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Derek Clouthier takes a spin in Shell's futuristic Starship, which aimed to improve truck efficiency.

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Power play

How much horsepower is too much, and how much is not enough? It's all about application.

Good times

Truck orders reach all-time high, truckers at 'full capacity'

July truck orders set a new all-time high at 52,250 units, truckers are operating at full capacity, and there is no relief in sight for shippers.

FTR reports July Class 8 truck orders surpassed the previous alltime best month of March 2006. The success was widespread, with most OEMs achieving elevated levels, FTR reported. Orders were up 25% month-over-month and 187% vear-over-year. Five of the highest 12 order months in history have occurred in the first seven months of this year, with orders over the past 12 months totaling a whopping 445,000 units.

FTR says fleets are "desperate" to get new trucks, but supply is limited. This is causing fleets to place large orders in hopes of securing future deliveries in the face of a current truck shortage. Manufacturers, according to FTR, are struggling to keep pace with demand as some parts and components suppliers haven't been able to produce and deliver on time.

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A race official signals the impending start of a drag race between two fully loaded tractor-trailers during Rodeo du Camion.

The need for speed

Some of the fastest race rigs bring their horsepower to Rodeo du Camion

By James Menzies

NOTRE-DAME-DU-NORD, QUEBEC

Spectators came from as far away as Japan to witness the spectacle that is Rodeo du Camion in this northwestern Quebec town Aug. 2-5. The main attraction is the truck racing, which sees bobtails and fully-laden B-Trains loaded to 62,500 kgs drag racing up a public street with a 12% grade, as thousands of spectators line both sides of the track.

Black smoke billows out of the gleaming stacks, the diesel engines roar, and the fans roar back in appreciation over and over again during the course of the oneof-a-kind event. Some drivers put as much as \$500,000 into prepping their rigs for the races, while others with more modest pocketbooks compete in the stock category, which limits modifications.

But the real badass trucks put out 2,500-plus horsepower and repeatedly brought the fans to their feet.

"The driver makes a difference, and after that it's the wallet," admits Michel Denomme, who competed in the stock class, finishing fourth in the bobtail category. He

owns 15-truck fleet MD Transport and has been racing at Rodeo du Camion for more than 20 years. He figures he has spent about \$10,000 getting his truck race-ready, despite the limitations placed on the category.

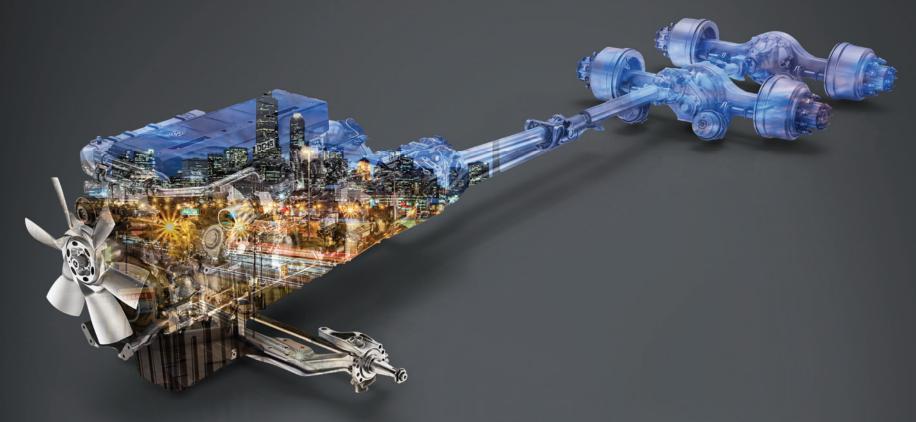
"And if you break down, it costs more money," he said. His race truck is powered by a 550 Cat twin turbo engine putting out about 1,000 hp. It has an 18-speed transmission, 46,000-lb rear ends, and a 4.10 gear ratio.

Racing legend Nicolas Gagnon and his Coga Racing team topped the A Class, representing the fastest trucks, in both bobtail and loaded categories. His truck is nowered by a Cat C18 engine with 2,000 hp "and a lot of torque," he told Truck News. He had won his first two heats when we caught up with him and was feeling confident.

"I'm happy," he said, and for good reason, as he went on to take the top prizes.

For many, truck racing and the Rodeo are family traditions. Robert Kurtz raced the 1968 Kenworth that his father Brent won with in 2001. He is the grandson of Brian Kurtz, who founded Brian Kurtz Trucking.

"Dad's pretty excited for it to come out again," the younger Kurtz said. He's been racing for about four



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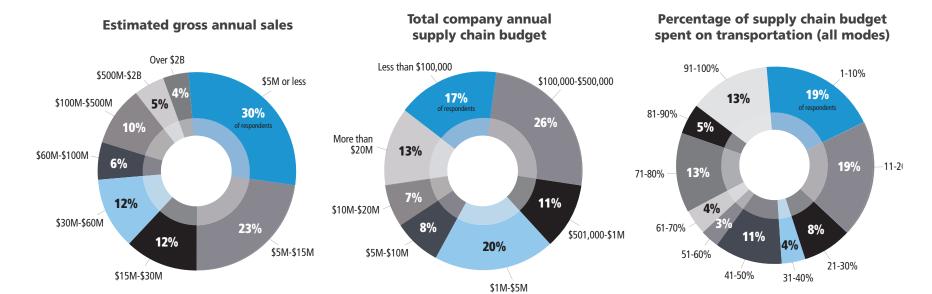
Shipper Sense

How Canadian shippers spend their supply chain money

Mirroring the economy, Canadian shippers are typically small to medium-sized companies. Yet given the geographic vastness of the Canadian market and the need to access the massive US market, transportation is a considerable portion of their spend. Almost half of Canadian shippers have supply chain budgets over \$1 million and almost 40% of shippers are spending more than half of that on transportation. More than two thirds are spending over \$100,000 annually on truck transport.



Follow Lou on Twitter @LouSmyrlis.



Percentage of transportation budget Percentage of transportation budget spent on truck transport spent on courier transport Less than \$10,000 \$10,000-\$49,000 Less than \$10,000 \$10M or more \$10M or more 14% 26% \$5M-\$9.999M \$50,000-\$99,999 10% \$1M-\$4.999M 6% \$5M-\$9.999M 10% 5% \$500,000-\$999,999 5% \$10,000-\$49,000 26% \$1M-\$4.999M 18% 27% \$100,000-\$499,999 12% 16% \$100,000-\$499,999 \$500,000-\$999,999 \$50,000-\$99,999



Predicting future crashes

When it comes to a driver's likelihood of being involved in a crash, you can predict the future

What if you could predict which drivers in your fleet are the most likely to be involved in a crash? You could intervene with them ahead of time, address risky behaviors, offer remedial training, and potentially prevent that crash from occurring. That would be a pretty powerful tool, and it's actually not at all farfetched or unattainable.

The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) recently updated its Predicting Truck Crash Involvement report. The crash predictor report aims to predict future crash involvement based on historical data. The 62-page report offers a comprehensive look at the driver behaviors that are the leading indicators of a driver's likelihood of future crash involvement.

Did you know a driver who has committed a reckless driving violation is 114% more likely to be involved in a crash than one without such a violation? Failure to yield the right of way violations also more than doubled the likelihood of the driver being involved in a crash.

Eight other violations had a significant relationship with future crash likelihood, including: failure to keep in proper lane; failure to use signal; involvement in a past crash; improper lane violations;



reckless/careless/inattentive/negligent driving; improper or erratic lane change; and hours-of-service violations.

Surprisingly, speeding violations were well down the list, with drivers convicted of speeding increasing their likelihood of being involved in a crash by just 45%.

Another interesting finding was that female drivers were less likely to engage in risky driving behaviors than males; this was consistent across all statistically significant behaviors. But women accounted for just 2.45% of all drivers included in the study. Age also played a role in a driver's likelihood to engage in risky behavior.

The entire report is chock full of interesting data, which can and should - be used by fleets to refine their hiring and training protocols. Commercial vehicle enforcement agencies are already using the data to modify their

enforcement policies, according to the report.

"Members of the commercial motor vehicle enforcement community interviewed for this analysis stated that their agency has shifted focus toward those driver behaviors with a stronger relationship to crash risk," the report reads.

While the crash predictor report draws on data from the U.S., I think it's safe to say driver behaviors between U.S. and Canadian drivers do not differ drastically. A total of 439,260 drivers were included in the study, so the sample size is also significant. The full report can be downloaded from www.atri-online.org. TN



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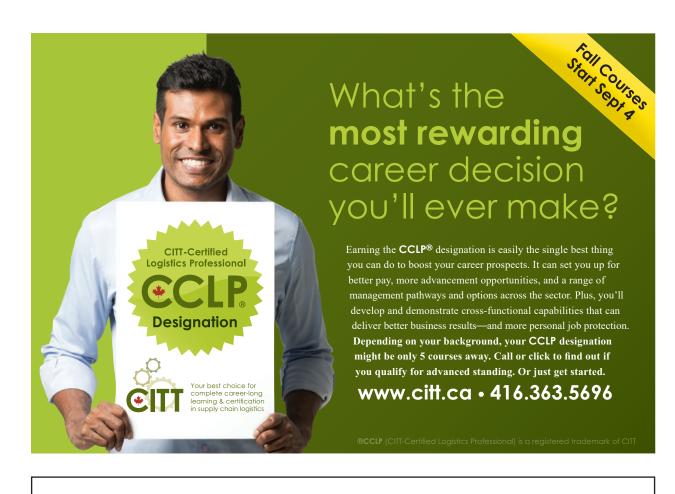
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Business

Record orders

Continued from page 1

"The supply chain issues began around March. OEMs started falling behind in deliveries to fleets in April. Deliveries did improve a bit in June, but most OEMs are still operating in catch-up mode," said Don Ake, FTR vice-president of commercial vehicles. "It is uncertain when suppliers will be able to improve delivery times and for OEMs to ship all orders on time. Realistically it may take up to a year for everyone to catch up."

It's an unusual situation, Ake explained, with fleets placing large orders to secure their spots in line for future deliveries.

"This is a unique situation where strong demand is meeting limited supply," he said. "Prices can't rise enough to alleviate the situation. Therefore, the market is responding by placing an immense number of orders into the backlog. Fleets are reserving places in line, so they can get the maximum number of trucks in the future. It is a bizarre occurrence and it will not be resolved soon. Conditions may be abnormal, but they are abnormally good."

"Aside from any major negative impacts due to trade relations, which is difficult to forecast at this stage, freight demand should lead to even stronger trucking conditions in the near term."

Avery Vise, FTR

Trailer orders, however, declined for the sixth straight month in June, in line with an expected summer slowdown.

There were 18,600 units ordered in June, with orders totaling 335,000 units over the past 12 months, according to FTR.

The market traditionally slows in the summer months.

"You can expect order rates to remain subdued for a couple of months," said Ake. "Fleets should begin placing substantial orders for 2019 beginning in September, a month earlier than normal, because production next year is expected to be hefty once again. The economy is healthy, freight growth is sturdy, and sales remain strong. The market is performing according to traditional trends, albeit at record-setting levels."

Truck and trailer orders are strong in part because the trucking industry in the U.S. is operating at full capacity, according to the latest FTR Trucking Conditions Index.

A May index reading of 11.4 reflected full capacity utilization, and FTR projects trucking conditions to improve further as the freight season enters its peak.

Total truckload rates are forecast to be up an estimated 13% this year, according to FTR. However, it projects trucking conditions to moderate in 2019 as more capacity comes on line. Even so, trucking conditions will still outpace recent years, FTR indicates.

"Key indicators of freight demand such as manufacturing and construction remain strong," said FTR vice-president of trucking research, Avery Vise. "Aside from any major negative impacts due to trade relations, which is difficult to forecast at this stage, freight demand should lead to even stronger trucking conditions in the near term. On the other hand, despite aggressive recruiting, a very tight labor market has allowed trucking companies to add only modestly to the driver force, keeping the industry at full active utilization. Therefore, two critical external factors in coming months will be trade and the labor market. Another factor will be the fuel environment as the direction of diesel and crude prices is unclear. Fuel pricing has risen a couple of times recently only to moderate slightly each time."

Shippers shouldn't expect to see relief any time soon, FTR noted, pointing to its Shippers Conditions Index, which in May remained solidly in negative territory. The -12.3 reading follows on the -13.4 reading seen in April, which reflected the worst conditions shippers have ever experienced.

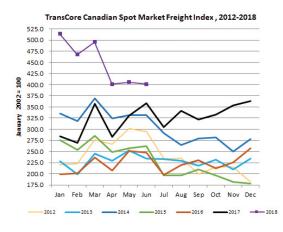
"Shippers are in an extended period of difficult conditions because of a tight truck market and sub-par rail service. While conditions are expected to stabilize, there is unlikely to be a significant improvement for shippers before the end of the year," said Todd Tranausky, senior transportation analyst.

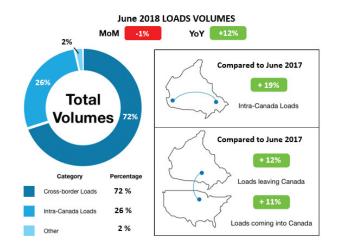
Here in Canada, the spot market remained red hot. Canadian spot market load volumes through the first half of 2018 were up 43% over the same six months in 2017, according to TransCore Link Logistics' Freight Index.

They were also 33% stronger than the second half of 2017, reflecting historically high load volumes, which is also attracting more capacity.

TransCore reports Q2 load volmes were 18% lower than the record-breaking first quarter, but up 24% compared to the second quarter of 2017. The index was flat in June, but 12% higher than in June 2017.

Load volumes in the second quarter were the second highest ever recorded by Loadlink, behind only Q1 2018. Load volumes remained flat through the second quarter, but truck postings surged, returning to levels last seen in 2017.





Capacity increased 35% in the second quarter, compared to O1. The truck-to-load ratio decreased slightly in June, with 1.45 trucks posted per load. Capacity remains tighter than it was a year ago, when 1.75 trucks were available for every load.

And in the U.S., for-hire truck tonnage dipped 0.4% in June, but is up 7.8% year-over-year.

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) reported the v-o-v gain was higher than the 7.4% rise in May. Year-to-date, tonnage is up 7.9%, far outpacing the annual gain of 3.8% seen in 2017.

"In the second quarter, we saw the tonnage index jump 1.8% from the previous quarter and 8.4% from a year earlier," said ATA chief economist Bob Costello. "This robust growth fits with what is likely to be a very strong GDP reading for the second quarter. I expect the growth in tonnage to moderate, but remain at very high levels in the months ahead." TN



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Anatomy of a private fleet

Joint U.S./Canada benchmarking study offers insights into private fleets

By James Menzies

NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

Why are we here? Without getting overly philosophical, that's the question private fleet managers need to constantly ask themselves, according to Tom Moore, senior vice-president of the National Private Truck Council (NPTC).

Moore was sharing findings of the second annual private fleet benchmarking survey, which was reintroduced in 2017 to compare private fleet practices in the U.S. and Canada. His presentation was held during the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada's annual conference June 14. Part of the survey involved asking U.S. private fleets why they exist.

"The number one reason private fleets exist is customer service," Moore said of their response, with cost being the second biggest reason, and control the third.

But when looking at the largest challenges facing private fleets today, the ability to find drivers emerged as the top issue in both the U.S. and Canada.

"Compared to last year, drivers are a much bigger issue in the States right now," Moore said. Cost was a bigger issue in the U.S. than in Canada, while equipment and maintenance combined to become the second biggest concern facing Canadian private fleets.

Customer service is also a high-ranking concern for private fleet managers in both countries, and how that is being measured is evolving. Moore noted on-time deliveries are being tracked by twothirds of respondents, with customer comments monitored by 80% - an increase from last year's survey.

"The customer is going to define what's right in their mind and create the standards by which you are measured," Moore noted.

He also noticed an increase in those private fleets monitoring their fill rate.

Profile of a private fleet

The benchmarking survey also painted a picture of the private fleet in the U.S. and Canada. The average fleet operates 61.5 power units, up from 48 last year. The median

fleet size was 43 power units, compared to 33 last year. The trailer to tractor ratio was 2.15 trailers for every tractor.

Sixty-seven per cent of responding fleets also reported operating medium-duty trucks, with the entire truck population comprised of 69% heavy-duty power units and 31% medium-duty.

Canadian fleets are more likely to lease their trucks, with half of Canadian private fleets leasing the majority of their equipment compared to 19% in the U.S. who do so. In Canada, 61% of those leases include full maintenance services.

Heavy-duty private fleets in Canada averaged 98,998 kilometers last year, up 3.3% from the prior year. Their American counterparts ran 96,000 kilometers, down 2%.

Nearly 70% of private fleets utilized their own equipment to deliver outbound loads, with third-party carriers and rail being used for the remainder.

"That's where we've been in the States for years, and that's a good place to be," Moore said. About 60% of those outbound shipments went



Tom Moore

directly to retail locations, with 22% going to distribution centers and 20% being interplant moves. The average retail delivery involved 7.87 stops.

But while private fleets are moving the majority of their own outbound loads, inbound movements represent a growth opportunity, with only 43% of such loads handled privately.

"There are a lot of opportunities on the inbound side of the fence to offset some of the outbound costs," Moore said. "With the capacity crunch in the States, more people are not worried about inbound flow. They need to get their units back and reloaded and back out to market relatively quickly. So, we're seeing less interest in the inbound side of the fence than we historically have."



Maintaining the fleet

The equipment and maintenance questions uncovered the most significant differences between private fleet operations in the U.S and Canada. Last year, 90% of Canadian private fleets reported outsourcing maintenance operations, which slid to 68% this year.

"That's a lot higher than we're seeing in the States," Moore said.

This could be due to the higher percentage of Canadian fleets choosing full-service leases.

Average fuel economy in Canada and the U.S. was 6.6 mpg, with medium-duty trucks achieving an average of 7.5 mpg. There were no significant differences between the two countries. Fuel economy is improving as fleets update their equipment, Moore pointed out.

Breakdowns were primarily caused by electrical issues, followed by emissions systems and engines. Lighting, tires, fuel systems, brakes, drivetrain, and cooling systems also led to breakdowns, in that order. American fleets are more likely to track their breakdown rate per 100,000 miles traveled, with twothirds of Canadian fleets not tracking that metric at all.

