

# TRUCK NEWS WEST

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Since the Humboldt tragedy, the industry has seen the introduction of MELT in several provinces, as well as an eight-year prison sentence handed down to the truck driver involved in the collision that killed 16 and injured 13.

## A year after Humboldt

A lot has changed for the trucking industry since the Humboldt tragedy

**By Derek Clouthier**

**MELFORT, SASKATCHEWAN**

A year after a semi-truck collided with the Humboldt Broncos team bus, killing 16 and injuring 13, both the driver and carrier involved in the tragedy have had their day in court, pleading guilty to the charges against them.

Jaskirat Singh Sidhu, the truck driver who caused the Humboldt Broncos bus collision, has been sentenced to eight years in prison.

Judge Inez Cardinal handed down the sentencing in court March 22. Sidhu pleaded guilty to 16 counts of dangerous driving causing death and 13 counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm.

The prosecutor in the case was seeking a 10-year sentence followed by a 10-year driving prohibition.

Reports from media at the sentencing indicated the judge said a strong sentence was warranted, but Sidhu's guilty plea and other factors meant he did not deserve the maximum 14-year sentence.

Sukhmander Singh, owner of Adesh Deol Trucking, the carrier involved in the Humboldt collision, pleaded guilty March 27 to five charges, and was fined \$5,000 for those transgressions.

Singh admitted he failed to keep time logs for drivers, neglected to make sure his drivers complied with safety regulations, maintained more than one daily log for any given day, and did not have or follow a written safety program.

Judge Sean Dunnigan gave Singh a \$1,000 fine for each of the offenses he pleaded guilty, totaling \$5,000.

The offences Singh admitted guilt to, which his lawyer announced in Calgary court on his behalf, occurred between Jan. 1 and March 31 of last year, prior to the Humboldt tragedy.

Nicole Sinclair, director of policy and communications for the Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA), said Sidhu's eight-year sentence shows that commercial drivers have a responsibility when it comes to public safety.

## MELT to be mandated in Manitoba starting Sept. 1

**By Derek Clouthier**

**WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

Manitoba's Minister of Infrastructure, Ron Schuler, announced March 26 that the province will implement mandatory entry-level driver training (MELT) starting Sept. 1.

Schuler said aspiring commercial drivers will be required to complete 121.5 hours of training, though how that training will be administered had not yet been laid out.

"It's a great first step when it comes to increasing road safety, but we don't have any specifics on program detail," said Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) executive director Terry Shaw. "What is the curriculum going to look like? What are the regulations around schools, instructors, and a whole host of other stuff...what are they all going to look like?"

*Continued on page 13*

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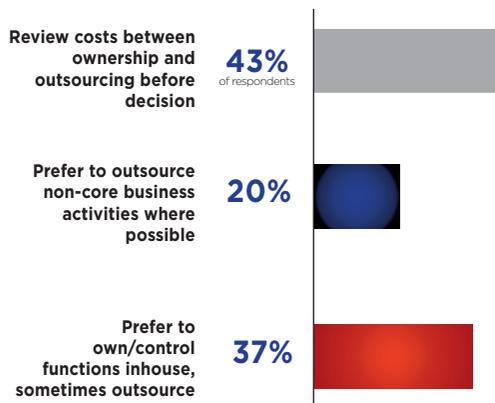
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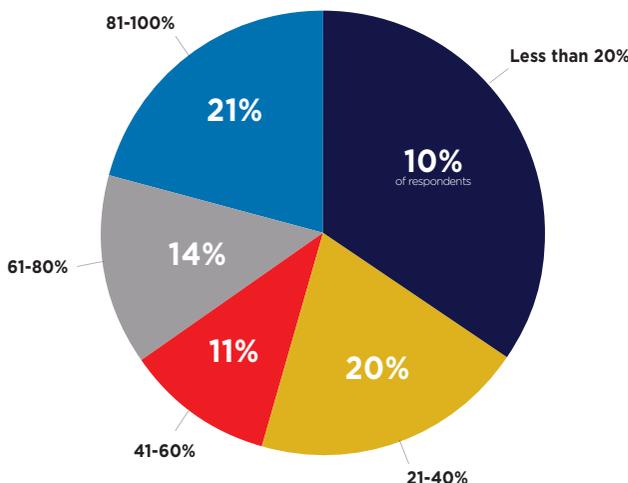


