

"There's value in getting paid on time. For example, how much time and energy did you just spend trying to collect on money owed to you."

"I don't know. It was a five minute phone call..."

"Which you are going to be thinking about for a long, long time. What if you gave a \$10 or \$15 discount for a quick payment. Is what you're going through right now worth that much to you?"

"More, probably."

"Exactly. And if you're going to give a discount for early payment, then you can charge a penalty for late payment. You might not get it, but if you do it'll make up for the discounts you're giving on the front end."

"Okay, I can see that."

"And, if they say money is tight, you can always offer them a payment plan. A hundred dollars a week for six weeks is better than nothing for eight weeks."

"A little bit coming in all the time would be good."

# I have an (in) voice

## - Part 2 -



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

"Right..." Mark paused. "Now, you can't get angry."

The man sighed, as if he knew this already but couldn't help himself. "It's what I do best when I'm owed money."

"I'm sure it is," said Mark. "And believe me you have every right to be angry with someone who has taken your services without paying for them. But people – no, no one," Mark corrected himself, "responds well to an angry person on the phone, or one who uses profanity. It's no mystery why they hung up on you."

"They kept giving me excuses like the person who usually makes payments is sick, and they've changed the accounting system, or they've lost my invoice and can I send another?"

"There are always going to be excuses. Some of them are legit, some aren't. Trouble is, you won't always know, so the best thing is to treat them all as if they're real, then offer a solution to the problem. If someone's sick, ask when they'll be back so you can talk to them specifically. If they're going to put a check in the mail, tell them you'll come by to pick it up. Sooner or later they're going to run out of excuses."

The man was nodding now as if he was taking what Mark was saying to heart. "You must have no trouble getting people to pay you, eh?"

Mark laughed under his breath. "Not at all. Once in my early days driving longhaul, I had an invoice that was months overdue. I had the brilliant idea to write to the Canada Revenue Agency and tell them that this company wasn't paying their bills."

My thinking was that if they weren't paying their bills, then what sort of expenses were they claiming because they weren't paying any expenses."

"Did that work?"

"No, not at all. I never heard back from the CRA and the owner of the trucking company – I heard later – was so angry when he read my letter telling him what I'd done, he vowed he would never pay me a cent."

"Lesson learned?"

"Not yet. See, because it looked like I was never going to get anything from this guy, I wrote him once more, but this time I apologized for what I'd done saying I was wrong and should be more patient. Then I pleaded the wife and kids thing and how I was just trying to look out for them."

"And that worked?"

"A little. I got about half of what I was owed, but after that I never worked for him again so I was able to lose a bad client and replace him with some good ones."

"So you think I should apologize?"

"Yes."

"Say I'm sorry?"

"Yes."

"Then what?"

"Be polite. Be professional. Tell them you are sorry for the way you acted, but you have a family to support. Offer them a payment plan. Offer to come by to pick up the check. If there's a problem, ask them when you should call back and who you can speak to who has the authority to issue a check."

"And if that doesn't work?"

"Then you tell them you'll be taking legal action or putting the invoice out to a collection agency. Believe me, those guys call way more often than you and I ever could. Nobody wants to handle agency calls two, three, or four times a day."

"Maybe I'll call them tomorrow."

"No, do it now. You'll make the bigger impression now than tomorrow."

"Okay, I'll give it a try," he said, getting up from the table and making the call.

Mark watched as he paced back and forth across the coffee shop. Every once in a while he would look over at Mark for encouragement, but his voice was never loud enough for Mark to hear what he was saying. That was a good sign.

"Well?" Mark asked when he was done on the phone and returned to the table.

"At first they couldn't believe it was me on the phone, but the longer I kept my cool the better things went. Eventually, they said they'd try to get a check to me this week."

"And how does that compare to the first time you called them?"

"Like night and day." **TW**

Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 3 of *I have an (in) voice*.

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# The Adventures of NEWLAND TRANSPORT

By Edo Van Belkom

When they get to the truck, his wife has a huge travel bag she's taking with her. "We're only going out for the day. What's in the bag?" She's brought along food, some toiletries and a bunch of other things that Vic never would have brought along. He's wondering if this is a good idea, but is willing to wait to see how it goes before deciding if it's working or not.

He starts to do the circle check, but she stops him. "I can do the circle check," she says. "I do one every day on my bus. You just try and climb up into the cab. I'll be with you in a minute. Of course, Vic doesn't get into the truck, but instead watches her do her circle check. He hates to admit it, but she's thorough and takes her time with it. Already, Vic is feeling good about this trip.