Class 8 trade cycles have been shortened. Canadian private fleets are trading in their Class 8 trucks after about 350,000 miles. Again, Moore said this short trade cycle

could relate to the more widespread use of leasing in Canada. The same could be said for van trailers, which in Canada are renewed every 10 years versus 12 years in the U.S.

The human equation

Differences in hiring practices and compensation for professional drivers emerged during the benchmarking survey. Moore noted an increase in owner-operators returning to the market.

In Canada, there is a union presence in 40% of private fleets, compared to only 13% in the U.S.

Canadian drivers were a little younger than their American counterparts, at 48.5 years compared to 50. In the U.S. the average age of the driver has consistently been 50 or older.

"The question is, what do you do or not do at age 50 that you could've done at 25 or 30?" Moore wondered, adding the older drivers could contribute to more workers compensation and safety issues, but also bring more experience. "Understand, the older workforce does present opportunities as well as challenges."

American private fleet drivers drove an average of 39 hours a week, compared to 32.56 hours in Canada. Seventy per cent of Canadian private fleet drivers were home every night, compared to 60% of their American counterparts.

Average driver retention in the U.S. was 9.4 years, compared to 12 in Canada. Canadian fleets on average require 2.5 years of driving experience compared to 1.75 years in the U.S. before they are considered.

"When we're facing a driver shortage, that's the wrong time to lower (hiring) standards," Moore said. "We really need to make sure we're getting the right drivers in place."

The average age of a new hire is about 41.

Moore commended Canadian fleets for doing "a phenomenal job" when screening new hires. Steps include abstracts, road tests, criminal background tests, pre-employment medical exams, and personality profiles.

About 44% of new hires are taken from the for-hire trucking segment. Moore predicted drivers will continue to see their value increase.

"We're starting to see drivers like free agents in football," he said. "They will go to where their working conditions are great, the money is better, and they can control their own destiny. They will say, 'Do you want me? I've got this kind of record and pedigree.' It's up to us to treat our drivers very, very well going forward."

He encouraged private fleets to consider recruiting new drivers from other areas of the company, since they are already familiar with the company and its values.

"I'd rather teach someone to drive a truck than teach them the right customer-facing skills," he said.

Driver compensation is on the rise, with 52% of private fleet drivers now being paid an hourly rate compared to only 20% being paid by the mile.

"Hourly pay is going to increase," Moore predicted, noting that compensation method is already higher in Canada than in the U.S.

Average pay in Canada was .496 cents per mile or \$24.74 an hour. Drivers are also receiving generous benefits, Moore added, with the only areas lagging being tuition reimbursements and family leave. Three-quarters of responding fleets pay incentive bonuses, equaling about 2.5% of their total pay, in line with the U.S. Safety and compliance are the biggest areas that are rewarded, although in the U.S. twice as many fleets are paying referral bonuses for new hires.

Only 61% of Canadian fleets have a driver wellness program, compared to 92% in the U.S.

Despite the differences, fleets on both sides of the border see a bright future. Moore said 51% of responding private fleets anticipated growth, mostly measured in double digits.

"It's a very buoyant future we have," he concluded. TN

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Are women drivers safer than men?

New ATRI study says they are



An updated report from ATRI indicates female truck drivers are less likely than men to be involved in a crash.

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Violations for reckless driving or failing to yield the right of way remain the top two driving behaviors that predict future crashes, the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) says.

And when it comes to a battle of the sexes, female truck drivers were safer than men.

The finding comes in the institute's third update to its crash predictor model, which compares behaviors like prior crashes, violations and convictions to the likelihood of a future crash.

The analysis draws on data from more than 435,000 U.S. truck drivers over a two-year timeframe, and identifies almost a dozen behaviors that raise the risk of a future crash by more than 50%.

Involvement in a prior crash increases the likelihood of a future crash by 74%, researchers found. Female truck drivers were also determined to be safer than male counterparts in every statistically significant safety behavior, with men 20% more likely to be involved in a crash.

Many fleets have come to use the crash predictor model to steer recruiting and training practices.

"ATRI's crash predictor model is a key input to our driver hiring and training practices. Safety is our first concern and by understanding how driver histories relate to future crash probability, we can develop targeted solutions for minimizing safety risks," said John M. Prewitt, president of Tideport Distributing.

The latest ATRI crash predictor model also identifies industry average crash costs across six types of crashes and severity.

The report can be downloaded from www.atri-online.org. $\ensuremath{\textbf{TN}}$





Canada's publicly-traded trucking companies are thriving

By James Menzies

Recently reported financial statements from Canada's publicly-traded trucking companies show they are taking advantage of a strong market, increasing driver compensation, and boosting profits at the same time.

Titanium Transportation Group, Mullen Group, and TFI International all reported improved earnings in the second quarter, and voiced optimism for continuing strong conditions.

Titanium achieves record results

Titanium Transportation reported Q2 revenue of \$51.8 million, marking a year-over-year increase of 58%. Net income was \$2.2 million, or double the previous quarter.

The truck transportation segment earned \$29.7 million, an increase of 38%, and the logistics group grew revenue by 103% to \$23.2 million. Improving rates and the ability to add capacity in a driver-starved market were two of the reasons Titanium Transportation Group was able to achieve such strong results.

Speaking to analysts about O2 and first half 2018 results, chief executive officer Ted Daniel revealed the acquisition of Xpress Group added \$4 million in revenue, rate increases contributed \$2.5 million and volume growth added \$1.5 million. The company was able to add 40 drivers in the first half of 2018, while many competitors struggled to add capacity.

Daniel believes industry conditions will remain strong.

"Seasonality tends to benefit Q2 more significantly than any other quarter, however industry conditions remain positive and we are well positioned to respond to increased customer demands," he said. "These are fairly strong economic times in the trucking industry."

He said the ingredients driving the trucking industry's prosperity -

the driver shortage, rising freight volumes, and a looming electronic logging device (ELD) mandate in Canada, to name a few - will not be resolved anytime soon. He's not worried that record truck and trailer orders will eliminate capacity tightness.

"That is not producing a driver," he noted. "I don't see capacity being resolved any time soon...I believe market conditions over the next 18-24 months are going to be fairly strong."

Daniel expects to see more acquisitions in the industry over the next 18-24 months, as EBITDA margins improve industry-wide, making it a better time for potential sellers to exit the industry.

Mullen's trucking segment reaches record revenue

Mullen Group reported record revenue for its trucking/logistics segment in the second quarter, up 19.8% year-over-year to \$219.4 million. Its total revenue was \$295.7 million, an increase of 8.1%, but its oilfield services revenue was down \$14.1 million. Net income was \$13.9 million

Murray Mullen, chairman and chief executive officer, said the company's 15 trucking business units were able to capitalize on a tightening supply chain and that he feels a turnaround is occurring in the oil and gas industry.

"All in all, I was most pleased with the performance of our trucking/ logistics segment and this despite a Canadian economy that is barely growing," Mullen said. "Clearly our oilfield services segment results were once again disappointing, however, I am of the belief this will improve with the acquisitions we have completed along with our expectation that the oil and natural gas industry is poised to increase capital spending and drilling activity in Western Canada once again."

During a call with analysts, Mullen said the company's strong revenue performance was "all on the back of the trucking/logistics segment." He noted the company was able to achieve pricing gains and he expects demand for trucking services to remain strong.

"Consumer spending is resilient. We're nearing full employment. It's very difficult to grow our business because the labor pool is so tight. Those are the primary reasons I think pricing gains will be retained," Mullen said.

"These are fairly strong economic times in the trucking industry."

Ted Daniel, Titanium

Drivers are benefiting from the strong market as well, but not to the same extent as they are in the U.S., Mullen noted, where the average truck driver has seen his or her earnings increase by US\$8,000-\$10,000.

'The supply chain is very tight in the U.S. market and trucking is doing very well, not just okay like we are here in Canada," Mullen said. "If we had any economic growth, our employees would do exceptionally well."

TFI International boosts profits

A strong trucking market also allowed TFI International to boost its margins and profits in the second quarter. The company reported Q2 net income of \$80.4 million on revenue of \$1.32 billion, an increase of 4%.

"Our consistent focus on profitable growth and operating efficiencies drove strong results across our entire business this quarter," said Alain Bedard, chairman, president and chief executive officer. "We generated an operating margin of 10.5% compared to 6.5% a year earlier, with margin expansion at all four segments. In addition, we nearly doubled our net cash from operating activities. Looking ahead, TFI is uniquely positioned to capitalize on the evolving transportation dynamics across North America."

On a conference call with analysts, Bedard also emphasized the importance of keeping drivers and paying them fairly in a tight market.

"We are trying to address that with a philosophy that, guys, let's spend more money in trying to retain the ones we have versus chasing the ones we don't have," he explained.

"So, everybody agrees with this philosophy and for sure, having a stable wage for those guys is priority number one for us at the operations level."

This approach also requires the company to put pressure on customers that don't value drivers' time and take too long to get them loaded or unloaded.

"The guy gets into the yard and he's got to wait five hours to be loaded. We are addressing those customers now, saying 'Listen Mr. Customer, if you don't change your behavior, I am going to have a big problem. I am going to lose customers all the time. We have a dedicated customer...where people didn't look at that before. And that guy is the worst churner of drivers. My turnover with this customer is probably 240%. So, we say, 'Guys, hey, wake up and smell the coffee. This has got to be addressed. We have to sit down with the customer and tell him, 'Listen, it doesn't work'."

Like Daniel, Bedard is not concerned about record truck orders leading to a jump in capacity in the near-term.

"Yes, guys are ordering more trucks," Bedard said. "But, we still don't have the trucks that could be driven without the driver. It's really, really difficult to find drivers...so it's getting to be very tight. So, we feel very good about where the company is going in 2018 and we believe that this is again going to be a very strong 2019." **TN**



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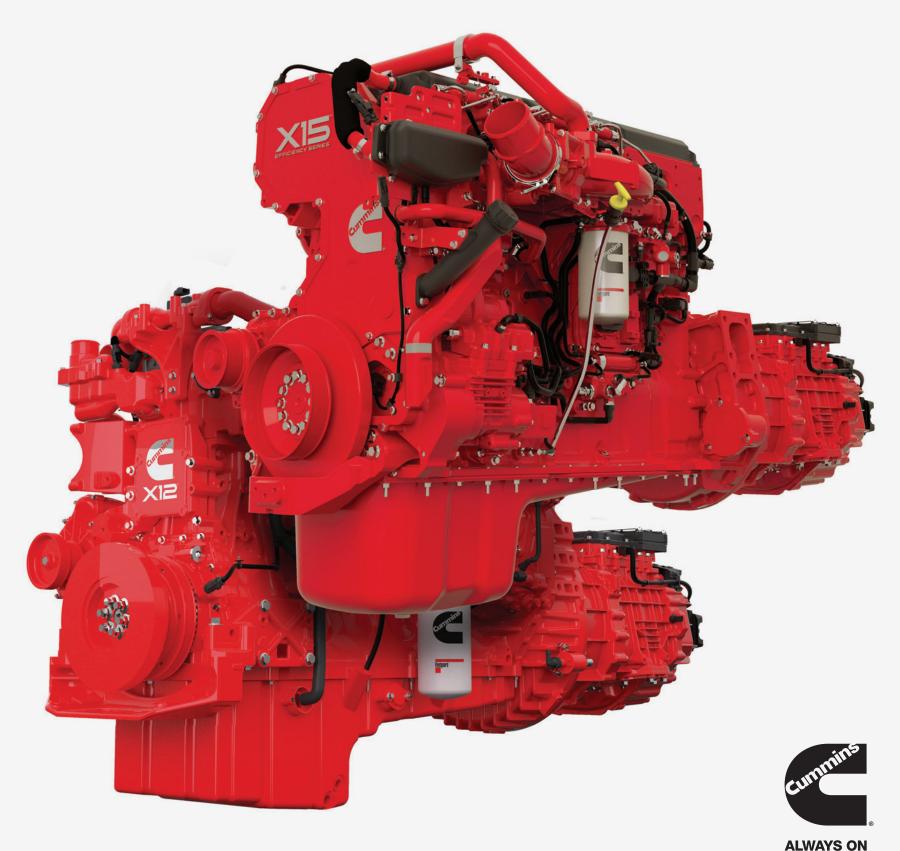
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Ontario truck blitz results improving



Const. Pat Martin (left) and Staff Sgt. Mike Hinsperger gave PMTC attendees an overview of this year's truck safety blitz performance.

NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

"If a proper pre-trip is done, 90% of the stuff I find doing roadside inspections should be caught."

That was the blunt message delivered by Const. Pat Martin, an officer with the Ontario Police Commercial Vehicle Committee (OPCVC), who was speaking June 14 at the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada's annual conference. He was joined by Staff Sgt. Mike Hinsperger of the same organization to discuss road safety and inspection blitzes.

Last year, said Hinsperger, the police agencies making up the OPCVC conducted blitzes that included 1,837 commercial vehicle inspections, resulting in 1,574 charges and a startling 40% out-of-service (OOS) rate. However, Hinsperger noted these are targeted inspections, so the high OOS rate doesn't mean as much as the better rates resulting from Roadcheck.

"I have to throw a grain of salt in there," he said of the results. "The type of enforcement we are doing is very subjective. When our officers see three trucks going down the road and one is a brand new Peterbilt and the other is a 1991 International Binder with parts falling off it, which one do you think we're going to bring in for inspection? Yes, it's a high out-of-service rate, however that out-of-service rate represents those vehicles we brought in for inspection."

The good news is, 2018 results have improved so far, after about 12 years of consistently high OOS rates.

"The 2018 results we've been seeing have been vastly improved over what we have seen in the past," Hinsperger said, noting they've been in the 22-28% OOS range at the blitzes conducted this year. "Hopefully we'll see that trend continue."

The most common defects found at these blitzes tend to be brakes that are out of adjustment, as well as load securement. Other issues that come up include: defective steering; unsafe trailers; cracked frames; defective tires; loose wheel fasteners; expired inspection reports; and false logbooks. But many of the mechanical items should be discovered during a proper pre-trip inspection, the officers noted.

"Loose wheel fasteners consistently come up," said Hinsperger. "Drivers should be doing a thorough inspection of the vehicle before the vehicle goes on the road. How preventable is a loose wheel fastener? I'd say very."

After highlighting a number of commercial vehicle violations Martin and Hinsperger have encountered in the field, the session moved to a question and answer format. PMTC delegates had plenty of questions about distracted driving, which Hinsperger said is now the number one cause of collisions.

He said there were nearly 65,000 crashes on Ontario's 400-series highways in 2017, with most of them involving distraction.

"Distracted driving has surpassed impaired driving as the number one cause of collisions," said Hinsperger.

"From what I see every day, it is a huge problem," Martin agreed.

While the Highway Traffic Act doesn't specifically address distracted driving, the enforcement officers pointed out careless driving charges can be laid if a driver is distracted. And it doesn't have to be by a mobile phone.

"Say a person lost control drinking coffee or tuning the radio or reaching to pet a dog. Is that distracted driving? It's called careless driving and that is the investigation avenue we will take," Hinsperger explained.

Drivers can help roadside interactions with enforcement officers go more smoothly by being organized.

"The biggest thing for me is documents," said Martin. "Are they in a nice folder? If a guy is looking under his seat for his pre-trip, that's a big indicator for me that maybe I upgrade to a Level 2 or Level 1 inspection. If everything is in order, off he goes."

Hinsperger urged fleets to make it easier for drivers to do their pretrip inspections, by taking advantage of available tools such as pushrod stroke indicators, which make their jobs easier.

"Let's make the job as easy as possible for the drivers," he said. "It's going to improve the safety of your trucks. Put things like tattletales on the pushrods so a driver can recognize quickly if it's coming out of adjustment." TN

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TD Smith entered the liquid tank world in 1979 from Toronto, transporting liquid food and chemicals throughout Canada and the United States where Thomas' son, Michael, now President and Owner, joined his Father. Michael has been around and active in the transport business all his life when not in school. Today TD Smith Transport operates under those same principals, always putting any excess money back into the company for betterment. The company highly respects its personnel and equipment that they operate by working to eliminate downtime and ensure safety on the road. They run modern state of the art equipment to service their customers with the upmost professionalism, wanting them to be very proud of their service and dedication. They see customers as partners.

Since 1990 the company has had a relationship with Tremcar and the Tremblay Family acknowledging within a very short time that they operate under the same principles as TD Smith. Tremcar deals directly with TD Smith and asks for regular input to ensure satisfaction on an ongoing basis.

"Tremcar units are lightweight, strong, and they have structural integrity," says Michael Smith. "We like the fact that they are custom built to our application and we have a privileged relationship with the owners that is hard to find nowadays."

Equipment being an important part of the liquid hauling industry, owner Michael Smith finds that Tremcar units hold their value much longer. "The quality of the workmanship and the quality of the materials used in building these units are evident."

TD Smith dispatches and maintains over 100 owner operators. They consider them family and some will have been with the company 30 years by 2019. The company purchased 18 company owned tractors through Currie Truck Sales, another family business considered a partner, working closely with Currie Truck Sales to help ensure service to customers. They are committed to Environmental Protection by reducing their carbon footprint.

TD Smith Transport does not compete with their owner operators but rather helps them in many ways. For example, they help them get the best out of a day to eliminate down-time in meeting ELD regulations. TD Smith also helps their owner operators eliminate additional major costs



Left to right: Dennis Black, Shauna Smith, Michael Smith, Donna Smith and Tyler Smith.

by supplying their units with the stainless pumps and other equipment required for some deliveries. Currently TD Smith Transport operates 250 liquid tanks of which 88% were purchased new from Tremcar. Seventy seven percent are 6,000 imp gal tandems and 23% are 10,000 imp gal duads servicing specialized beverage and foodgrade customers throughout North America.

In 2005 TD Smith built a Kosher Foodgrade Wash Facility at the Mt. Forest terminal. It is governed by JPA, various foodgrade customers and Kosher Council. It also utilizes certain outside governed wash facilities when needed across North America. Twenty one percent of the fleet is composed of chemical coded vessels serving non Foodgrade Customers with oils, fuels, waxes, syrups etc. They are washed at audited outside wash facilities, who are also considered partners.