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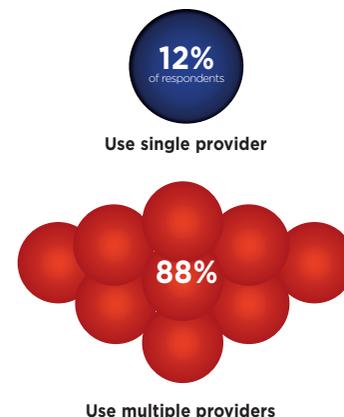
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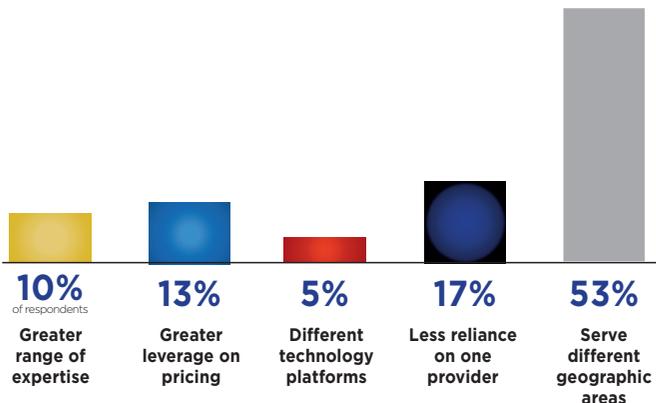
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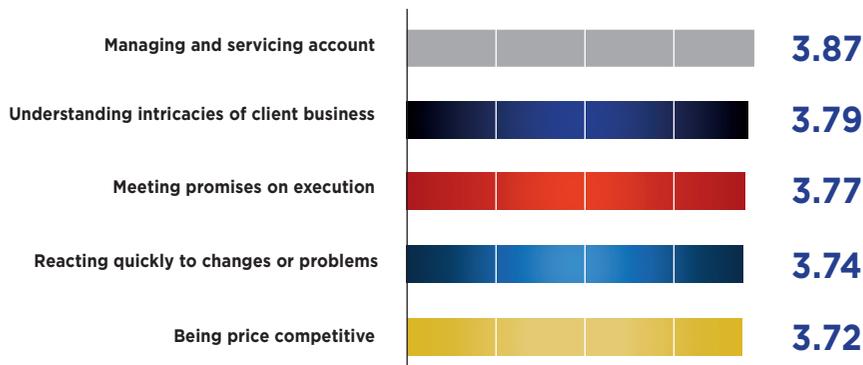
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Derek's deliberation

# Alberta's election issues will filter over to the national stage this October

We have an election happening in Alberta April 16, and by the time you get to read this column it will all be over and we will either have a new government or be carrying on with the current NDP.

As of April 9, polls had the United Conservative Party (UCP) with a wide lead over the NDP at 51% to 36%. The Alberta Party and Liberals were barely a factor.

For those in the trucking industry, there are a few issues that rise to the top of totem pole in this election.

Pipelines and support for the province's oil and gas sector is clearly one, as we have seen from the rallies and convoys that have been rolling down western Canadian roadways since before Christmas.

During one of my weekly interviews on Trucker Radio, Stan Campbell and I chatted about what kind of impact these convoys – specifically United We Roll! Convoy for Canada that traveled from Alberta to Ottawa – would have on politicians. I argued that they would have little to no influence on government, which I don't think was the goal of convoy organizers. They were looking to sway the opinions of voters, which we will soon see if there was any impact.



The carbon tax is another issue in Alberta, and across the country, with the federal government recently imposing its will on provinces that had not mandated their own policy.

The carbon tax can be looked at in two ways. Those who support it say industries and individuals should not be allowed to continue polluting the environment with no repercussions. Charge them in the hopes they will either reduce their carbon footprint, or at the very least contribute tax dollars toward green energy and environmental initiatives. That's assuming the government in your

province uses the money for that purpose, which not all do.