"No. I'm waiting for things to warm up."

From that moment on, Vic says little else.

When they reach their first destination, Vic is impressed by how smoothly his wife is able to handle the truck. Her upshifts are smooth and she hasn't over-revved the engine or missed a shift once. Inside the truckyard, she's lucky that there is plenty of room and makes a wide turn to set up the trailer and put it in line to the loading dock.

"You want me to back it up?" Vic asks. As long as he can get the truck into gear, he can reverse just by using his good left leg to engage the clutch. But this yard is wide open and it should be easy to back up to the loading dock.

"I'd like to give it a try," she says.

"Then I'm going to get out and spot you," Vic says.

"I don't need your help," she answers.

"I'm not asking you. If you have a second set of eyes that can let you know if something's unsafe you should use it every time. The last thing we need is for you to hit something on the ground or someone hitting you when it could have been avoided."

"Oh," is all she said.

Vic has a few second thoughts about how his wife might be able to go on the road with him. "What about the kids?" he asks.

"My mom will be coming over in the morning and she'll be here when they get off school."

"What about if we have a long haul overnight?"

"She says she doesn't mind sleeping over. She wants to do anything she can to help."



Vic tries to think of a reason – any reason – why his wife can't drive with him in the passenger seat and can't come up with anything. At best, she can do all the driving. At worst, she can do all the highway miles and he can do the last bit at the loading dock.

Early the next morning, Vic's mother-in-law arrives and Vic and his wife head out to the truck.



"Do you want me to spot you?" Vic asks. "You know, help guide you out of the yard?"

She just looks at him, and shakes her head a bit. "I thought I told you to get into the truck."

"You did, but I-"

"Then get in the truck. How am I supposed to learn if all you want to do is baby me through this?"

Vic says nothing more and climbs up into the truck.

Moments later she climbs into the truck herself and inserts the key. With a fluid set of motions, she has the truck up and running in no time at all and takes a deep breath. "Nervous?" Vic asks.



he's able to slowly ease the truck back, snaking it right and left the whole way, but managing to meet the loading dock perfectly flush.

"That's good!" Vic says.

"I did it?" she asks, setting the brake and shutting the truck down.

"You did."



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Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



# Freightliner's EconicSD manufactured for Canadian and U.S. customers

By Derek Clouthier

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Freightliner Trucks has unveiled its EconicSD waste collection truck, a North American offering that focuses on driver comfort and safety.

The truck, which was first introduced in Germany in 1998 and

updated in 2013, completes the company's vocational lineup, and as Richard Saward, general manager of vocational and government sales for Freightliner Trucks said, is built to serve a segment that sees up to 1,400 stops per day in neighborhoods where safety is a primary concern.

"Vocational segments have a direct effect on our everyday lives," said Saward. "It's all fun and games until the trash can stays out on the road."

The Freightliner EconicSD is a low-entry COE waste collection truck, equipped with the Detroit DD8 mid-range engine and Detroit Assurance safety system.

Leveraging the global engineering experience of parent company Daimler AG, the refuse truck has been tailored to meet the needs of the North American customer.

"By working closely with our North American waste collection customers and analyzing how we could provide a solution that best benefits their businesses, we recognized the opportunity to adapt the Freightliner EconicSD for this market," said Roger Nielsen, president and CEO for Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA). "Our customers continually seek to elevate the safety and performance of their waste collection vehicles, and the Freightliner EconicSD is the right solution for the distinct needs of this segment."

More than 125 modifications were made the EconicSD in an



The Freightliner EconicSD high cab rear loader body.

effort to meet North American demands.

Saward underscored the vehicle's robust safety offerings during a sneak peek of the truck prior to the April 24 unveil at WasteExpo in Las Vegas.

The EconicSD is equipped with a panoramic windshield and low seating position to enhance driver visibility to mitigate incidents with pedestrians, cyclists, and other drivers.

"Waste collection vehicles need to navigate tight turns, busy urban streets and suburban neighborhoods, so safety is a critical concern at all times," added Jeff Allen, senior vice-president, operations and specialty vehicles for DTNA.

The truck will go into production in October of this year, will be available for order this June, with deliveries slated for April 2019.

As for pricing, Saward said, "This will not be the cheapest truck, but it will be the best." **TW**

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# Doing all the ‘small’ things really well

By Derek Clouthier

OAK BLUFF, MANITOBA

Go big or go home, the saying goes, and REK Express takes this to heart when it comes to the freight they haul and their vision for the future.