From their operations manager Dennis Black who has been with TD Smith for almost 25 years, to their long-time dedicated dispatch group of six, the Smiths are dedicated to team work. Michael's wife Donna and daughter Shauna work with the administration team of eight including the safety and auditing department. The shop facility employs four long-time mechanics and the Food Grade Wash facility employs four long-time wash technicians all managed by Michael's son Tyler. Tyler also drives truck, which helps service the last-minute requests.

TD Smith Transport Is very active in the community having received distinctions, appreciation awards, as well the Corporate Citizen of The Year supporting their local hospital, minor sports, church assoc., fire dept, cancer research etc. TD Smith is also pursuing building a home across the road from their facility in Mount Forest. The idea is to make their operators feel at home when doing an hour reset and enable them to benefit from the accommodations of a real home.

Tremcar is proud to partner with such a dynamic and professional company. Dedicated to service TD Smith the best way we can, we wish TD Smith Transport long-term success!



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Driverless, cabless, electric logging truck revealed



Swedish start-up Einride has unveiled a battery-powered logging truck with no cab. It can be operated by remote control from up to hundreds of miles away. The company claims it was designed to handle the rigors of logging.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

A Swedish start-up has introduced an autonomous, all-electric logging truck.

The T-log, introduced by Einride, features off-road capabilities and is designed to navigate forest roads. It was showcased at the Festival of Speed.

"Einride is constantly pushing the boundaries of autonomous and all-electric vehicles in our ambition to lead the transition to a sustainable transportation system," said Einride CEO Robert Falck.

"With the T-log, we've created a vehicle that can withstand the rigors of a demanding environment. It is uncharted territory for us, but also an enormous market for battery-powered AVs."

The driverless truck uses Nvidia Drive's self-driving platform and is SEA Level 4 autonomous.

It has no driver cab but can be remote-controlled by a human, from hundreds of miles away.

The lack of a cab increases loading capacity, the company claims.

An intelligent routing system that taps into real-time traffic data allows the T-log to adjust its route and avoid congestion.

"The driver's cab is what makes trucks expensive to produce, and having a driver in the cabin is what makes them expensive to operate," said Falck. "Remove the cabin and replace the driver with an operator who can monitor and remote-control several vehicles at once and costs can be reduced significantly. In addition, operating a vehicle from a distance allows for a much better working environment, as has already been demonstrated in industries like mining." TN

OTA calls for targeted enforcement

TORONTO, ONTARIO

The Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) is urging enforcement agencies to target carriers and drivers that don't comply with regulations and elevate their safety performance.

The call for targeted enforcement is in response to new Ontario Province Police crash statistics, that showed an increase in truck-involved fatalities in the province.

"It is important to remember that in 70% of collisions involving commercial trucks, the truck driver is found to not be at fault and even more rarely are collisions the result of the truck's mechanical fitness," said OTA president Stephen Laskowski. "Regardless, OTA believes we need to modernize enforcement and regulatory approaches to better identify the minority of carriers and drivers who do not operate in safe and compliant manner."

The OTA plans to bring into the province a 10-point plan recently tabled by the Canadian Trucking Alliance, which will help enforcement target non-compliant carriers.

"We need to apply limited enforcement resources on those who require the most attention from the OPP and MTO," savs Laskowski. "It's OTA's focus to implement this enforcement strategy for the advancement of highway safety in Ontario while compelling fairness for the vast majority of professional Ontario fleets and drivers who invest and are dedicated to highway safety." TN



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CTA urges crackdown on Driver Inc.



Drivers and companies using the controversial Driver Inc. payment model may come under more scrutiny if the CTA gets its way.

TORONTO, ONTARIO

The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) continues to sound the alarm about Driver Inc. - a payment model in which drivers who do not own or operate their own vehicle still become incorporated and receive pay without source deductions.

The payment scheme has become so widespread that all carriers may need to consider adopting the approach if they want to compete for drivers, the alliance says, calling on the federal government and provincial compensation boards to intervene.

"Contract drivers who are utilizing company vehicles, without any financial risk/responsibility to own/ operate the vehicle, contravenes the historical definition of driver-contractor status in our sector," said Stephen Laskowski, CTA president. "To now rule against this historic principle, effectively changing the definition, would turn our industry upside down."

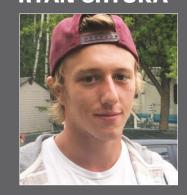
The alliance has been looking to Canada Revenue Agency to clarify its position on the payment approach - something it estimates is costing the government millions in tax revenue.

"Incorporating yourself as a driver, without owning/operating your own truck, has significant labor law and tax implications. Many drivers and companies utilizing this system seem to think Driver Inc. is some previously undiscovered tax oasis. It's not. It's a mirage," says Laskowski. "The tax filing implications make the Driver Inc. model a very questionable approach to legitimately increasing drivers' take-home pay. Obviously not declaring your income is a highly illegal method to increasing pay, made easier by the fact that CRA does not always find businesses that don't issue T4A's to contractor drivers."

The CTA wants the Canada Revenue Agency to ensure that companies and drivers are paying their fair share of taxes by filing as a Personal Services Business (PSB), with all company drivers issued a T4 or T4A in 2018. **TN**

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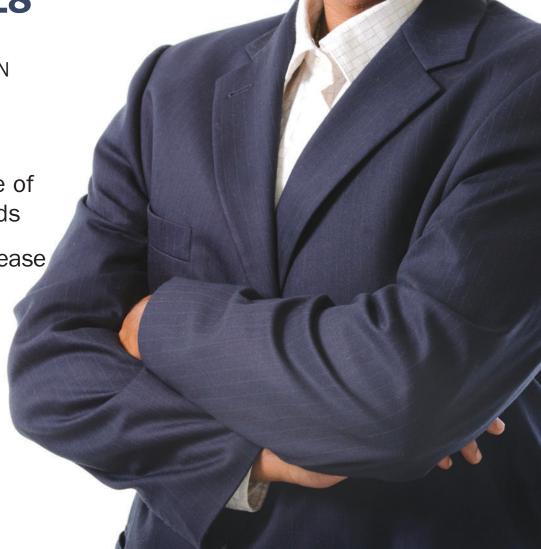
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On the fast track

NASCAR truck drivers combine passions for racing and trucking

By Sonia Straface

DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

To drive for NASCAR, you have to be fast and heavy on the throttle. You most likely have to be a thrillseeker or an adrenaline junkie, too. And your worries about fuel economy are likely out the window once the flag waves.

Doesn't sound like you? Don't worry. Your dreams of driving for the stock car racing series aren't over just yet. You can still drive for NASCAR, just in a different capacity.

NASCAR truck drivers are the behind-the-scenes winners who travel from track to track hauling everything needed for the big race, like lights, TV cameras, and yes, even the cars.

The NASCAR season, which runs from February to November, is comprised of 36 races at racetracks all over the U.S. To date, the NASCAR truck driving team has around 40 drivers that work all week long to prepare for the Sunday race days.

One such driver is 39-year-old Tony Fripp. Fripp has been driving for NASCAR since 2006 after being an over-the-road driver for a handful of years with US Xpress.

"I worked up to their Walmart dedicated fleet for five or so years," he said. "I was pulling Walmart freight. And I was at a Walmart in North Carolina delivering and I met a guy while I was there and he asked me if I was interested in driving for NASCAR. And that's how I started."

Like any new job offer, he was apprehensive. "I was comfortable where I was. And I really didn't know anything about the sport," he said.

But after some gentle pushes (from his mother) Fripp pulled the trigger and joined the NASCAR truck driving team.

"And it's been the best decision I've ever made," he said.

Fripp hauls TV and broadcasting gear for NASCAR production.

"My truck never goes home, but I do," he explained. "Once we get loaded from one racetrack, it's on to another. We are always the first ones to get there, and the last to leave."

Fripp's job includes not only driving the truck from racetrack to racetrack, he helps with the unloading of the TV equipment including fibers and cameras. He also helps unload the NASCAR technology trailer and set everything up.

"Mondays and Tuesdays are set-up days and then we start the process of tearing down on Sunday after the race and it's off to the next track," he said. "This job is not a typical freight hauler job where you drive up to a dock. Here, you have to put in some manpower. And this job isn't for everyone."

Despite this, Fripp says he loves his job and couldn't imagine doing anything else.



Tony Fripp

"The best part of my job is I'm a people person," he said. "I like seeing the fans and talking to them. And seeing their excitement and knowing that I had a part in that is the best part. I wasn't a fan of NASCAR before this job. I didn't understand racing before. But once I got into it and they started teaching me about the points, and how you play with part of the car, and learning the logistics, it got interesting to me and now I love racing. I watch it when I'm off."

It also helps that he drives what he calls "the best truck in the world" the new Mack Anthem.

"My favorite feature would be the overall set-up," he said. "All the gauges are perfectly located. It's so focused. I love that. Coming off of an 18-speed transmission, the mDrive is great. Especially when you're stuck in the race traffic after - you don't want to be shifting gears in traffic. It's the smoothest truck I've ever driven. It has lots of storage too. I'm always looking for things I've stored away."

"I like seeing the fans and talking to them. And seeing their excitement and knowing that I had a part in that is the best part."

Tony Fripp, truck driver

Jeff 'Cowboy' Icenhour is also a driver for the NASCAR team. He is a transport driver for Richard Petty Motorsports, a racing team that competes in the NASCAR series.

Icenhour is responsible for hauling car number 43 to each and every race.

"That's my responsibility each week," he said. "I have to make sure that everything we need for the race is on my truck. I always make sure the straps are tight. And make sure the car isn't moving around. The last thing I want is to get to the track and find out it's gotten loose in the back. It's also very important that I make sure I follow the rules and obey traffic to get to each race safe."

Icenhour has been a professional truck driver for 32 years. He said trucking is in his blood, as both his grandfather and father drove trucks.

He's been driving for various NASCAR teams for 16 years, and just started with Richard Petty this February.

Icenhour said he loves driving from track to track, but the best part of his job is that he gets to do something different every week.

"I like being on the track, and I like that it's more than sitting in a truck all day," he said. "With this job, there's something new every week. Plus, it's a good crew here that I like to work with. Everyone pulls more than their own weight. There's 43 guys that get to do what I do, and I'm very fortunate and blessed to be one of them."

And of course, he's a NASCAR fanatic.

You just about have to be for this job." TN





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Dealing with dealers

Shop around and pick the right truck dealer for your needs

By Eric Berard

A truck dealer can be a fleet or maintenance manager's best friend when things go sour in operations. Even with its own top-notch maintenance department, a fleet might need a dealer's help for an emergency service call, a genuine brand part that can't be found anywhere, or a complicated diagnostic issue.

Yet, your dealer dealings should be just like any transaction: they're worth shopping around for before committing.

General assessment

No matter which dealer is taking care of your trucks, you want that facility to be professional and organized. Tidiness can be a clue right from the moment you step in.

'Well-maintained, clean locations are valued," says Paul Kudla, Volvo Trucks North America (VTNA) regional vice-president for Canada.

A dealership where everything is in order and clean is a good indicator of seriousness, concurs Daniel Descoste, general manager of Remorquage PDR, a Laval, Que.-based towing and recovery company that also hauls general freight throughout Canada. Descoste also thinks that dealership employees' attitudes can be a major incentive or turn-off.

"People in the trucking business are always in a rush and feeling ignored by members of the staff who don't even look at you is one of the worst experiences," he says.

That's one of the reasons why Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) insists on customer feedback follow-up, according to Ray Addison, aftermarket marketing communications manager at DTNA.

"Characteristics like attentiveness

to your needs, responsiveness, and clear communication are important," agrees Kevin Baney, Kenworth assistant general manager for sales and marketing.

Vice-president and global product manager for rental at Ryder, Rich Mohr, advises to take the time to have a chat with the manager and tell him or her about your fleet and see if the person asks questions about your own company. This can be a sign of genuine interest in working as a partnership, he says. Also ask for a preventive maintenance (PM) sheet sample to have an idea of how comprehensive it is.

'The vast majority of breakdowns that occur are because something on the vehicle failed in between PMs," he points out.

Obviously, geographical proximity is an asset, but your trucks won't necessarily always break down in your neighborhood. That's why a wide, reliable, and consistent network of dealers is something to look for, even if you have the best relationship with the local dealer.

As a customer, Descoste feels there are limits to dealer networks' consistency, no matter how much goodwill. "Dealers are having a real hard time finding good technicians and keeping them," he says.

The competition

Remember that you are the customer and that dealerships are independent businesses. Not only do you have the right to take advantage of this competition, it's sound business to ask questions while "dealer shopping."

"Dealerships know it's a very competitive market and assume that customers are getting a variety of quotes," Kenworth's Baney confirms.

"What processes are in place to



Remorquage PDR general manager Daniel Descoste says his company looks for dealerships with clean, organized facilities.

communicate with customers? What is the dealer's service throughput? What key performance indicators do they measure? It is more effective to have a clear list of priorities that are specific for the success of a fleet's business. Evaluate if the dealer is the best fit based on that framework," DTNA's Addison advises.

Upping uptime

Getting a good price is pleasant but maximizing uptime with your trucks on the road generating revenue is even more important, says Descoste, for whom price does not always top his list of criteria. He benefits from exclusivity deals on some Ouebec provincial highways but the police and Ministry of Transport expect him to be on the scene with no delay when an accident happens.

"I can't afford that a truck remains idle in a shop for six or seven days because the tech can't find out what's wrong with it. It just can't happen. It must not happen or I would go out of business," he says.

Manufacturers are aware that uptime is such a critical profitability factor for any carrier and that's why they work to achieve the quickest and most accurate diagnoses possible. For instance, DTNA has a rule for its Elite Support dealers that's referred to as "Express Assessment." The dealers that are certified as Elite Support agree to provide a

clear state of the situation to the customer in a two-hour timeframe.

Most truck manufacturers have similar premium dealership programs for which diagnostic and repair time and accuracy are among the metrics that are measured and assessed on a regular basis to maintain such a special status.

Service sells trucks

No matter how cruel it may sound to fans of a certain brand, uptime and quality of service can be a deciding factor when the time comes to purchase new power units. Remorquage PDR has different truck brands among its fleet, but Internationals are becoming more prevalent since Descoste is doing business with dealer International Rive-Nord, also from Laval, Que.

While he used to have only a few trucks of the diamond brand, he's now planning to buy more of them. "All makes have good trucks. What matters isn't the place where you buy them but what happens after," he says.

Truck manufacturers are aware that customer loyalty to a brand is less pronounced than it once was and that service often sells trucks. On the other hand, owners of a given brand tend to patronize the same network for maintenance and repairs.

Continued on page 25





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Dealer shopping

Continued from page 23

So, no matter the size of your fleet, if a manufacturer loses you, it can mean he loses both new truck sales and parts and service business. Don't hesitate to use this as a negotiation lever with your dealer for better pricing or service conditions.

Parts, tools, knowledge

Whether you perform your own maintenance and repairs or have them done by a third party, you can't go anywhere without the appropriate spare parts and parts availability. Don't be shy to ask your dealer how it ranks in that department.

"Fill rate is a great key performance indicator (KPI) to assess parts availability. The national average fill rate is 98.2% for the Kenworth dealer network," says Baney.

DTNA's Addison goes beyond statistics and uses common sense: "A good measure of parts availability is the results it produces," he says. Addison refers to the company's supply chain as a whole "ecosystem" that includes "data-driven stocking and strategically placed parts distribution centers that ensures that we have parts available when our customers need them."

Enquire whether your potential dealer partner uses the right tools, too. Today, it's not so much about wrenches but rather software and its related updates and diagnostic capabilities. Technician training is also a crucial topic to discuss with your dealer. Is it done online only? In class? A mix of both? At what frequency and following what standards?

Ryder's Mohr suggests asking the dealer directly how many technicians on premises are actually trained to work on different types of components and systems. This,

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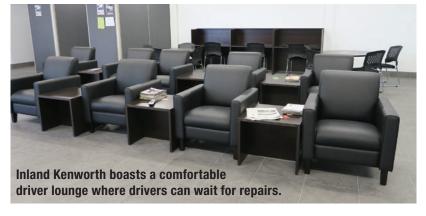
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he says, will give you a good idea of the expertise level of the shop you're dealing with.

Driver amenities

Though it's a dirty word in a performance-driven industry, downtime does happen and drivers can get stuck in a remote area waiting for their truck to be fixed. Check if the dealership you're considering offers them more than a peanut machine and coffee. Modern dealerships pamper truckers with driver lounges, often outfitted with TVs, WiFi, work and relaxation stations, showers, and even laundry facilities in some instances. Some dealerships will go the extra mile in arranging a cab for drivers so they can get some rest at a hotel instead of being stuck in a waiting room.

That kind of attention to detail can really be appreciated. "When you find yourself in the middle of nowhere, it's good to have a little coaching about the surroundings," says Descostes.

When asked about the basics that should be offered to drivers while they wait, Ryder's Mohr's response is: "Get'em home."

They're not focusing on their job, nor productive when their vehicle is down, he adds. This philosophy is among the factors that led Ryder to seal a deal with Uber Central to organize a centralized cab ride service system for its customers. Besides, outsourcing staff and customer transportation allows the frontline people to focus on the task at hand instead of having to spend time dealing with credit card approvals and cab companies. TN





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Breaking down blockchain

Panelists urge industry to work together to implement blockchain technology

By Sonia Straface

TORONTO, ONTARIO

If trucking wants to take advantage of blockchain, it needs to come together and work as one unified team.

That was the message from panelists at TransCore Link Logistics' 20th annual conference at the Markland Wood Golf Club in Toronto.

Panelists, including Dave Braikovich, chief technical officer of Polaris, Jacoline Loewen, director of business development at UBS Wealth Management, and Mark Southey, executive vice-president of business development at Traffix, all agreed that the best way for trucking to be successful with blockchain technology is to work together.

The trucking industry is just dipping its toes into the water when it comes to blockchain, because many don't know much about it, or, don't know how to get started.

Blockchain is, in simple terms, a digital ledger where transactions are made and recorded permanently. It is decentralized, in that information isn't going to and stored in one place (like a centralized system), rather, several places.