Those who oppose the carbon tax say it does nothing to curb emissions, and depending on which media outlet you read, you can argue either way. The *Vancouver Sun* says B.C.'s emissions from road transportation have increased 10.5% since the province brought in the carbon tax in 2008.

Yet the *Globe and Mail* says per capita emissions in B.C. are down by 14% since 2008. Is it any wonder people trying to gain insight into the effectiveness of carbon pricing get confused?

Another issue in the Alberta election is toll roads. The NDP is telling voters that if the UCP is elected they will introduce toll roads in the province, something the conservatives deny.

The UCP has entertained the idea of a toll road in Northern Alberta for the trucking industry to improve access to Grande Prairie, Cold Lake, and Fort McMurray. Because the road would be primarily for industry, the idea is that industry helps pay for and maintain the road.

Whether this comes to fruition, who knows, but it would be inter-

esting to hear from some of our readers if they would support such a venture.

Other than toll roads, I believe the issues facing Alberta voters will be mirrored in the upcoming federal election this October.

Oil and gas, the carbon tax, environmental initiatives, and sprinkle in a scandal or two, and there you have it; the federal election in a nutshell.

Alberta polls in 2015 had the NDP with a huge lead over the then PCs, and that has flipped this time around.

But polls have certainly been wrong before. Just look south. **TN**



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# Why CYBER CRIMINALS are targeting the TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

By Garry Robertson

**Cybercrime** isn't new, but it's taking new forms. While financial institutions and other lucrative targets have tempted hackers for decades, sectors like transportation and trucking – where fresh technology has spurred new growth – are gaining more attention from data thieves looking for a big score. Northbridge expert on trucking crime, Garry Robertson, weighs in on what's at stake with new technology and how an effective risk management approach factors into your bottom line.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY CAN LEAD TO NEW VULNERABILITIES

Technology is a double-edged sword: it can raise your fortunes, but also lay bare your weaknesses. Without an adequate cyber plan in place, you may unknowingly pave the way for thieves to gain access to your business – and take a big bite out of your profits. Cyber incidents impact companies across every industry, and the average cost of a breach response is \$6.11 M.<sup>1</sup>

Cybercrime in the truck and transport industry generally targets centralized IT systems to isolate and take over cargo and equipment, which can also pose serious threats to employees and to public safety. Understanding your technological weak points is the first step towards a safer operation, and knowing how to protect your systems can reduce the risk of a serious cyber incident that harms your customers and your business.

## HOW CYBERCRIME TARGETS CARGO

Cargo theft is an ongoing problem for carriers, and technology provides new ways for thieves to make off with freight. One relatively new tactic is known as “fictitious pick-up”: thieves look up valuable loads on online loadboards, and using false credentials to pose as legitimate truckers (such as a defunct company's DoT number), they get the contract, pull up their own truck to the point of collection and simply drive off before anyone realizes they weren't who they said they were.

In a similar approach, some criminals use “business identity theft” to recreate documentation in a certain company's name. After learning the pickup location and the company information through online systems, the thieves arrive at the pickup point before the agreed-upon date and make off with the cargo.

Another way to target cargo is to stop a truck in its tracks. Telematics systems take different forms, and some are more prone to hackers. In a recent report, researchers at the University of Michigan demonstrated how easy it was to remotely change the truck instrument panel to affect acceleration or disable brakes. In fact, they concluded that computer systems in trucks were easier to hack than those in cars.<sup>2</sup>

## SERIOUS THREATS TO SAFETY

Of course, cargo isn't the only asset at risk. Ransomware can be used to hijack a truck's control system to suspend delivery and strand drivers until the victim pays the requested ransom. Such a situation could have grave consequences for the driver, and the criminals could make off with confidential fleet and customer information, too.

Privacy breaches can cost you a fortune and ruin your reputation. However, some experts expect that things are about to get worse, with

threats of intellectual property theft, cyber extortion and the impact of business interruption following a cyber-attack raising the stakes.<sup>3</sup> The more machines exchanging data, the more chances for data theft.