Company president Ryan Mitchell may have told *Truck West*, “To be honest, we really don’t do anything overly unique, we just do all the small things really well,” but it takes a great deal of skill and experience to be able to safely move the type of equipment REK specializes in.

Mitchell did admit that at times he forgets how many factors and how complicated it is to do what they do, and most of the accolades go to his staff.

“We’ve got a team that’s been doing it for so long that it feels like just a normal day’s work,” said Mitchell, “but there’s actually a lot that goes into it.”

The majority of REK’s freight is brand new farm and construction equipment. Using double drop RGN trailers, as well as flatbeds and step decks, REK hauls across North America, moving machinery weighing up to 60,000lbs and stretching to 12 feet wide.

And though experience helps, it’s not easy to move such large pieces safely and efficiently.

“The foundation for us starts with having some really high quality people and high quality equipment – spec’ing the right trucks and trailers,” Mitchell explained. “Our team has to constantly be aware of travel restrictions, permit requirements, permit restrictions, and making sure we are doing the job safely, whether that’s during the loading and unloading process, or traveling down the highway.”

One of the primary points of concern when hauling this type of equipment is load securement, particularly when the freight is so valuable.

“We need to safely keep the product on the trailer and deliver it to the customer without a single



It’s easy to forget all that goes in to hauling specialized, oversized freight.

scratch,” said Mitchell. “This is very different than hauling other product or even used machinery. There are basic fundamentals and rules around load securement, but you just can’t predict everything a driver might see, so you teach the fundamentals and then rely on the driver to problem solve when they’re on the road.”

Planning ahead is also an important facet of REK’s operations, and it doesn’t come easy.

Mitchell said being able to plan a set of weekly trips for their drivers and have them home for the weekend for a chance to reset is challenging, but it’s also how REK sets itself apart from the competition.

“We are incredibly proactive in our planning, to the point where I’ve seen situations where every driver in our fleet has two and three full round-trips pre-planned for them,” Mitchell said. “In some cases drivers have four or five reloads planned and know what they’re doing two weeks in advance.”

Even Mitchell has questioned the attention to detail when it comes to his company’s obsession with planning, but in the end it’s about maximizing a driver’s time.

“Sometimes I wonder whether it’s even productive to plan that far ahead, but it allows us to maximize every spare hour for our drivers and I know they really appreciate it,” he said. “It’s pretty rare that a driver leaves the yard without knowing what they’re doing next.”

Mitchell’s attention to detail is something he learned from his father, Dennis Mitchell, who started the company in 1997 with just a handful of trucks.

With nearly 20 power units today, Ryan continues to employ the same core principles his father did.

There are of course differences with how a carrier operates in 2018 compared to the mid-’90s, one of which, Ryan said, is the level of transparency he has brought to REK, and how he has made those principles more public.

“We are very calculated about considering a new hire and their consistency with our values, same when managing people,” Ryan said. “Everyone has their own management style, and I just prefer to lay it all on the table right from the start to set expectations and make sure there is extreme clarity around the attitude and character that we are trying to maintain.”

One industry issue Ryan has laid an opinion on the table is the need to have every driver and carrier on a level playing field.

Not going so far as to advocate for further regulations, Ryan said the rules and expectations for carriers are clear, and they need to be followed.

“It’s time to enforce the rules properly, consistently, and as often as possible,” he said. “I don’t think the government holds carriers accountable nearly enough, so it creates incentive to compete by cutting corners.”

Ryan feels carriers need to better follow the rules when it comes to

hiring new drivers, hours-of-service compliance, and safety regulations.

“Carriers can choose to completely ignore those rules and get away with it for far too long before they see any real consequences,” said Ryan. “If we invested in better enforcement it will naturally weed out the unsafe drivers, and it will allow quality carriers to charge appropriately for doing the job in accordance with the rules that have been laid out.”

Electronic logging devices are one way, according to Ryan, to level the playing field, but the rules must be enforced for any new technology to work.

This type of approach, as well as a progressive attitude of the future, has helped make REK a success.

“Ultimately, we need to adapt to how our customers’ business models change,” Ryan said, “and that could look entirely different with the growing viability of technologies like 3D printing, virtual reality, and autonomous vehicles.”

Even with all that is on his plate, Ryan maintains his humble outlook of the work REK Express achieves daily, and how to continue steering the ship forward.

“I’m a strong believer that in times where there are major changes and uncertainty, the basic foundational pieces of running a business are more important than ever,” he said. “Having a team of people that are engaged enough to care deeply about serving customers, and staying extremely committed to integrity, honesty, and treating people with respect.” **TW**



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