The greatest advantage blockchain will bring to the industry that it desperately needs, is trust, panelists agreed.

"Blockchain will eliminate paperwork because there's trust," explained Southey. "Because we have all these nodes feeding information into a shared ledger - it means that when a warehouse puts 1,000 boxes on truck, there is no question there are 1,000 boxes on the truck. There is no proof required and then we have trust between the shipper and

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the transporter. This negates the bill of lading. Because of that, we can automate payment. We can automate transfer responsibility. Half of our industry (with blockchain) can be automated. That's where blockchain will have a fundamental shift."

He added the trust between drivers and employers will also improve.

"Driver behavior won't be questioned because it will all be recorded," he said. "There is no dispute about whether an action occurred or not."

Brajkovich agreed, calling blockchain an API manager on steroids. He said the greatest advantages blockchain will offer the transportation industry is quality, speed, and efficiency.

And while many may be worrying blockchain could eliminate jobs like dispatchers or other administrative roles within trucking, Barjkovich says this is not the case.

"Those people that handle paperwork today in trucking, they can be repurposed to do more efficient things," he said.

He said banks are the leaders in blockchain right now because they "are leaders together and understand that these paradigm shifts happen quickly."

Right now, only 1% of the supply chain industry is using blockchain.

"The industry needs to come together. If we can't come up with a singular composed strategy, it's going to be difficult to implement blockchain," Southey said.

Loewen said those in trucking who don't know where to get started, should research groups you can join that are looking into blockchain now.

"There are all these business incubators," she added. "There are lots of tiny companies looking for problems to solve. As individuals, go meet with these people. Give them problems to solve. They will likely solve them for you, for free. There's some out of Ryerson University and some from Waterloo University. Canada is leading-edge with this stuff. You could go from a five-truck trucking company to the next Walmart of trucking if you wanted to dream that big." TN



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Rodeo du Camion

Continued from page 1

years now and the truck he drove this year was built for this event in the late '90s.

"This is the first time it's been back racing," Kurtz said. The truck is powered by an N14 Cummins with about 850 hp. Asked what attracts him to the event, Kurtz said "Something about 20,000 lbs of steel taking off."

Martin Groulx of Montreal, Que., was parking his truck after losing out to a Coga driver when we caught up to him.

"When you get Coga, your chances are smaller," he said. Groulx has been racing at Rodeo du Camion since 2009 and also competes in other truck races in the province. His truck sports a heavily modified Cat engine putting out about 2,000 hp.

"It used to be a working truck but not any more since last year," he said. He finished seventh in the A Class bobtail category when all was said and done.

Finishing one spot behind him in the same category was Dominic Chantal, who was debuting a new custom-built race truck. The key to a good run, he said, is the start.

"If you have a good start, you have a chance to win. If you don't, you don't have a chance," he said.



The trucks lean – sometimes lifting the axle off the ground completely - when the throttle is mashed at the start.

The other key to success is keeping the truck in one piece. Breakdowns, unfortunately, were frequent and required repairs to be made within 30 minutes to get back into the game. It was especially disheartening to see a truck all the way from Michigan fail to get off the starting line - his day was over before it began.

This year marked the 38th year Rodeo du Camion has taken over this small town. Organizers say the event brings in \$4.5 million in economic benefits. One of the highlights is the draw prizes. The top prize is a three-year lease on a



Nicolas Gagnon won the loaded and bobtail categories in the A Class.

2019 Pete 389, or \$100,000 in cash. Albert Viger and Marielle Bergeron were the lucky winners, opting for the cash. Another major door prize, won by Daniel Laroche, was a choice between a new Ford F150 or Jeep Wrangler. In total, more than \$200,000 in prizes were given away.

When spectators needed a break from the smoke and the noise, a well-populated show-and-shine was located nearby. The serenity here contrasted the organized chaos over at the race strip.

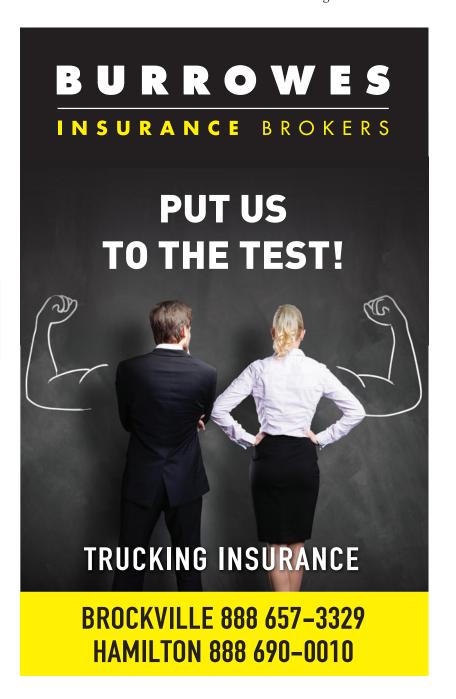
The big winners this year were Gagnon, in the A Class, taking both bobtail and loaded categories. Martin Couture won the B Class bob-



A race winner approaches the finish line, greeted by the checkered flag.

tail category, while Paulo Gagnon was the fastest B Class driver while loaded. The C Class (stock) winner was Pat Sigouin, in both the bobtail and loaded categories. **TN**





New Western Star leadership eyes vocational growth

By James Menzies

YOUNTVILLE, CALIFORNIA

David Carson, the newly installed president of Western Star, says the company is positioned for growth in the vocational segment and poised to take advantage of a strengthening market.

Speaking to the truck press for the first time since he took over as president in January, Carson noted residential and non-residential construction spending has finally recovered to pre-recession levels. He said up to \$4.5 trillion must be spent to repair deteriorating U.S. infrastructure, and some major projects can't be planned for.

"If a bridge goes, it has to be fixed," Carson said. "If a critical highway has some sort of erosion or surface issue, investments have to be made. Brands like Western Star have to have the right products with the right body builders, and new solutions available for when those projects come around."

Carson said Western Star is making significant investments in the vocational segment.

"We are vocationally oriented, and that marketplace is extremely important to us," he said. "We understand they are very different markets. You might be doing one or two truck deals in a vocational transaction rather than hundreds or thousands of trucks in on-highway."

Carson vowed parent company Daimler Trucks North America is committed to the brand.

"Western Star is here to stay," he said. "And we are really working to grow and develop the business, and I look forward to doing that."

Samantha Parlier, vice-president, marketing and product strategy, is also new in that role, taking over in January. She said Western Star has strived to clearly define what a vocational truck is.

"A vocational truck is designed in such a way, it's going to do a job or a series of jobs that couldn't be substituted by rental, linehaul or P&D trucks," she explained. "People are buying these trucks because they have a job to do."

Dump trucks represent the largest vocational segment, at about 15,000 units a year. But Parlier said there's no reliable data that breaks



Western Star is seeing a continued strength in the vocational segment.

down the vocational truck market. Even dump trucks can vary greatly, with tandems, tri-drives, and lift axles commonly being spec'd.

"There are more than 3,000 counties and all have their own laws," Parlier said. "Customers and dealers need to understand the laws and regulations in their specific areas. Bodies change dramatically."

Bulk haul, heavy haul, crane, snow plow, mixer and vac trucks make up the other popular vocational segments. Not to mention logging, which was how Western Star got its start.

"It was started in Kelowna for one reason. There were lots of logs and trees to be cut down and we built the trucks to do it," she said. "We still retain our dominance in the logging industry in the Pacific Northwest and other areas."

To be successful selling vocational trucks, Parlier noted, "we need to understand the needs of our vocational customers. It's complicated, not straightforward, and everyone has different needs."

One segment that's finally showing some signs of life is the Canadian oilpatch.

"We are seeing some activity being driven by it," Carson said. "I wouldn't say it has rebounded necessarily. Customers and dealers haven't seen that, but clearly as oil prices go up, all those opportunities north of the border become more viable from an economic standpoint." TN

Trailer Wizards expands

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Trailer Wizards is expanding in Quebec and Eastern Ontario.

The company announced in June its acquisition of Canadian Service Plus (CSP), an independent trailer maintenance repair shop in Montreal, Que.

The purchase will add seven employees and five mobile service vehicles to Trailer Wizards' Montreal location, with the aim of enhancing its ability to service the Greater Montreal Area.

"When the opportunity presented itself to acquire Canadian Service Plus (CSP) it did not take long to see that this would be a great benefit for Trailer Wizards and our Montreal location," said Stephane Morin, branch manager.

The company also announced oon after that its Cornwall loca tion is getting an upgrade.

The shop is opening a new standalone facility as a link between the Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal markets.

The new store will sit on an eightacre property with two full-service shop bays and a parts department. Construction at the new Tenth Street location is expected to be completed by the end of September. TN





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Mack Granite now available with Lytx pre-wire option

By Sonia Straface

FONTANA, CALIFORNIA

Mack Trucks recently announced that its popular Granite model is now available with a pre-wire option for the Lytx DriveCam safety system and Lytx Video Services.

The announcement, made during a ride-and-drive event here, comes just short of a year after it unveiled the same news for its LR and Terra-Pro models. And it was only a matter of time before it revealed the same option for the Granite, "the number-one selling Class 8 heavy-duty conventional straight truck model in the U.S.," said Jonathan Randall, senior vice-president of sales and marketing for Mack Trucks.

"Now all our major refuse models are available with pre-wire options," said Curtis Dorwart, refuse product marketing manager, Mack Trucks. "Making it simple and as upfit-ready as possible is really our goal. Lytx is a leading provider, and it really helps with productivity and driver training and potential for reconstructing accidents. We partnered with them because they have a great product that is well received in the industry."



The Lytx systems include both forward- and rear-facing cameras and offers video-based coaching and predictive analytics. Video Services gives customers the option to access continually recorded video and optional live video (forward-facing only).

The DriveCam works by recording driving actions once the camera has been triggered by an event such as a delayed response or a hard brake. If the camera is triggered, for what Lytx calls a "coachable incident," the camera collects 12 seconds of the recorded data (eight seconds before the incident, and four seconds during and after) both outside and inside the cab and sends the footage to the fleet manager. From there, the fleet manager can have a meaningful coaching conversation with drivers to review safety protocols, explained Kristin Costas, director of product management with Lytx.



"Reducing collisions on the road is the goal," she said, adding that so far, Lytx has protected 850,000 drivers across 30 countries. "We identify risky events. We want to boil down behaviors happening in and out of the cab so that fleets can have meaningful conversations with their drivers."

Costas played a recording of a reallife driver who had a coachable event when he had to brake hard and swerve to avoid rear-ending a passenger vehicle on a city street. When the in-cab footage was reviewed, it showed the driver was texting on his cell phone moments before the hard brake.

"What makes us different is we can see what happens inside the cab," she said. "And it's a much more meaningful conversation with the driver when he can watch himself inside the cab texting and see what he's missing around him."

Video Services allows continuous reporting, which many refuse fleets find helpful for things like proof of service or delivery verifications.

Costas explained that for example, if someone calls to complain their garbage wasn't picked up that day, the fleet manager can go back through the continuous video, find out when the truck was there and see if the garbage was put out on time or not.

"It's also used for extended insights into safety, for example, maybe the DriveCam wasn't enough to see what (the fleet manager) wanted, so with this they can pull more data," she said.

During the ride-and-drive, Dorwart demonstrated what happens during a hard braking incident. When he applied the brakes harder than usual, a red light went on in the cab to indicate to the driver he was being recorded, and the video was fed into a conference room upstairs in a nearby dealership where he was being monitored.

Costas explained that while she has heard of some pushback from drivers about the rear-facing cameras, that usually goes away when they are exonerated in the event of a collision.

The pre-wire option is set to be available for order beginning in the third quarter of 2018, Mack said. The option builds on Lytx's and Mack's Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2017.

Our objective is to streamline installation time, to improve uptime, enhance productivity, and decrease total cost of ownership for our customers," Costas added. "We are really excited about this opportunity."

David Pardue, vice-president of onnected vehicles and uptime services for Mack, added: "Expanding the Lytx offer to our Granite model means customers with on- and offroad vocational applications have access to the latest safety solutions. Whether being used to help drivers become more efficient, or helping prove a driver's innocence in an accident, the Lytx video-based safety program delivers great value to customers." TN

Alliance Truck Parts vows to become industry's leading value parts supplier



A stronger retail presence is one of the strategies Alliance Truck Parts will employ to become a stronger player in the parts segment.

By James Menzies

YOUNTVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Alliance Truck Parts wants to become the industry's leading truck parts provider, and it has a plan to get there. Stefan Kurschner, senior vice-president, aftermarket, with Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA), said Alliance will bolster its presence by opening more standalone stores as well as stores within truck dealerships. It will also greatly

expand its product line.

"We need to substantially up our game," Kurschner said. "We will make it the leading brand for value parts."

Brad Williamson, manager of Alliance Truck Parts, said it currently offers 52 product lines, which will be expanded to more than 80 over the next 18-24 months. The value parts line will provide the reliability customers require, for a price that's palatable. It will complement the OE parts lines offered by other Daimler brands.

John Finn, director, aftermarket marketing, said truck parts represent a \$30-billion opportunity, divided nearly evenly between OEM and non-OEM channels.

"We want to go after this all-makes business and the value brand segment, and Alliance gives us the opportunity to go after that segment," Finn said.

In addition to creating new retail locations, Williamson said Alliance Truck Parts will also be enhancing its digital strategy, with an improved website and mobile app. He acknowledged there's growing competition from e-tailers, but they cannot match Alliance's network.

'We know we have the best network in the trucking industry," Finn agreed.

Alliance's purchase of Canadian remanufacturing company Mascot Truck Parts has helped the company broaden its product line. It now offers reman transmissions, differentials, steering gears, steering pumps, and drivelines. Other product lines added this year include air conditioning compressors, steel wheels, and slack adjusters. TN



Riding in the ultra-efficient Starship truck

By Derek Clouthier

RAPHINE, VIRGINIA

Like something out of a sci-fi movie, the AirFlow Starship initiative has produced a futuristic-looking rig that's been in the making for several years. Beginning with a simple drawing by former driver and owner of AirFlow Truck Company Robert Sliwa, the Starship, which is a joint venture between AirFlow and Shell Rotella, has been tearing up the road for a while now, and I recently had the chance to ride in the fuel-efficient truck during the Shell Rotella SuperRig Roadshow at White's Travel Center in Virginia.

For those who haven't yet heard of or seen the Starship, here is a general breakdown of the truck: it employs an aerodynamic design to minimize wind resistance (giving the truck its futuristic look), has an active grille cooling system, uses low viscosity full synthetic Shell lubricants, boasts an ultra-low rpm engine (never surpassing 1,250 rpm), a 6x2 axle configuration for lower weight, friction, and better fuel efficiency, low rolling resistance single wide-base tires, roof-mounted solar panels, predictive cruise control, regenerative braking, and relies heavily on driver behavior for peak performance.

"If you put the wrong driver in this truck, they won't get as good of fuel mileage," Sliwa said during our ridealong June 14.

This past May, the Starship made a cross-country trip from San Diego, Calif., to Jacksonville, Fla., in an effort to showcase what the truck is capable of, which Sliwa said is comparable to any big rig out there.

"Both Shell and I wanted to prove that this is a real-world truck that stops at truck stops just like everybody else," said Sliwa. "I have an electronic logging device (ELD) like





The Airflow Starship truck has come a long way since its inception.

everybody else. It's a real-world truck that hauls real-world freight."

The truck was fully loaded during the trip, with a total gross vehicle weight of 80,000 lbs, while the Starship's freight ton efficiency was measured by an on-board telematics system.

Riding in the Starship is like riding in many other tractor-trailer combinations. With an automated manual transmission, shifting gears was smooth and efficient, even while accelerating up to speed to enter the highway.

The air-conditioning cooling the cab was powered by the 5,000-watt solar panel on the roof, charging a

"It's a real-world truck that hauls real-world freight."

- Robert Sliwa, AirFlow Truck Company

48-volt battery bank on the tractor. Sliwa said he started building

trucks in 1983, at a time when anything out of the ordinary in the trucking industry was not as well accepted as it is today. He said his first truck seemed to get about 95% negative reactions from those who saw it.

The next truck, the BulletTruck, which he started in 2009 and completed in 2012, was more accepted by the industry, but there were still reservations by many.

"We took that truck from coast to coast and everywhere else hauling real freight. Some guys really hated it and some guys really loved it," Sliwa said, adding it was about a 50/50 split between the two sides.

Sliwa said now with the Starship, some people still ask whether the truck is an electric vehicle or some other alternative fuel offering, even when he's at a truck stop pumping diesel to power the truck's Cummins X15 engine.

"This truck seems to be about a 90-95% positive reaction," he said.

Sliwa said historically trucking was a very conservative industry and takes baby steps when it comes to change, and over the past five years progress has been glacial. He said several OEMs know that the Starship's design is what is needed to help save fuel and put out a more efficient truck, but fear of the unknown and the potential challenges of selling a product like the Starship steers them away from the design.

Rolling down the highway at around 60 mph, I asked Sliwa how the truck performs in adverse weather conditions such as those seen in Canada and the northern U.S. Having driven through a snow storm in Nebraska, Sliwa said the experience was no different than if he were driving any other truck, and he took the same precautions as the other drivers had.

He also drove in 75-mph crosswinds north of Salt Lake City, Utah, and unlike some assumptions, the truck was sturdy.

"A lot of people contend that the truck will be less stable or tend to blow over with full trailer skirts, but it's really the reverse," he said. "If you didn't have skirts and the wind was blowing 75 mph, it's only going to hit the top of the trailer and blow it over. When you have the full skirts, it pushed it sideways."

He also said the skirts eliminate splash and spray, an advantage for both the truck driver and others on the road around them. The Starship does not have any traditional mirrors, which Sliwa said can get dirty in adverse weather. The driver instead relies on a mirror eve system, using cameras around the truck, which have their own boat tails to help reduce any debris from inhibiting the view.

The cab was extremely roomy, with the bed having been removed and replaced with seats for the ride-along. No testing has been done on the Starship vet, even after its journey from California to Florida. Sliwa said testing will come, but that is the second phase of the initiative. TN



DTNA dealers targeting 24-hour turnaround times

By James Menzies

YOUNTVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Stefan Kurschner wants Daimler Trucks North America's (DTNA) dealerships to be the Starbucks of truck dealers.