## IS YOUR COMPANY AT RISK?

As technology advances, some businesses embrace interconnectivity by patching together a system of IT tools to improve different aspects of their operations. The problem is that these systems don't always work together seamlessly: some are older than others, updates aren't always carried out, and they may not communicate effectively. If your company relies on a loose arrangement of different electronic tools for your daily operations, you need to take extra caution when it comes to staying up to date with software and securing lines of communication.

You don't need to be a big, internationally-renowned company to attract cybercrime – small and medium-sized businesses are increasingly preyed upon. After all, smaller companies typically won't have the same prevention training and security barriers to ward off cybercrime that a large company could afford to implement. In fact, there has been a steady increase in cyber-attacks on businesses with 250 employees or less.<sup>4</sup>

## STAY ONE STEP AHEAD

The fact is that any transportation company could be at risk of cybercrime. Here are some of the ways you can protect your business from privacy breaches or ransomware (and their crippling consequences):

**Stay vigilant – and adaptive.** Keep up-to-date with software and take time to make sure your lines of communication are secure. Use a tool that can provide compliance reporting and run a centrally-managed antivirus program that updates signatures frequently.

**Plan well.** With a solid incident response plan, disaster recovery plan, and business continuity plan to back up your business, you stand a much better chance of recovering with your operations and your reputation intact.

**Train your staff.** All your staff should understand relevant security concepts, and they should know how to properly run and inspect electronic systems. Of course, a dedicated and well-tuned IT division is always a good addition to the team.

## MANAGE YOUR RISKS TO MANAGE YOUR COSTS

Since one major cyber event could be enough to decimate your profits, better cyber risk management could mean more money in your pocket. But remember that risk mitigation is a moving target: as cybercrime changes, protection, prevention, and insurance measures must adapt.

It's difficult to predict what the future holds as transportation becomes increasingly computerized, but it's important to think about all aspects of your business and choose a focused and complete insurance solution. Northbridge has created an industry-leading cyber solution with reputable partners and skilled brokers to help you manage the risks that could be waiting around the corner.



**Garry Robertson** is Manager of the Claims Special Investigations Unit for Northbridge. A Certified Fraud Expert, Garry has over thirty years of experience in insurance and corporate fraud investigations.

<sup>1</sup> IBM Ponemon Institute's Cost of Data Breach study, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Trucking Association, Researchers Conduct Truck Hacking Experiment [Aug 16, 2015]

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Trucking Alliance, Cyber Risks on the Rise for Transportation [Sept 18, 2015]

<sup>4</sup> Symantec, 2016 Internet Security Threat Report, page 44

## ALBERTA

# Trimac buys Gibson Energy's trucking business

### CALGARY, ALBERTA

Trimac has agreed to purchase Gibson Energy's trucking business.

Trimac says the purchase expands its bulk transportation services, as Gibson has a large presence in Western Canada. Gibson was founded in 1953 as Gibson Petroleum Marketing Company, and was one of the first midstream companies in Canada to move and market crude oil.

Its first semi-trailer purchase came in 1969, when it began hauling heavy crude oil using its private fleet. It now hauls products including crude, condensate, LPG, sulphur, asphalt, and petroleum coke.

Trimac will continue providing transportation to Gibson Energy through a long-term exclusive agreement and will take on its commercial trucking contracts, equipment, and 160 employees.

"We are pleased that Gibson chose to partner with Trimac to provide transportation services and to support their growth," said Matt Faure, president and CEO of Trimac Transportation. "The addition of Gibson's Canadian

trucking business to our large portfolio of North American transportation businesses is a perfect example of how we continue to diversify and expand our business into new markets as part of our strategic plan."

Gibson Energy, which helps send one in four barrels of crude exported from Western Canada through its Hardisty terminal in central Alberta, says it will pocket about \$100 million from the sale.

It says Trimac Transportation will pay about \$70 million for the trucking assets and a Trimac affiliate is to pay \$30 million for property in Edmonton. **TN**

## Western Canadian dealer named one of Wabash's best

### CALGARY, ALBERTA

Calgary's Fleetstop Trailers was named one of Wabash National's top dealers for 2018.

"We are again honored to be included with Wabash's largest and best run North American dealerships," said Craig Sterling, managing partner of Fleetstop Trailers. "We are very proud of our expanding customer support network under Fleet Brake Parts and Service and the continued market share growth we have seen in over last 10-plus years."