The senior vice-president, aftermarket for DTNA, wants customers to know they can go to any location in the continent and receive the same fast, consistent service. And he's given dealers an ambitious challenge: to get trucks in for service and repaired within 24 hours.

'We cannot allow a customer to have a good experience, and then a not so good experience," Kurschner told the trucking press during an event here July 17. "If you go into Starbucks to get a cup of coffee, you know what to expect. We are striving for exactly the same...We have spelled out a goal for us, that is 24-hour service turnaround. In 24 hours, your truck is back on the road."

Fast turnaround times are vital today, as fleets struggle to find and retain good drivers. Kurschner said a driver is tempted to leave a company as soon as six to 12 hours after his or her truck has been broken down. The 24-hour goal is already being met by about 56% of DTNA's dealerships, Kurschner said.

"We are not going to stop at 24 hours," he added, noting dealers will be closely monitored to ensure they're meeting the new target. "We believe this is a very feasible goal, but we need to make it nationwide."

One of the ways DTNA plans to achieve this, is by expanding its network of parts distribution centers (PDCs) so that parts can be delivered to dealerships overnight in most cases. The company is adding its 10th PDC in Phoenix, Ari., which will mean 90% of all dealers will be able to receive next-day parts delivery if they place their order by 4 p.m. The sole Canadian PDC is in Calgary, Alta., but Kurschner said the company is planning to add another in Canada.

Improvements are also being made in the dealerships themselves. Kurschner said 75% of the work done by DTNA's dealers now goes through Elite Support locations. These are dealerships that have adopted best practices and met certain criteria.

"We are not selling them a sticker they glue on their window," he said. "It's something you have to work for There's a process of certification you go through and you have to earn the badge. It's a rigorous process and not a one-time event, you get re-audited and have to live up to the standard."

DTNA is also leveraging technology to improve service time and communication with customers. Building on customer demands to "tell me more, tell me sooner, and fix my truck faster," Kurschner said.

As well, a new suite of uptime management software programs have been brought together.

Express Write-up is a tablet-based app that connects to the truck via Bluetooth and reads the data needed by the service writer. It serves as the first point of contact with the customer.

"If you go into Starbucks to get a cup of coffee, you know what to expect. We are striving for exactly the same."

Stefan Kurschner, DTNA

Uptime Pro is a desktop-based program used by technicians in the dealership. It allows the technician to see the VIN, customer complaint, fault codes and other information. It also draws in big data generated by the entire population of trucks that have seen warranty repairs, which helps direct the technician to the most likely source of the problem.



process," Marty Kubiak, manager of service systems explained during a demonstration. "The technician is provided with standard repair instructions and times

specific to the vehicle model. They have easy access to service manuals and instructional videos. Lengthy repair stories are eliminated."

Uptime Performance is a measurement tool that provides key performance indicators and measure the dealers' ability to meet its 24-hour turnaround objective.

The latest tool to be part of the suite is Service Tracker. It's a mobile app which allows customers to track the repair process. Think of it as the pizza tracker app from Dominos, which lets you know when your pizza is being made, when it goes into the oven, and when it's been sent out for delivery. Five fleets are in pilot testing, with a nationwide rollout scheduled for Sept. 1.

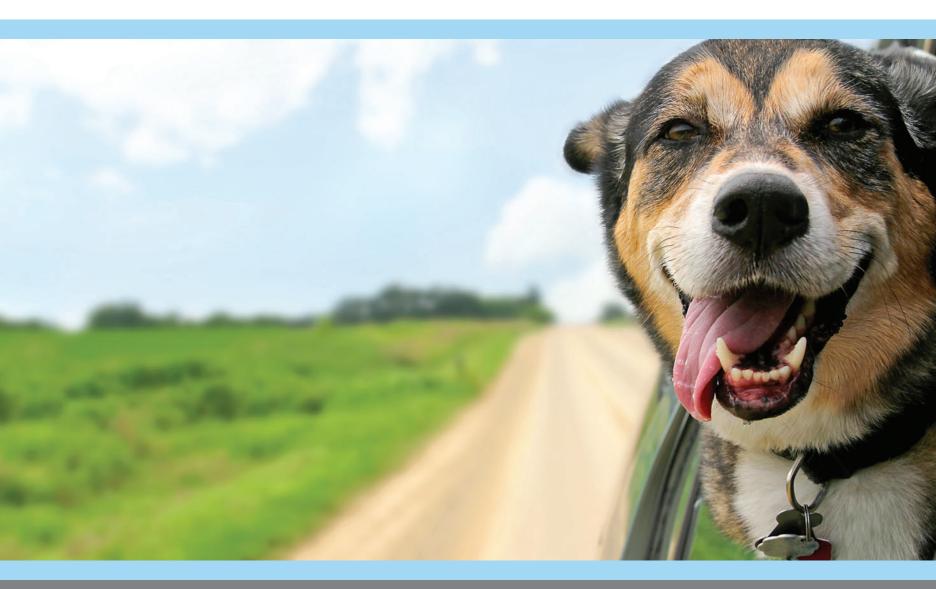
"With this tool on your phone, 90% of all trucks in our service network will be visible to our customers," said Kurschner. TN



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ZF unveils new PowerLine automatic transmission for commercial trucks

By Sonia Straface

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

ZF introduced its new PowerLine automatic transmission for medium-duty trucks, heavy-duty pickups, and buses at the infamous Lucas Oil Raceway outside of Indianapolis, Ind., on June 13.

The new eight-speed transmission was built with commercial vehicles of up to 57,000 lbs GVWR in mind, and handles up to 1,000 lb.-ft. of engine torque. According to ZF executives, the new transmission provides fuel savings of up to 10% when compared to automatic transmissions on the market today.

ZF said it plans to roll out the transmission globally in 2020, just ahead of the Environment Protection Agency and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Phase 2 Greenhouse Gas and Fuel Efficiency Standards.

According to Christian Feldhaus, senior project manager of truck driveline technology for ZF, the new transmission was adapted from the 8HP passenger car transmission.

"We are bringing a very successful product from passenger cars to commercial vehicles," he said during a presentation to trucking journalists.

He added the transmission is a proven product, as more than 15 million of ZF's passenger car transmissions have been produced since 2007.

"The target was to make this product the most efficient possible," Feldhaus said. "So when it comes to market it helps all customers to comply with the GHG requirements."

The ZF patented eight-speed gear set and intelligent skip-shift are said to improve acceleration performance by up to 30%. ZF also said the new PowerLine provides a 45% weight benefit and reduces noise emissions by up to 30% compared to competitive models.

"From a total cost of ownership perspective, we tried to reduce the noise emissions for drivers because of fatigue," Feldhaus said, adding that noise and vibration is something that deeply affects drivers without them even noticing.

The new PowerLine commercial vehicle transmission also comes loaded with smart software features such as Adaptive Starting Gear, Neutral Idle Control, Multi Skip Shift, Maneuvering Mode, StopStart and more.

The new transmission will also feature extended service intervals and a lifetime fluid filter that won't need to be replaced.

"Not having to change the filter is significant when you look at total cost of ownership," Feldhaus added.

Trucking press were invited to test the new transmission that was placed in a Dodge Ram 3500 truck, weighted down with more than 3,000 lbs. of water in the bed.

What I noticed most while driving the truck along the closed course



was the skip-shift technology. The truck accelerated with ease.

"The benefit of the automatic transmission over an automated manual transmission (AMT) is comfort," Feldhaus said. "With an AMT, you have to shift gears and you can feel it but with the automatic and skip-shift technology, you won't feel the shifts."

I definitely noticed the comfort on my ride. With my (lead) foot on the accelerator, I could hardly tell I was hauling any weight at all in the truck.

What Feldhaus said is the best part of the PowerLine is how it is a one-size-fits-all product.

"And this enables us to cover most medium-duty applications with just this one product," he said.

The manufacturer also allowed trucking media to experience its ReAX electric-assisted hydraulic steering - which reduces a driver's workload by requiring 70% less effort to turn in a static state - and lane keeping assistance technologies on the racetrack.

"PowerLine is hybrid-ready," Feldhaus said, adding that ZF is prepared to offer the transmission as a hybrid option after the initial rollout.

"The ultimate goal of ZF is to reduce the total cost of ownership through more value for money with higher torque rating capabilities and the lowest operating costs, such as fuel savings, extended fluid change intervals, lifetime fluid filter, and more," said Mitja Schulz, senior vice-president and head of commercial vehicle technology North America, ZF.

"Thanks to its automotive genes, the PowerLine brings excellent shift qualities, no matter if truck, bus or heavy-duty pickup - comfortable, fast, and without any interruption in acceleration." TN

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Tri Truck Centre takes top Hino honors

BARRIE, ONTARIO

Tri Truck Centre has once again been given Hino Motors Canada's (HMC) top honor among Canadian dealerships.

John Esplen, dealer principal and Rick Howitt, general manager, were awarded the top-ranking gold position for the 2017 Hino Dealer of the Year award.

This is the fourth consecutive year the dealer has received the top spot.

"Each year the criteria for this award become more difficult. Each vear, the team at Tri Truck rises to the challenge, working together to ensure top performance with excellent customer service," said Mark Lorentz, vice-president of sales for HMC during the award presentation at Tri Truck Centre on July 12.

The award is based on HMC's annual dealer evaluation, a com-



Pictured (L-R): John Esplen, dealer principal, Tri Truck Centre, Yumiko Kawamura, president, Hino Motors Canada, Rick Howitt, general manager, Tri Truck Centre, and Mark Lorentz, vice-president, sales, Hino Motors Canada.

prehensive measure of the dealer's total business, sales management, service support, parts performance, and overall facility. TN

Breadner Trailers moves into Atlantic Canada

MONCTON, NEW BRUSNWICK

Breadner Trailers has opened up a new location in Atlantic Canada.

The new facility is the country's newest and largest Hyundai Translead dealer, according to the company. It is currently offering a variety of Hyundai Translead dry vans and refrigerated trailers.

"We are excited to announce our newest location in Atlantic Canada and continuing to grow with Hyundai to help expand parts, sales, and service into this region for our customers," said Robert Breadner, president of Breadner Trailers.

The new facility is located near Moncton, N.B., at 66 Brenan Ave. TN

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Eaton forms new eMobility business

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN

Eaton is banking on an electric future for trucking and has formed a new eMobility business to provide the industry with a wide range of electric power solutions.

Most famous for its transmissions, Eaton is also well established in the electrical field and formed the new business by combining products, expertise and global manufacturing capabilities from its electrical and vehicle groups.

"We're known to be more of a mechanical type provider in transmissions, but we really do know electricity and electric power," Scott Adams, senior vice-president of product strategy and sales for the eMobility business segment told Truck News in an interview. "We have a really strong depth of understanding of electricity and with our heritage in the vehicle space, we're able to blend our electricity knowledge with our vehicle knowledge."

Eaton is investing about US\$500 million into the new business over the next several years. It anticipates the vehicle electrification market will grow to include 15 million pure battery-electric vehicles and another 30 million hybrids by 2030. Its prime focus will be on intelligent power electronics, power systems, and advanced power distribution and circuit protection for both automotive and commercial vehicle customers.

Despite this sharp growth in electrification, Adams said it will be a while before fully electric heavy trucks become the norm. But the journey to an electric future will begin with smaller steps, such as the electrification of certain components, and eMobility has a role to play there as well.

"We believe adoption will happen from a regulatory perspective," Adams said. "Over time, as they get into the second and third phases of the greenhouse gas (GHG) Phase 2 rules, some electrification will be used to achieve those limits. There are a lot of drivers. There's a regulatory push and a customer pull."

The move to full electric power will likely begin with light-duty vehicles and locally driven commercial trucks. Mild hybridization is likely to come first, as battery cost and weight remains a challenge for Class 8 longhaul trucking.

"The challenge, really, is the cost of the batteries and the weight of the batteries," said Adams. "But we do see adoption happening."

Adams said the eMobility business is ready to hit the ground running and should generate about \$300 million in revenue this year from its current electrified portfolio. It projects revenues to grow to \$2-\$4 billion by 2030. The business will be headquartered in Southfield, Mich., with design centers and manufacturing locations in Asia, Europe and the Americas. It already employs about 1,200 people.

Existing products offered by the new business include DC/DC converters, power distribution units, hybrid and battery-electric transmissions, and high-voltage fuses.

Eaton says it has more than 15 vears of experience developing hybrid systems, with more than 15,000 on the road globally. It also makes the high-voltage, fast-acting fuses found in nearly half of the electric cars in the world. TN



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Here comes the sun

TORONTO, ONTARIO

The North American Council for Freight Efficiency (NACFE) is showing confidence in the sun as a practical power source for trucks and trailers.

"Fleets should seriously consider investing in solar systems," the council said recently in the launch of its Solar *Confidence Report*, the latest in a series of studies that explore fuel-saving technologies and practices.

"The application of solar panels on trailers with extra electrical loads like telematics, refrigeration units, and liftgates make sense as a means of improving battery life and reducing the need for roadside assistance. This is especially true if the trailer spends long periods without being attached to a tractor. And the opportunity to extend the run time of battery HVAC systems makes installing solar for battery HVAC support a good solution," it said.

"Fleets should seriously consider investing in solar systems."

- NACFE

Today's solar panels are flexible, thin, easily installed, and reliable, the report found. Although, potential fuel savings were seen to be "a very small part" of the overall benefit.

The panel installations should be sized for their intended application, NACFE stresses.

"For example, the size of a solar panel to support a battery HVAC system on a tractor might be limited by the area available on the tractor fairing, whereas a solar panel to support a refrigeration unit only needs to be large enough to provide a small trickle charge to the refrigeration unit starting battery."

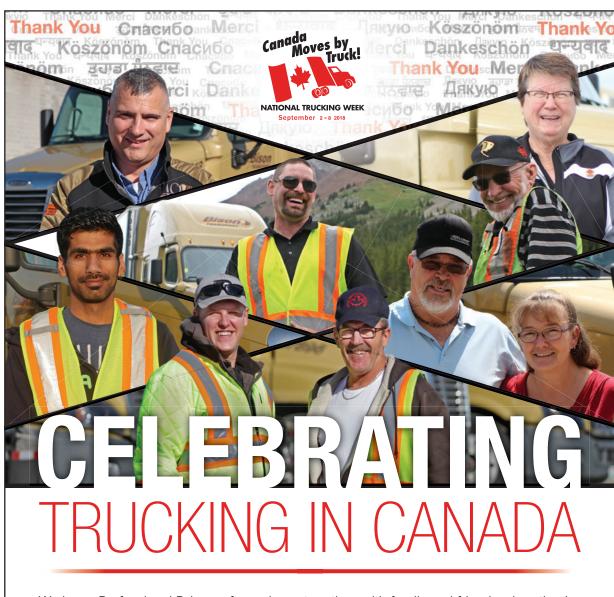
Still, it's not yet known if the paybacks will match claims by manufacturers.

"We have verified that the benefits fall in several categories with the biggest benefits being from extending battery life and avoiding emergency roadside assistance for dead batteries. Many fleet users are happy with the investment they made and intend to continue to use solar panels in the future," the council concludes.

The report comes with a payback calculator to help to evaluate whether a system makes sense.

The full report can be downloaded from www.NACFE.org. TN





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Ryder names top Canadian carriers



PRESCOTT, ONTARIO

Kriska Holdings has been named the Canadian Truckload Carrier of the Year at the Ryder Carrier Quality Awards.

Midland Transport was chosen as the LTL Carrier of the Year.

The award recognizes excellence through a variety of metrics, including on-time performance, claims handling, customer service, technology applications, economic value, and innovation for the last full calendar year, according to Ryder.

"I'm very pleased," said Tammy Cryderman, general manager of Kriska. "Ryder works with 3,100 carriers and has chosen to recognize Kriska as one of their top 13. Everyone at Kriska has played a role in us receiving this award."

"The support that we receive from our carriers has a direct impact on our ability to deliver on the promises we make to our customers," added Dave Belter, vice-president and general manager of transportation management for Ryder. "Ryder is proud to partner with industry-leading carriers and we thank and congratulate them for going above and beyond to support Ryder and our customers with safe and timely deliveries." ${\sf TN}$

Challenger recognized for HR

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO

Challenger Motor Freight has been recognized as a finalist for the Canadian Human Resources (HR) Awards.

It is a finalist for the Seneca award for Best Learning and Development Strategy.

The award celebrates the company that has delivered the most outstanding organizational benefits by directly linking the training needs of its people, at all levels, to the business needs of the organization. TN



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Voice of the owner operator

Pay it forward

I just got back from the Bramasole Diner, the all-day-breakfast greasy spoon where I've been a regular for over 17 years. On a typical Sunday, it was hot and crowded and noisy; the guy beside me at the counter kept bumping his sweaty elbow into me and a woman a few tables away was loudly berating the long-suffering server for putting too much ice in her glass of water (I kid you not).

I should have been annoved and grumpy, but instead I felt like a million bucks. The cafe owner, Karen, had just told me about the delightful reaction of the customer whose breakfast I had paid for the day before.

Karen and I have had this thing going for years; it started when I did her a small favor and she repaid me with a free breakfast. When she refused to let me pay the second time, I suggested that I pay for someone else's breakfast. When we saw that customer do a double-take and then grin from ear to ear, we were hooked. Now, whenever Karen is my server, I pick up the tab for another table, she hands that customer a zero-balance bill on which I've written "pay it forward" and we all have just a little bit nicer day.

And here's the bonus: apart from the obvious benefit of helping others, giving is one of the most therapeutic things we can do for ourselves. Numerous studies examine the ways that giving is good for the giver, citing increased self-esteem, less depression, lower stress levels, greater happiness, lower blood pressure, and longer life, among the benefits associated with acts of kindness.

Some even argue that charitable behavior generates as much in the way of health benefits as diet and physical activity.

The lottery-winning jolt I felt this morning was more than psychological. Research has shown that kind or generous behavior triggers the secretion of natural "happy" chemicals in our brains, such as mood-mediating serotonin, dopamine, a feel-good chemical, and a compassion and bonding substance known as oxytocin (not to be confused with OxyContin, one of several commercial names for oxycodone, an opioid painkiller).