Wabash recognizes its top dealers as five- and four-star dealers based on performance data. Twenty-six dealers are part of the company's Dealer Ambassador Program, and 16 earned an award as a top dealer.

This was the third straight year Fleetstop received the honor.

"Our four- and five-star dealers continually demonstrate they share our values of quality and innovation in serving our mutual customers," said Chad Lovelace, indirect channel manager, Commercial Trailer Products. "Our relationships with dealers are an integral part of our mutual success." **TN**

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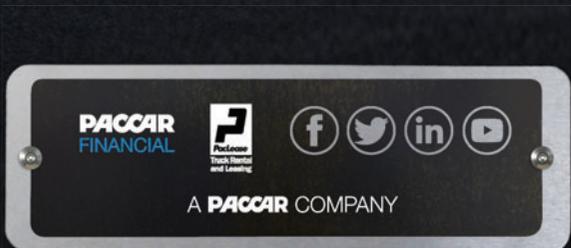


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# 'Proof of training, please'

Local councilor suggests banning drivers who lack MELT training from Saskatchewan roadways

By Derek Clouthier

**REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN**

With mandatory entry-level driver training (MELT) now mandated in Saskatchewan, the province's trucking association says it supports standardized training on a national level, but licensed commercial drivers from across North America need to operate on provincial highways.

The message comes after Lake Lenore town councilor Shawn Blandin tabled a motion during the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) saying the new training rules should apply to all drivers on provincial roadways.

In his motion, Blandin says drivers should be required to show proof their driver training is equivalent or exceeds that which is now mandated in Saskatchewan.

Despite support of a national MELT program, Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA) director of policy and communications Nicole Sinclair said she does not support the idea of requiring out-of-province drivers to show proof of equivalent training.

Sinclair said changes to regulations take time, and by the time a system to monitor out-of-province drivers would be implemented, a national driver standard will be in place.

"By 2020 all new commercial drivers operating in the province will meet this standard," said Sinclair. "We have done a great job in Saskatchewan of creating a standard that will increase road safety and industry knowledge for new industry entrants."

Sinclair said if the councilor's motion was to be implemented, it would be detrimental to the provincial and national economies.

"Licence reciprocity is in place for a reason," she said. "It makes it more efficient to get goods to market and allows trucking companies to operate across the country. If Saskatchewan were to not allow drivers from other provinces to drive here, that could be reciprocated in other provinces and have terrible repercussions for our export-based economy."

Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) does have rules in place for commercial drivers who relocate to the province since MELT was mandated March 15.

Tyler McMurchy, manager of media relations for SGI, said drivers coming from a province with a MELT program will have no restrictions and can exchange their

Class 1 licence for a Saskatchewan licence. Drivers from a province without MELT, or from the U.S., and have held a Class 1 licence for 24 months or more, will also be able to acquire a Saskatchewan Class 1 with no restrictions.

Those who have held their Class 1 for over a year and less than two years can exchange for a Saskatchewan Class 1 but must complete a knowledge and road test within the first year.

Drivers with a Class 1 for less than one year will be issued a Class 3 licence and are required to com-

plete the MELT program to get their Class 1.

As for banning commercial drivers from Saskatchewan roadways who do not meet MELT standards, McMurchy said that is not the way to move forward.

"Given that thousands of semi-truck drivers from jurisdictions across North America drive through Saskatchewan every week, it would not be practical or realistic to implement a rule banning duly licensed and experienced drivers from Saskatchewan roads if they don't have approved commercial

driving training," said McMurchy, noting that councilor Blandin's resolution during SARM did not pass.

**Beating the deadline**

McMurchy confirmed with *Truck News-West* there was an "unexpected increase in drivers trying to take their road tests prior to the March 15 changes" with MELT.

Between Dec. 4, 2017 and March 13, 2018, SGI indicated there were 640 people who booked an appointment to take their Class 1 road test.

This year, that number skyrocketed to 2,282 during the same timeframe.