Oxytocin also causes the release of a chemical called nitric oxide, which expands the blood vessels. This reduces blood pressure making oxytocin a "cardio-protective" hormone which protects the heart by lowering blood pressure.

And forget the anti-wrinkle cream. Two culprits that speed up the chemical process of aging in the human body are free radicals and inflammation, but new research shows that oxytocin reduces levels of both these in the cardiovascular system, thus slowing aging at its source. So, kindness is good for you inside and out.

And, according to a University of California Berkeley study, people who volunteered for two or more organizations were 44% less likely to die over a five-vear period than those who didn't volunteer, even accounting for many other factors including age, exercise, general health and negative habits like smoking. Good news for truck drivers!

And here's the thing: any kind of giving can boost your wellness. It doesn't need to be an organized volunteer activity, or cutting a cheque for a worthy cause. Those small, random acts of kindness can have the same impact: paying for the coffee of the person behind you or tipping

a little more than usual; holding the door or the elevator for someone; mowing a neighbor's lawn or shoveling their driveway; leaving coins on a vending machine or at the laundromat for the next customer; or donating used clothes to a shelter.

The gift of giving and unselfishness stimulates the reward center in the brain, releasing endorphins and creating what is known as the "helper's high." And like other highs, this one is addictive, too. Generosity can be contagious, spurring a ripple effect and keeping the cycle of "good" going.

That's what my "pay it forward" deal at the Bramasole is all about. When a customer realizes I'm the



Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Happy to help? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll-free at 888-794-9990.

person who bought their breakfast and comes to thank me, I just ask them to do something nice for someone else. And they usually do. The servers delight in sharing the stories of how others pay for meals, write thank you notes on napkins for the cook, or add money to a customer's parking meter.

In this clamorous, overcrowded, and sometimes nasty world we live in, generosity trumps apathy every time. Pay that one forward. TN



Congratulations to Luke Melanson on winning our Contrans Flatbed Group photo contest! Luke is a Canada-only driver who loves scenic runs out west, hiking, fishing, and keeping his dedicated truck squeaky clean!

We received over 50 submissions from our drivers for this contest, and the rules were simple: send us a cool photo of your truck, and our office staff will vote on the photos they like best! Having mapped out all of HWY 17 around Lake Superior, Luke went above and beyond to get the perfect shot!

Upon completing high school, Luke did a year of college, followed by starting up his own landscaping company. Not knowing what he wanted to do as a career for sure, he decided to give driving a try. After getting his license, he gave himself a few months to see if he'd enjoy it, and to his surprise, he liked driving flatbed much more than he anticipated: "I gave myself 4-6 months, but now it's something I can see myself doing for years to come."

Luke joined Contrans Flatbed in January,

2017 after completing our 6-week new driver mentorship program. "[Contrans] is a good larger company to start with," he noted. "One thing I've liked about [Contrans] is they don't take advantage of the new drivers... I've found I've been treated the same as anyone with seniority since I've started.'

When asked about his experience so far at CFG, Luke stated his appreciation for CFG's open-door policy. He said, "for the size of this company, it feels a lot smaller

than it is... drivers are a priority here." After seeing what else is out there. Luke knows Contrans is the most well rounded and offers the best overall pay package. Because of our size. Luke also commented on the flexibility that CFG provides: "you can always talk to your dispatchers and they'll work with you to try and accommodate your requests."

If you want to see other pictures from



the competition, check out our Facebook and Instagram pages (@contransflatbedgroup)! To see more pictures of Luke's adventures at Contrans, visit his Instagram page (@luke_melanson)!

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Tax Talk

The value of service

A good accountant should pay for themselves many times over, but a bad one can cost a fortune

There's a certain big box store near me where the prices are low but I'm not sure things really are less expensive. Paying a buck for something is great as long as it lasts as long as the \$2 item. But if you have to replace it three times before the \$2 product wears out, the cheap item is going to cost more in the long run.

The same is true for your truck.

The cost of some things, like tires, seem easy to measure. Mileage life divided by the price is a real number. But cheap tires affect other things, like fuel economy. Those secondary impacts can be tougher to quantify.

Now try to calculate something that is all intangibles: accounting and tax prep services.

Knowing whether your tax bill or refund is correct is a potentially endless circular discussion so I won't even go there. But we can talk about the delivery-of-service issues that can add value to your life and business.

For instance, a client just called looking for a copy of the bill of sale for his truck. He's leasing on with a new carrier and needs it for his IRP plate, but he misplaced it. We're diligent about bills of sale and other important documents, so of course we have it and sent it to the carrier within five minutes of his call.

Two things happened here: I answered the phone and had what he was looking for. How much is it worth to have that panic moment resolved?

Whether you need business advice or someone to just prepare returns, a good accountant should pay for themselves many times over, but a bad one can cost a fortune.

Case in point, we recently helped an owner-operator file his 2016 and 2017 tax returns. That doesn't sound like a big deal but the fact that the police were involved says otherwise.

The owner-operator's accountant failed to file his returns on time for five of the last seven tax years. But he stuck by her because she always assured him she would take care of everything and besides, he was getting a good deal.

Letters from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) were piling up so he started calling other accountants. We reviewed his returns and calculated the total amount of late filing penalties charged to him over the years.

He decided to apply to CRA for taxpayer relief.

CRA's response: "After carefully considering the facts and circumstances of this case, we are denying your request."

CRA documented all the correspondence it had with the owner-operator, including the times he told CRA that his accountant said she had filed the returns.

"The services of a third party may be used to prepare and submit tax returns," the CRA said. "Although your situation is unfortunate, it is ultimately the taxpayer's responsibility to ensure that returns and payments are received on time."

There's more but you get the idea. CRA even commented that had the owner-operator made regular tax installments there would have been less interest charged. He knew he had to pay his taxes so

why didn't he make installments? At least now he's taking charge of his situation.

The intent of this article is not to promote our company. It's to promote the value that any good truck accounting specialist can deliver versus the next door neighbor or trucking specialist that does not do a good job.

Our fees and those of my reputable competitors are not, in real dollars, much different compared to what some of these bad service providers charge. What you get is



Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, providing accounting, book-keeping, tax return preparation, and other business services for owner-operators. Learn more at www.tfsgroup.com or call 800-461-5970.

the value of service and experience – things that don't show up on the invoice.

Give any one of us a call and ask. You may be surprised when we answer the phone or call you back. **TN**



Private Matters

The heat is on

MELT is expanding. Let's ensure we get it right, and have some commonality.

Multiple provincial and territorial governments have been talking about mandatory entry-level training (MELT) over the last several years, and it has been a hot topic at Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) meetings for at least as many.

The topic gained more attention when Ontario announced in 2015 that it was going to mandate it there. (MELT for A/Z drivers in Ontario came into effect on July 1, 2017).

The Humboldt bus tragedy has pushed this topic to the very forefront of the regulators' and media's attention again. Recently, Alberta announced it will be introducing MELT, possibly as early as January 2019, along with several other changes in regards to truck safety. It also held stakeholder consultation sessions in Edmonton and Airdrie, Alta., in July, which the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada (PMTC) attended.

Saskatchewan, while not as far along as Alberta, has announced it has been looking into MELT, and will be introducing some form of program in the not-too-distant future. Manitoba and B.C. are also researching MELT, and all the western provinces have had initial discussions concerning a "western MELT framework."

The PMTC was one of the key stakeholders in the MELT consultations in Ontario and has lobbied Transport Canada to work on a national framework for MELT for the last several years. As a lot of you will know, getting a common regulation implemented across every province and territory in Canada is a challenge, to say the least, and the patchwork of rules and regulations the industry is forced to work with as it travels across provincial boundaries is a major burden and expense.

The CCMTA has done great work at bringing the feds and provinces together to discuss regulations and



Mike Millian is president of the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada, the only national association that represents the views and interests of the private fleet industry. He can be reached at trucks@pmtc.ca.

work towards common ground, however a lot of work still needs to be done.

While the PMTC is encouraged that the different jurisdictions are talking, and that most appear to be reviewing the only MELT framework in place in North America right now, which requires 103.5 hours of training, we are already hearing rumblings of massively different MELT hours being considered.

This concerns us. Sixty or 70 hours of training has already been floated by Saskatchewan and is a number we have heard being tossed around as a possible framework for the four western provinces. I hope this is not a number that is seriously being considered, as less than two weeks of training is woefully inadequate in our view.

We have the opportunity to work together, build a common approach, and a framework that can be utilized for a training standard across the land. The Ontario standard is not perfect, and does need some refinement, however this should be looked at as a minimum standard and one to be learned from and built upon. If we are serious about a MELT regime that will have a serious impact on road safety and increase the entrylevel skills of new drivers to the industry, we must work on a meaningful and robust standard, not one that is simply better than nothing.

Let's look at Ontario's, keep what's working, build upon what isn't working, and build a meaningful national Memorandum of Understanding for MELT that all provinces and territories can be encouraged to utilize.

I don't know if driver training was an issue in the Humboldt tragedy, and I don't know if MELT would have prevented these tragic events from occurring. But I do know it would not have hurt to have mandatory training.

Standardized mandatory training is needed for commercial drivers, and the time to raise the bar as to what is required to enter this industry as a driver, has come. The requirements to get in have been far too low, for far too long. We are at a moment in time where there appears to be a will for mandatory commercial driver training in most regions of Canada, and we have the opportunity to ensure we put a standard in place that is meaningful and workable across the land. Let's not waste it. **TN**





Human Factors

Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program: What we learned

Series of roundtables reveals opportunities for improvement

Last year, the federal government reached out to industries that are heavy users of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). They want to better understand the specific industry challenges and identify possible program improvements.

For the trucking industry, which brought in more than 1,500 workers in the TFWP last year, the struggle to find drivers and other workers is anything but short-term. The shortage of drivers who are Canadian citizens has limited the growth of many fleets and has broader implications for Canada's economy.

And, the TFWP can help. As such, the federal government partnered with us on a series of roundtables across the country - a chance for fleets that have been using the TFWP for years to provide their feedback. Others came out to learn more about the program and how it might help them.

The roundtables resulted in a report that has been submitted to the TFWP. We made recommendations for immediate consideration that can support more efficient access and use of the program.

They include an expedited vetting process for reputable and trusted employers; suggested enhancements to the application process to better reflect the realities of the industry, including compensation and job advertising; as well as several processing improvements to support unique aspects of our industry.

We're now waiting for the government to hopefully move quickly with these recommendations. Until then, here are some things we learned during our roundtables from employers who are working hard to improve recruitment and retention:

Review your recruitment, hiring, and onboarding

Fleets have learned that they need to respond quickly, if not immediately, to all applicants. Review your recruiting and hiring procedures to make sure you can process an applicant's information and initiate a dialog quickly.

And, be efficient. Getting just one driver is a big investment of time and resources, and many are leaving no stone unturned. Assess where you are getting the best results and work to focus your efforts accordingly.

But don't rush the onboarding. Fleets that are investing more with onboarding and effective coaching are seeing higher retention rates.

Assess your "leaves"

One fleet executive said that a driver exit is now being treated "like a major accident." Address your "leaves" and determine where

you can improve. Another proactive approach has many fleets forming "driver experience committees" to improve communication and collaboration among drivers, managers, and others within the company.

Review compensation

Many fleets are going beyond reviewing driver pay rates to focus on total compensation and address work-life balance concerns. Does your compensation package reflect the needs of your drivers? You don't want to hear that it doesn't during an exit interview.

Leadership

Challenging times require competent managers who can innovate, stay calm, and ensure the bigger picture is not lost. And this is particularly important for fleets looking to the TFWP for drivers.

The program presents an extra layer of compliance requirements, as well as the specific human resources needs of workers who are: 1) temporary and 2) from another country.

These challenges require competent managers who can innovate, adapt, and keep sight of the fact that the TFWP should be mutually beneficial for the company and the for-

Angela Splinter leads Trucking HR Canada, a national not-forprofit organization dedicated to addressing the human resources challenges and opportunities in the trucking and logistics sector. Learn more at www.TruckingHR.com or follow them @TruckingHR.

eign worker coming to Canada.

The Government of Canada's website (www.canada.ca) has more information about hiring a temporary worker through the TFWP, and we offer practical ideas about managing a diverse workforce at www.TruckingHR.com. Something to consider as we wait for action. TN

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Platooning not a good plan

Dear Editor:

Regarding the hype and testing of truck platooning, it's time to stop now and save our money and resources. The concept and application were proven 150 years ago. It's called a train!

It runs on steel rails on its dedicated road. If the idea is to run vehicles close together to slipstream and travel efficiently, well they are going to have to be connected. I have been a trucker for 40 years and in heavy traffic there are always those in the motoring public that will crowd into your safety zone between you and the vehicles in front.

Imagine how the onboard radar and accident avoidance is going to react to that - I say more chain reaction collisions. **TN**

Danny Folkins Searsville, N.B.

Questioning the profession

Dear Editor:

Companies these days are hiring the worst drivers I've ever seen. They blame it on the driver shortage.

We are the most regulated and underpaid industry. As drivers, we are trained to look at the dollar figure at the end of the week and not the hourly number. We are working for just above minimum wage.

Most companies pay by the mile, which means we work 70 hours a week and don't get paid overtime. Most companies do not pay for your pre-trip, post-trip, or to fuel the truck. They don't pay to cross the border.

They think we should do our first drop or pickup for free. They route us down back roads to save 10 or 15 miles. We are scrutinized daily by our own companies, customers, police/DoT, Customs and the general public. My question is, why would anyone want to be a truck driver today? TN

Donald Nichols



Over The Road

Moving into a new truck

Deciding what stays, and what goes, can be a painstaking process

Every three to four years I am given the privilege of moving into a brand new tractor. As I clean out the old tractor, I have the opportunity to look at all the things I've been carrying around with me for the past four years and to make a decision as to its value.

Do these items still serve a purpose? Are they of use? The criteria I use to make this decision is pretty simple. If I have not had an item in my hands and put it to good use over the past four years, then it doesn't warrant taking up valuable living space in the truck.

I discovered I own a lot of maps and map books that I don't use regularly - or at all. So I took them home and discovered I have even more maps. A lot of maps. I think I have a map problem. My wife of almost 40 years had a practical solution.

"Why don't you just get rid of them if you don't use them? They're just taking up space."

As truckers, we all need a contingency plan in place that maintains our independence when all else fails.

The look in my eyes told her I'd already been down that road. She left me to stew.

On reflection, it became obvious to me pretty quickly that these maps are a tactile connection to my memories and experiences of the past 20 years. They are a reference point.

When I open one up, the stories pour out - even recent ones despite the fact I've been using Google Maps pretty much exclusively for the past four-plus years. Each map is a trucking diary, and it's just fun to get lost in the experience and the lessons each one holds.

That led me to thinking about the reference material that does warrant taking up valuable living space in my truck. That reference material is filled with lessons, and I use it to tap into my experience and expand my knowledge.

The only map I ended up taking back to my new truck was my commercial Rand McNally road atlas. This atlas provides all the information I need to get where I need to go without batteries or internet access. It is basic information for truckers and a must-have.

I keep the most recent editions of Ontario's Truck Driver's handbook and Air Brake Endorsement. This material provides me with all the basic laws, regulations, and routines

I am obligated to follow as a professional driver.

Third, I retained a drivers' hoursof-service reference guide covering all the jurisdictions I drive in.

Fourth, operating manuals for the truck and engine of the truck I'm driving as well as manuals for all the various accessories that may have been added on.

These are the basic reference materials I always want with me. Having access to the internet is fantastic, but it is only of use if you know what questions to ask. As truckers, we all need a contingency plan in place that maintains our indepenwhere the rubber meets the road. This is Trucking 101.

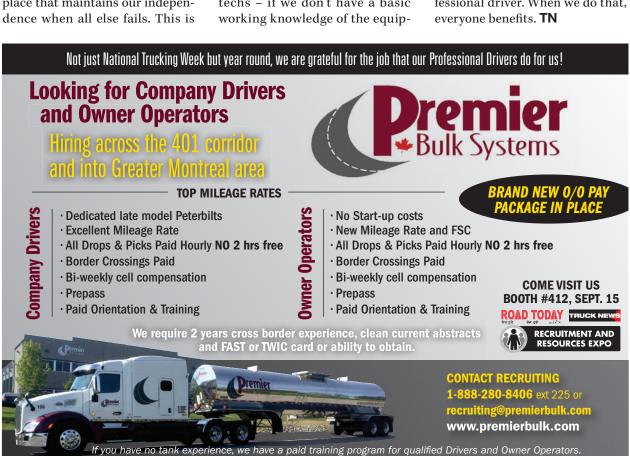
Independence is about accountability, especially to ourselves. In my opinion, it does not matter if you are a new driver, a novice driver, or a well-seasoned professional, I believe it is incumbent upon all of us out here to stay up to date on the laws and procedures we must follow.

In addition, it is up to us to remain well versed and knowledgeable about the equipment we use. We can't communicate effectively with other professionals in the industry - especially diesel techs - if we don't have a basic Al Goodhall has been a professional longhaul driver since 1998. He shares his experiences via his blog at www.truckingacross canada.blogspot.com. You can follow him on Twitter at

@Al_Goodhall.

ment we drive and the policies we are responsible to uphold.

The bottom line is that you need to read and review the operating manual and you need to read and review the regulations that govern your profession on a regular basis if you want to grow, prosper, and remain independent as a professional driver. When we do that, everyone benefits. **TN**





Preventive Maintenance

Watch your mouth

How to take good care of your teeth while on the road

Unless you constantly sing along with the radio while alone in your rig, your closed mouth creates an excellent environment for bacterial growth. Fortunately, although your mouth is teeming with bacteria, your body's natural defenses partnered with good oral health care can keep them at acceptable levels. However, improper oral hygiene may lead to mouth infections, tooth decay, gum disease, and general poor health.

Recent studies show that your oral health gives clues about your overall health and that mouth issues may also affect other parts of your body. These studies suggest that oral bacteria and the inflammation associated with periodontitis (a severe form of gum disease) might increase your risk of developing some diseases, while other diseases, such as diabetes, may lower your body's resistance to infection, making oral health problems more severe.

You can circumvent these issues by regularly monitoring your oral health habits - keep your teeth clean to reduce cavities, gum disease, and other related conditions. Avoid tobacco usage; eat a healthy diet; floss; limit sweet snacks between meals; and, thoroughly brush your teeth at least twice daily with fluoride toothpaste.

For brushing, pack the proper equipment. A fluoride toothpaste with a soft-bristled toothbrush or an electric/ battery toothbrush are recommended to reduce plaque build-up and prevent mild gum disease (gingivitis).

As well, use proper technique. Hold your toothbrush at a slight angle with the bristles directed toward the area your tooth meets the gum. Brush gently, with short backand-forth motions. Brush all tooth surfaces, and even your tongue.

Maintain vour dental equipment. Always rinse your toothbrush with water after brushing; then, stand it

in an upright position to air-dry between uses. Storing it uncovered will prevent mould, yeast, or bacteria growth. Keeping your toothbrush separate from others will prevent cross-contamination. For optimal results, replace your toothbrush every three to four months as the bristles become frayed.

For the tight spaces between vour teeth and under the gumline that your toothbrush can't reach, floss. When flossing, take about 18 inches of dental floss and wind most of it around the middle finger of one hand and the rest around the middle finger of the other hand. Then, grip the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers. Using a rubbing motion, gently guide the floss between every tooth, one at a time. At the gumline, curve the floss against one tooth and then the other. Unwind fresh floss, as needed, as you move around your mouth.



Karen Bowen is a professional health and nutrition consultant, and she can be reached at karen_bowen@yahoo.com.

If you find managing floss a bit challenging, try these other interdental products which also work well: a dental pic; a pre-threaded flosser; plastic toothpicks with tiny brushes; a water flosser; or a wooden/silicone plaque remover.

It doesn't matter whether you brush or floss first, as long as you're thorough. Swishing mouthwash between your teeth also effectively limits bacterial growth.

Your saliva naturally plays an important role in maintaining a healthy mouth by neutralizing acids produced by bacteria, transporting food particles, and preventing them from sticking to your teeth. When your mouth becomes dry, compensate by sipping water or chewing sugar-free gum. Retain oral moisture by breathing through vour nose (not mouth), and monitor medications since some decongestants, antihistamines, painkillers, diuretics, and/or antidepressants reduce saliva flow.

Although a combination of consistently good personal oral hygiene, and regular dental cleanings and exams usually prevents gum disease and related health concerns, contact your dentist if you experience: red, tender or swollen gums; gums that bleed when you brush or floss; gums that begin pulling away from your teeth; loosened permanent teeth; changes in the alignment of your top and bottom teeth; unusual sensitivity to hot and cold; persistent bad breath; a constant, unusual taste in your mouth; changes in how your dentures or partial dentures fit; difficulty swallowing; and/or mouth ulcers or sores that won't heal.

Be proactive. The health benefits of packing a small bag with water, gum, mouthwash, floss, toothpaste, and a toothbrush could be enormous. TN



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Preventing gum disease

When discussing the health of professional truck drivers, conditions such as diabetes, elevated cholesterol levels, and high blood pressure often come up in the conversation. However, rarely do you hear about oral health and gum disease. As most health care professionals would agree, oral health is very important and can greatly affect the overall health of an individual.

When you brush your teeth in the morning, do your gums tend to bleed? If so, you are probably one of the nine in 10 adults who have some form of gum disease. With their busy schedules and long work hours, it is common for truck drivers to neglect their teeth and gums. As a result, many truck drivers suffer from gum disease or gingivitis. The good news is that this condition is both treatable and preventable.

We all know that our gums surround our teeth and part of our jaw bones, however many of us do not know what their function is. Basically, our gums form a tight seal around the crowns of our teeth and protect them from bacterial infection and decay. So, if our gums are damaged, our teeth are more likely to be damaged. I always tell my patients to think of their gums like the head gasket of their truck engine. They both provide a tight seal.

Gingivitis is simply inflammation of our gums, which is due to the build-up of bacteria between our teeth and gums.

In most cases, gingivitis begins with the formation of plaque. Plaque is formed when different substances such as sugars and starches come in contact with the bacteria that is normally found in our mouths.

If plaque remains on our teeth for several days, it can harden and form tartar, which acts as a reservoir for harmful bacteria. Unfortunately, we usually cannot get rid of tartar by brushing or flossing and must seek help from a dental professional. With time, this plaque will irritate the gums, causing them to become swollen and bleed easily. In addition to plaque formation, certain drugs and medical conditions may also lead to the development of gingivitis.

By far, the most common cause of gingivitis is poor oral hygiene. However, there are other factors that can increase your risk, including tobacco use. All forms of tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco, increase bacterial growth in your mouth as well as weaken your immune system. Another risk factor is diabetes, which elevates your blood sugar levels and can damage many parts of your body, including your gums. As you can see, many drivers are at a higher risk as they have many risk factors.

As with all medical conditions, the sooner you seek help, the better your chances are of curing and preventing more serious conditions. If your gums are puffy, dark red, and bleed easily, it is important to seek professional help as soon as possible. Untreated gingivitis can lead to more serious forms of gum disease, which can cause tooth loss. Also, recent studies have linked chronic gingivitis with heart attacks and stroke.

The treatment of gingivitis is fairly simple in most cases. The first step is to have a dentist or dental hygienist thoroughly clean your teeth, removing all traces of plaque and tartar. Generally, the symptoms of gingivitis will clear up shortly after a professional cleaning as long as you continue to practice proper oral hygiene. Within a few weeks, your gums will look pink, healthy and feel great.

As I always say, prevention is the best treatment. There are a few basic things that you can do on the road to prevent gingivitis from occurring. First of all, brush your teeth at least twice a day. Also, choose a toothbrush that is soft and has a rounded head. If a toothbrush is too hard it will likely injure your mouth and gums. Toothbrushes should be replaced every three to four months.

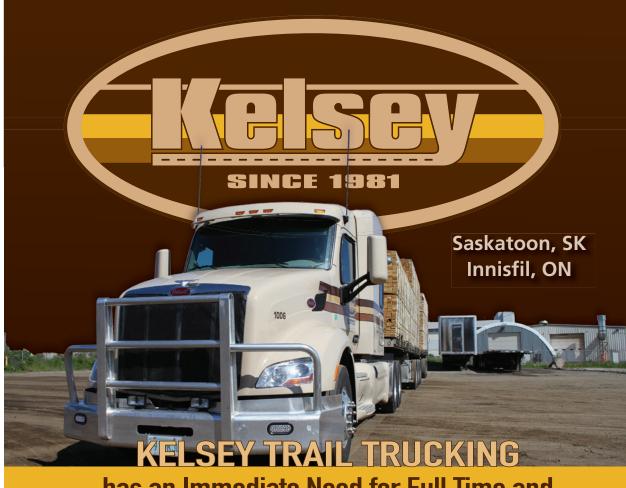
In addition to brushing regularly, it is important to floss, as it is the



Dr. Christopher H. Singh runs Trans Canada Chiropractic at the 230 Truck Stop in Woodstock, Ont. He can be reached at 519-421-2024.

most effective way to remove food and plaque from between your teeth that your brush cannot reach. Finally, see your dentist or dental hygienist regularly for check-ups and cleanings. If you follow these simple steps, you will greatly reduce your chances of developing gingivitis or other form of gum disease and your teeth and gums will thank you for it.

Until next month, drive safely! TN



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You say tomato, I say tomahto

Buying a truck isn't as simple as it used to be

Various scenarios need to be considered when purchasing a truck

I'm sure I'm not alone in the dilemma I currently face. I have a truck that I'm still paying for, yet it's costing me almost as much as my payments in repairs.

Owing to a number of factors, this is much more of a problem than it used to be. I bought the truck when the Canada/U.S. dollars were even, so it has a reasonable monthly payment, especially considering a new truck is automatically at least 20% more expensive due to the current exchange rate, not to mention the annual increases with each model year change. However, with the cost of repairs on top of the payment, a new truck is looking better all the time.

Now that's not to say that the truck is unreliable. Things wear out over time; it's why the manufacturers only offer warranty for a specific time and mileage period. It's how truck repair shops stay in business.

But in times past, a truck was usually paid for by the time the repair bills started rolling in and it was just the cost of doing business.

Today, trucks are more complicated, and complicated means more expensive – both to buy and to repair. There's a lot more stuff that needs replacing and cleaning as part of routine maintenance and there's a lot more to go wrong, too.

Used truck prices reflect this. A four- or five-year-old truck with half a million miles is going to require around \$10,000 per year in repairs over the next half million miles, so residuals have dropped. That's how the free market works.

If you're buying such a truck, the monthly payment and the repair bills will add up to less than the payment on a new truck, mainly because the monthly payment will be quite low if you buy it over three or four years. But add the repair

bills to the higher payments you'll be making if you've had the truck from new and still have a couple of years left to run before you pay it off, and the combination of payment and repair bills can be painful.

In times past, a truck was usually paid for by the time the repair bills started rolling in and it was just the cost of doing business.

From my own personal experience, I see three ways to address this issue. One, you buy a new truck and trade it in every three years. It will

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

still have decent drive tires, still be in warranty, and will have a reasonable residual value and desirability.

view of life on the road.

Two, you buy a three-year-old truck with a lower payment and expect the worst and hope for the best when it comes to future repair costs. Each method has merit. A new truck should be trouble-free for the time it's in your possession, but the monthly payment will be high. A three-year-old truck will have a lower monthly payment and will require new tires early on and a few expensive maintenance items, like a diesel particulate filter cleaning for example. But, overall it should be a little bit cheaper each month - on paper at least.

The third option – and there are two ways to go about this – is you could buy a new truck and decide to keep it when the warranty expires because it's been a good truck. The first way is to build in a residual when you buy it and pay for it over a shorter term. Let's use \$50,000 as an easy example.

You have the option of trading it for a new truck, maybe even making a few bucks out of the old one, or you can pay off the outstanding amount, either in cash or by refinancing it. The second way to do this is to buy it over five years and refinance the truck after three years and spread the remaining payments out over an extended time period.

However you look at it, buying a truck isn't as simple as it used to be. **TN**









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The evolution of the powertrain

Today's powertrains boast increased torque, less horsepower

By Derek Clouthier

When it comes to the mechanical components that move a truck, it used to be about one thing – generating power.

For a variety of reasons, the powertrain of today is much different from what you would get 20 years ago. Advanced technologies, environmental concerns, government regulations, and the desire to save on fuel costs are some of the reasons behind the change.

Today's engines provide comparable performance to older models, and much more efficiently.

There are still questions, however, when it comes to choosing the right powertrain for each application – after all, how much power do you really need? Is there such a thing as having too much power? And what are the dangers of not having enough power?

We talked to a few industry sales experts who have seen firsthand what today's customers are looking for in a powertrain, and how performance has evolved over the past couple of decades.

"Fleets are starting to understand that it's more about torque and less about horsepower when they're buying engines these days," said Bob McKinley, new truck sales operations for Carrier Centers out of Woodstock, Ont. "The fleets that are really on top of it are ordering things like lower horsepower and more torque because that leads to fuel efficiency, and the power is in the torque."

McKinley is seeing a shift toward engines with 1,850 lb.-ft. of torque and 450 hp, a transition from the high horsepower buyers were looking for 20 years ago. Many OEMs, he said, had not yet discovered to simply add more torque to the motor.

McKinley said these days, drivers are "shutting the truck off at road speed limits" and using the higher torque to get up hills, eliminating the need for increased horsepower, which essentially just makes the truck move faster.

Blake MacPherson is a truck sales representative at Team Truck Centres in Windsor, Ont., and he, along with his sales colleague Joel Bezaire, said though engines 20 years ago ran "more free with a better seat-of-yourpants feel when driving," customers need to choose the right powertrain from their particular application.

"With heavy-haul, the more torque and more horsepower, the better," said MacPherson, adding that an overdrive transmission would also be beneficial.

For over-the-road applications, MacPherson echoed McKinley, saying more torque and less horsepower is the way to go. And for regional hauling, a powertrain with moderate torque and horsepower, as well





Today's powertrains are all about torque and fuel efficiency, and less about horsepower.

as a 13-liter engine would work best, according to MacPherson.

The move from 15-liter to 13-liter engines has continued over the past few years.

Mark Dorais, new truck sales representative for Peterbilt dealer Cervus Equipment in Regina, Sask., said emissions targets are driving OEMs to focus on smaller displacement engines.

"A 13-liter engine is commanding the market in North America due to the major fleets in the United States and the lighter weights they haul versus in Canada," said Dorais, adding that the 13-liter can offer better fuel economy, while the 15-liter provides superior performance. "There are OEM engines, such as the Paccar MX, which is a 13-liter engine and offering up to 510 hp and 1,850 lb.-ft. of torque, that do well pulling heavy weights while getting good fuel economy."

Dorais said as technology has advanced over the years, and the materials being used in smaller displacement engines have made them lighter and stronger, they are able to increase performance while hauling heavier weights.

MacPherson had a slightly different perspective with regards to the 13-liter versus 15-liter engine debate.

"The 15-liter is commanding the market between Detroit Diesel and the Cummins X15," said MacPherson.

Longevity, fuel economy, and reduced maintenance were three

factors where a 15-liter engine is superior to the 13L, according to MacPherson. It can also command a premium at resale time.

Heavy-haul applications, heavy vocational, and over-the-road are applications where MacPherson would recommend the use of a 15-liter engine, while regional haul, moderate vocational, crane trucks, and dump trucks are suitable for the 13-liter option.

McKinley said 13-liter engines are starting to come into their own.

"With the 13 liters, we're seeing acceptance in the last six months that we didn't see the six months before," he said of the new International A26 engine. "Everybody wanted to wait and see what other people thought of it. The fuel economy that all 13-liters get is there with (the A26) and the reliability has been there, and we've sure learned the reliability story. It's better to be up and running every day than to get the last drop of fuel."

Tipping his hat to Paccar's MX-13, McKinley said International is moving away from the maligned MaxxForce engine, which had issues, mainly due to the turbo air control valve.

With International now offering the A26, McKinley said the air system has been changed to mirror other engines, and thus far, feedback has been positive.

"It's a good motor. Our dealership has sold about 75 to 100 now and it's been out about a year," he said. "They're doing what they promised to do. They're getting about half a mile a gallon better than a 15-liter. I don't know if a year is enough time, but they are certainly behaving themselves and they have the power to do the jobs."

Reiterating McKinley's opinion, Dorais agreed that today's engines are more about torque than horsepower.

"There's a mindset in the industry that you must have the most horse-power to be able to pull, but in fact it's the torque that gives the power," he said. "Unless a customer is pulling heavy weights, then a high horse-power engine isn't really required. With the advances in electronics and software programing, engine manufacturers are able to really focus on specific areas and get the most out of their products."

But is there a risk of not having enough power?

"The main thing is flexibility," said McKinley. "Don't paint yourself into a corner with the truck that just (barely) does it and gets the most fuel economy. You might get a new contract to haul something and wish the truck you bought would be flexible and do the new job."

MacPherson believes when it comes to heavy-haul, there is no such thing as too much power, but for other applications, there is some wiggle room.

"With over-the-road, you need to balance your power and torque to achieve maximum fuel economy in your application," he said.

"I don't think there's no such thing as too much power compared to how much power is actually required for the application," added Dorais. "With too much power there's a tendency to put your foot into it, which will burn more fuel. And being under-powered will burn fuel because the engine has to work that much harder."

As for resale value, all agreed it should be taken into consideration when purchasing a new truck.

McKinley said going forward he see less of an issue reselling 13-liter trucks because of their fuel efficiency.

MacPherson countered, saying a 15-liter with automated transmission will always bring the best resale value because all over-the-road and heavy-haul applications should use a 15- or 16-liter engine.

Dorais agreed that bigger displacement engines tend to have higher resale value.

"Customers should really focus on what they require for their application," he said. "It's either fuel economy or performance."

If all else fails when trying to decide what kind of powertrain is best for you, McKinley said to heed the advice of others.

"Our story goes, that if you look at all the big fleets, they're all on B-trains with 450 hp and 1,850 torque, with a 13-speed automated (transmission), so you should too," he said. "If you're a small guy, then learn from the big guy, because they've had the time to experiment." **TN**



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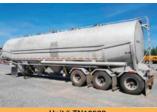
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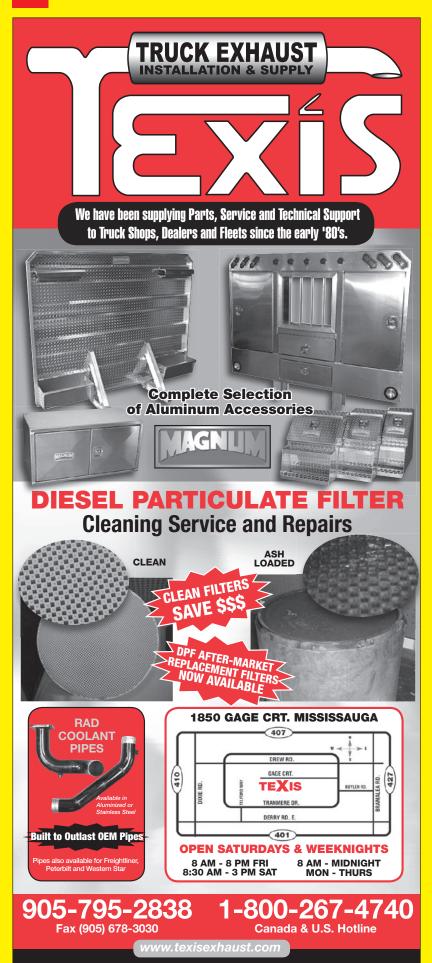


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2004 INTERNATIONAL 7500 FUEL TRUCK, INTERNATIONAL ENG; HT-580, 300 HP. 10 SPD. EATON FULLER TRANS; TANDEM AXLE(S), AIR SUSP; WHITE IN COLOR, GWWR: 60,000 LBS., c/w SUPER HEAVY-DUTY ROBICA 18,500 L (4,887 USG) ALUMINUM 4-TERS.MECHANICAL MANIFOLD. 233,000 MILES. -1262099

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Tallman Group reorganizes management; **Stemco** names a new president; and **Trimble** and **Truck-Lite** announce appointments.

The Tallman Group has announced an organizational realignment within the regional operations leadership team. **David Amelotte,** regional vice-president, Eastern Ontario, is responsible for the operations of the Belleville, Cornwall, Kemptville locations; Dealership and Collision Centre, Kingston; Dealership and Power Systems, East Ottawa and West Ottawa locations.

Jordan Markoff, regional vice-president, Greater Toronto Area (GTA), is responsible for the operations of Oshawa, Markham, and Mississauga and Peel Truck & Trailer locations.

Terry Descoteaux, regional vice-president, Northern Ontario, continues to be responsible for the operations of the Sudbury, Timmins, and Sault Ste. Marie locations.

And **Ron McCabe**, director of parts, is responsible for parts purchasing and sales for the Tallman Group organization.

Stemco announced it has hired **Eric Vaillancourt** as its new president.



Vaillancourt joins Stemco with more than 30 years of experience in various industries. He most recently served as the president of

Garlock Sealing Products, another EnPro Industries company. Vaillancourt succeeds former company president Todd Anderson.

Bridgestone Americas has announced **Ben Johnson** is joining the organization as director of marketing for the commercial truck bus radial (TBR) tire business. In this role, Johnson will lead the marketing and channel strategy for Bridgestone, Firestone, and Dayton commercial truck tires in the U.S. and Canada. This role was previously held by **Michelle Lane**, who accepted the executive director of marketing role for the company's Firestone Building Products business earlier this year.

Trimble Transportation has announced three executive leadership appointments. These moves include the promotions of **Mark Botticelli** to chief technology officer, transportation and **Keith Mader** to vice-president of analytics, transportation. **Trent Lezer** will assume the role of senior vice-president of technology at PeopleNet.

Truck-Lite recently announced three executive promotions and the addition of one new position within its organization. **Mark Bara** is the new executive vice-president of sales and marketing; **Laurie Beegle** is now president of Davco Technology; **Paul Sniegocki** is executive vice-president of engineering and chief technology officer; and **Doug Wolma** is the newly designated role of president.

"These additions to our executive staff come at an exciting time for Truck-Lite," said Brian Kupchella, Truck-Lite CEO. "Mark, Laurie, Paul, and Doug have decades' worth of experience between this organization and the industry at large and will greatly facilitate Truck-Lite's strategic trajectory for continued growth in 2018 and beyond."

Phillips Connect Technologies (PCT) has hired intermodal industry veteran **Cliff Creech** as its business development manager. In his new position, Creech will primarily guide product and business development efforts for ChassisNet.

Fleet Advantage has named **Jon Keller** senior vice-president of sales. Keller is a seasoned sales veteran with experience in fleet leasing, asset management, and life-cycle cost management.

Keller joins Fleet Advantage from Merchants Fleet Management, where he most recently served as vice-president, sales, east, responsible for managing sales representatives focused on business development and customer retention strategies. **TN**

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Mark Dalton: Owner-Operator

By Edo van Belkom THE STORY SO FAR

Mark travels to New Mexico for a load back to Canada. While he's there, another driver shows up for a load to Los Angeles. The driver looks Mexican and the shipper was expecting someone white and tells the driver there is no longer any load. Mark offers his load to the man, and the shipper ends up giving the man his original load...

Despite Mark's intention not to travel deep into the U.S. for a while after he witnessed a shipper pull a load from a driver, he thought would be white but turned out to be of Mexican descent, Mark ended up delivering a load to a Texas border town that was ultimately headed to Mexico.

This time Mark was driving with both eyes wide open, ready to more easily recognize racism however subtle - for what it was, which was wrong.

However, as he'd traveled south through the U.S., he hadn't witnessed any signs of racism. But then again, he hadn't really interacted with anyone either. So, maybe his experience had been a one-off, something that could be explained as the action of just a single person, or one of those in the minority who gave others a bad name. Mark hoped that was true, so much so that he was willing to put the theory to a test.

After making his delivery, Mark traveled to a warehouse in San Antonio to pick up a load of pet food destined for Toronto.

After his truck had been loaded, but before he could leave, Mark dug out a pair of rainbow pride flags from inside his cab and stuck them on the front fenders of Mother Load. The flags were new and bright and immensely colorful in the Texas midday sun. In fact, it didn't take long for people to notice them.

When the shipper came to give Mark the paperwork he needed for his load, the man stopped at the end of Mark's trailer and leaned back to get a better look at the multi-colored flag attached to his truck and flapping in the breeze.





Greatness is in the eye of the beholder - Part 2

"Whatcha got there?" the shipper said.

"Got where?" responded Mark.

"That flag, there." He flicked his head slightly toward the front of Mark's truck. "With all the colors on it."

"Oh, that," Mark said. "That's a rainbow flag...you know a gay pride flag or an LGBT flag."

"A what?"

"LGBT. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender."

"I know that!"

"But you asked."

The man looked at Mark with narrowed eyes. "I guess what I meant to say was, why the hell do you have it on your truck?"

"Well, it's a funny thing that," Mark began. "I'm not gay myself, but I have a lot of friends who are and a couple of weeks ago I let them borrow my truck to decorate and drive in a parade. It was actually a lot of fun."

The shipper just stared. Finally, he said, "Are you looking for trouble?"

Mark gave the man a puzzled expression. "Why would I be in

"There are people around these parts who don't appreciate that flag, or the people flying it."

"Why would that be?"

"For what it represents."

"You mean, equality, acceptance, freedom of expression..."

"No, that ain't it."

"Maybe I should be flying a couple of Confederate flags instead. Would that be a better symbol? You know, for what it represents?'

After a moment of silence, the shipper said, "You're not from around here, are you?"

"No," Mark said. "I'm Canadian."

"That's nice. I'm from Texas and around here companies reserve the right to not use any drivers who don't believe in the same Christian values as we do."

"Well, I believe in a lot of Christian values, like that all men and women are created equal and that everyone is equal in the eyes of God."

The shipper smirked a little, then put out an arm to guide Mark out the door.

'Well, let's just say that some people are more equal than others around here."

When they got to Mother Load, the shipper went around the front of the truck and pulled the flags from the fenders. Then, holding the flags in his hands he said, "I know what you're trying to do, but if you want to poke the bear around here you want to find yourself a partner to drive as a team...that, or carry a gun."

Mark said nothing. Then the shipper opened the driver's door and tossed the flags and the paperwork onto the driver's seat. As he turned toward Mark, he smiled and said, "If you want my advice...stop tempting fate and just take this load back to wherever it is you came from before somebody gets hurt."

The man stared directly at Mark as he said the last bit and it sent a bit of a shiver down his back. It was obvious he'd been warned and that it was probably best if he heeded that warning. "Thanks," he said. "I'll keep that in mind."

Several miles down the road Mark was pulled over by a Texas State Trooper.

"Licence and registration," the trooper asked.

Moments later, Mark was asked to step out of the truck. The officer gave Mark a quick pat down search on the side of the road, then did his best to look into the cab of Mother Load through the open driver's door.

"May I ask why I've been pulled over?"

"This truck fits the description of a truck that was recently stolen from a yard in San Antonio."

"I'm driving a Peterbilt that's pulling a Fruehauf trailer. That's about as common as it gets in this part of the country."

The trooper seemed unimpressed. Finally, he said, "Where are the flags?

"What flags?"

"Wait here." The trooper turned and walked back to his cruiser. A few moments later, after a brief conversation on his radio, he said, "You can go now."

Mark was happy to put the miles behind him. TN

Mark Dalton returns next month in the third instalment of Greatness is in the eye of the beholder.





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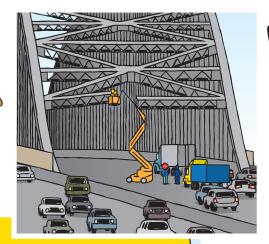




The Adventures of

By Edo Van Belkom

ith that one incident, what had been a great, regular, and well-paying route had become a break-even or moneyloser overnight. It was still too early to tell just how much the delays were going to cost Vic in terms of time and fuel, but there was no doubt his bottom line was going to be affected. Perhaps the saddest part was that any money lost was the fault of a fellow truck driver.



ic has been driving the QEW for some time now, hauling scrap steel from one scrap yard to another. On his last trip, he saw a dump truck driving along with its box raised and tried to stop it before it ran into the Burlington Skyway Bridge, but he was unsuccessful and the collision put the bridge out of commission for

Now the repair effort is fully underway, but there are still lanes that are blocked and traffic moving in that direction has been reduced to a

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

'It's the

tariffs.

The deal for

all that scrap fell through.

"In a trade

war everyone gets hurt."

111



"But there are

still dozens more

loads of steel...

"Those tariffs

hurt the steel

industry.

I'm just

a truck

driver."

are supposed to

inally, Vic gets past the place where the crash occurred, and – even though ● he's travelling in the opposite direction – he's able to see the amount of damage that was done. Obviously, the repairs were going to take more than a few days to complete. Vic, like everyone else on this route, was going to have to find a way around the bridge. Easy to say, but any alternate route he found was going to have the same sort of delays due to volume.

However, after getting through the slowdown and with a clear road ahead, Vic was buoyed by the thought that the bridge would be repaired soon enough and things would eventually get back to normal. There was still more than a month's worth of work on this job and the damaged bridge was only a short-term obstacle to be overcome.

But then Vic gets a phone call.

anadian retaliatory tariffs are having a similar effect on drivers just like Vic.



"Damn Canadians! What am I supposed to do now?"

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The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company has two new wide-base tire models available. The new widebase tires for longhaul trucks are being touted to save carriers money on both fuel and downtime, featuring Goodyear Fuel Max and DuraSeal Technology.

The Goodyear Fuel Max SSD drive and Goodyear Fuel Max SST trailer tires come with a SmartWay verification for incorporation of fuel-saving compounds and tread designs for low rolling resistance.

The tire maker's DuraSeal Technology is said to help seal punctures of up to a quarter inch in diameter in the repairable area of the tire's tread,

however the technology doesn't seal sidewall punctures.

In addition, the Goodyear Fuel Max SSD has an all-season design that features wide grooves with stone ejectors, which help resist stone drilling to promote casing durability, and has interlocking microgrooves to help stabilize the tire's tread for high mileage.

Both the Goodyear Fuel Max SSD and Goodyear Fuel Max SST are available in size

445/50R22.5. The tires are available now in North America from the company's group of commercial network dealers. TN

Carriers Edge now offers a French version of its course on Canada's vehicle inspection regulations, as well as French and English versions of a new course specific to the rules that govern Ouebec-plated vehicles.

The company now offers more than 40 French-language courses overall.

Drivers who complete the vehicle inspection courses - available for tractor-trailers and straight trucks - will understand procedures for pre-trip inspections, and how to spot problems that could lead to breakdowns or be flagged for a roadside violation, the company says.

The Quebec-specific course focuses on the rules and forms used in that province. TN

Giti Tire (USA) has unveiled the GDL633 FS ultra-wide-base tire for drive axles and the GTL933 FS ultrawide-base tire for trailers in longhaul applications.

Both models of the SmartWay-verified offerings are available in the 445/50R22.5 size.

Promoted features on the drive tire include a special tread compound to reduce rolling resistance, sipes designed for the even contact pressure needed to minimize irregular wear, and the lug pattern design for traction and stability. There are seven circumferential grooves to evacuate water.

Features of the trailer tire include an optimized tread design on the rib edges to minimize irregular wear, and a wide tread design that promises a consistent contact patch pressure. Tread grooves have also been enhanced to minimize stone retention. ${\sf TN}$

Ancra Cargo's X-Treme Grip tire chains have been unveiled in v-bar, stud, and square-link options for those who are heading through punishing layers of ice and snow.

The V-bar chains have a plated silver zinc finish for frozen roads. Heavyduty stud tire chains are for off-road applications like logging.

And the square link models, coated in a protective plated silver zinc finish, are for highways covered in snow and ice.

All the chains are available in single- or triple-chain alternatives.

While the V-bar and studded tire chains measure 8 mm, the squarelink versions are 7 mm. TN





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FD711 drive tire to support high-scrub and high-traction applications.

The latest offering delivers a solid grip, long wear, and enhanced retreading capabilities, the company says. It's recommended for applications including long- and regional-haul service, pickup and delivery, and light-to-moderate on/off highway environments.

Bridgestone Americas has unveiled the Firestone

Traction is supported with an open shoulder design and aggressive tread blocks, while resistance to wear and abrasion come with the staggered tread block design and tough tread compounds, Bridgestone

adds. Other features include a slow-wearing cap compound and cool-running base to help protect against heat, and a four-belt construction to protect the casing in the name of durability and retreading.

It comes in 11R22.5 and 11R24.5 sizes, backed with a 90-day "buy and try" guarantee. TN





Taking care of business on the Blue Line

Accessible management, decent-paying freight the key to retaining drivers



Julia Della Maestra and husband Tom Della Maestra are hands-on owners.

MILTON, ONTARIO

Is there anything more Canadian than hockey? The color red, perhaps? Blue Line Distribution doesn't think so.

Blue Line, known for its bright red trucks, was named after the blue lines in a hockey rink. It started in 1986 under Tom Della Maestra, who at the time was an avid hockey player, and his wife Julia.

Della Maestra played defense on the blue line, but began his own trucking company with the vision to succeed and a desire to grow into an all-Canadian company.

Today the business, which is headquartered in Milton, Ont., is flourishing. It has more than 60 company driven trucks and about 20 owner-operators, along with more than 150 trailers.

Blue Line specializes in less-thantruckload (LTL) and hauls general freight. Most of the time, it hauls liquor and spirits. Sometimes it will transport exotic cars and helicopters, too. But, really, on an average day it can transport anything from pillows to air conditioners, according to Fatima da Rosa, the administrative director of Blue Line, who has been with the company just less than 20 years.

"We haul mostly into the United States and in the western provinces," she added.

Blue Line has two other offices, one in Miami with about 20 employees, and another in Chicago.

Business is good, according to da Rosa, but Blue Line is still looking to hire more drivers.

"Drivers are needed everywhere and with the average age of the driver going up it's getting harder to hire," she said. "We do have a higher turnover rate than we'd like, but we do have some longstanding drivers with us that have been here for 15-17 years. The ones that stay, they stay here a long time."

Da Rosa says drivers enjoy working for Blue Line because of the fair and competitive pay packages.

"They get paid well. They get a lot of miles. And the cheques never bounce," she said. "I think being here is a comfort for them. They know what to expect in terms of routes. We have a safety bonus incentive, which they like. And we have brand new shiny trucks that they love to drive."

Currently, Blue Line's fleet consists of 2019 Volvo trucks. The company normally cycles its trucks every three or four years, and it always springs for the better spec's and maintenance schedules, according to da Rosa.

"Drivers are so proud to drive these trucks," she said. "When they're out on the road, many of them will take pictures when they're parked to show it off."

Working for Tom and Julia is also a reason they stick around, da Rosa

"They really like working for them," she said. "Because (Tom and Julia) are so involved with the business. In other companies, sometimes the owners aren't in the office as much, but here it's not like that. Our guys can pick up the phone and call Tom 24/7 and they know that. They don't have to go through 50 different people to talk to the owner."

"We don't take freight that doesn't pay well."

- Fatima da Rosa, Blue Line

Da Rosa said the company's greatest advantage is its undenied scrutiny when it comes to choosing freight, as well as new hires.

"We don't take freight that doesn't pay well," she said. "We will turn down freight if it's not the right money. We make sure our freight is always on time, as scheduled, and we make sure to only hire drivers with experience. We are very picky about who we hire here. You have to have between five and 10 years of experience to work at Blue Line."

Da Rosa said new hires go through a rigorous onboarding process that involves a road test and a thorough check on one's driving record and references.

"We don't just go on blind faith here. We check all the references," she said. "And we know that past employers are very honest with us. We are so careful with who we hire because drivers today aren't that old stereotype. They are highly educated and skilled. They have to have customer service experience. They are put in stressful situations. So, we want the best of the best here."

The company's latest challenge, on top of dealing with the driver shortage, is the legalization of marijuana coming into effect in October. To date, da Rosa says the company hasn't rolled out a formal policy, but management is looking to create a zero-tolerance policy at Blue Line.

Looking to the future, da Rosa said Blue Line is hoping to expand and become a leader in North America.

'We really want to grow some more," she said. "We have 20 more trucks on order and more accounts are signing on. I believe we are exploring different states we haven't done work in before. More business is coming, so we expect growth. We have the freight, now we just need the drivers." TN



Sonia Straface is the associate editor of Truck News. She has been covering the Canadian trucking industry since 2014.

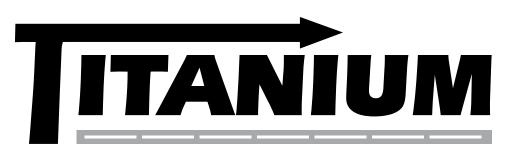


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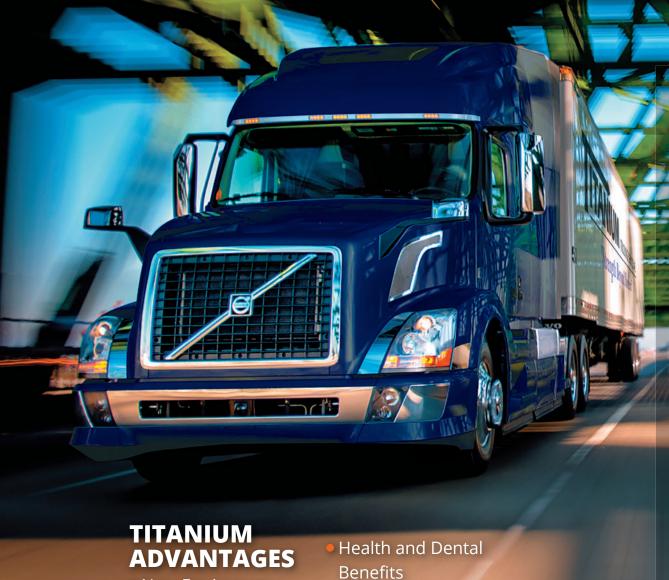
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