"We do expect that drivers who do take the mandatory training, pass the more rigorous tests, and acquire a Saskatchewan Class 1 to be more prepared to navigate our nation's highways safely," he said. **TN**



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# The impact of Humboldt

Continued from page 1

She added that with Canada's commitment to stricter standards, such as mandatory entry-level driver training (MELT), the government is finally putting in place rules to reflect this responsibility.

"It is one thing to hold a driver to a higher standard in court because of what they should know how to do, it is another thing to not have any rules to back up that responsibility," said Sinclair. "Time will tell on increased expectations of companies, but in the meantime, more needs to be done to make sure companies understand their obligations to road safety."

## A trainer's perspective

*Truck News-West* spoke with a Class 1 driver trainer based out of Saskatchewan, who asked to remain anonymous because they said some media outlets in the past have portrayed training professionals unfairly, and as a result, some have been "reprimanded by the powers that be."

The trainer said Saskatchewan's MELT program means schools will be able to provide a higher quality education to students, as they will have more time to provide additional behind-the-wheel skills.

They did say, however, that there is a potential downside to mandatory training.

"The cost of training has quadrupled because the program is four weeks instead of one, two, or three weeks," the trainer contends, adding that this could add to the

driver shortage. "That being said, the investment in a driving education can be recuperated in a short period of time versus a college or university education."

The trainer said the burden to produce quality commercial drivers is not the sole responsibility of schools, but also on carriers.

"If a 16-year-old gets their licence one day, nobody wants or expects that person to drive across Canada into a city they are not familiar with," they said. "This principal should hold true to the professional transport industry as well. Quality carriers do provide on the job training, but obviously there are companies that do not."

The trainer said Saskatchewan's MELT program is a good start, but there needs to be changes going forward as to how the curriculum has been laid out.

"All schools feel there is an excessive amount of classroom time being made mandatory," the trainer said, "where we would like to use more of that time for behind the wheel driving."

The trainer said their particular school has not changed its approach to driver training since the implementation of MELT, with safety being the primary focus.

"The amount of training time has allowed us to be more comprehensive. Prior to mandatory training we had to deliver only the amount of training the client was willing to pay for," they said.

"Previously, people wanted to spend the minimum amount of money to get their licence. Now they are required to spend more time in school allowing more theory knowledge to be delivered along with much more behind the wheel training."

The trainer said their education facility has always met the new MELT requirements, and some other schools may need to change to meet these standards, such as minimum truck-trailer lengths and 13-speed transmissions and access to minimum required yards and classrooms.

The trainer admitted that when the Humboldt tragedy occurred, every trainer across the country "prayed to God it was not one of the drivers they trained."

But no amount of training can stop a person from running a stop sign, the trainer contends.

"I often ask other people, 'Have you ever made a catastrophic mistake while driving your car or other vehicle but nothing catastrophic or tragic happened?'" the trainer said. "To date, nobody has ever said they have never made a horrific mistake."

## The STA's perspective

The STA believes the trucking industry has changed radically as a result of the Humboldt tragedy.

Sinclair said public attention of the incident has shined a spotlight on the importance of the industry, as well as its strengths and weaknesses.

"A shift in mindset has occurred to acknowledge and appreciate the skill it takes to operate a commercial vehicle," she said, adding that the driver profession is not an unskilled occupation. "Saskatchewan has acknowledged that with the introduction of mandatory entry-level training and stricter exam and monitoring systems for farm plated commercial vehicles. This is a great step forward for both safety and the status of the industry, but we have a ways to go."

Sinclair underscored funding in the provincial budget to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure for safety improvements and the way rural intersec-



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# Stricter entry standards



The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) is calling for a national motor carrier entry standard all companies must meet before being allowed to commence operations.

The CTA is suggesting the federal government work with the industry to create what it calls a Fleet Regulatory Responsibilities and Corporate Practices (FRRCP) standard. FRRCP could require new carriers to undergo safety fitness and risk assessment evaluations, as well as continuous safety oversight prior to being permitted to operate a commercial vehicle. Some of these requirements have been put in place in Alberta.

“High performing truck drivers are not only a product of their continuous commitment to their profession, but are a reflection of the culture of compliance and training of their carrier,” said CTA chairman Scott Smith. “The perfect equation of truck safety includes a committed carrier and driver, and we must begin ensuring that every carrier that enters and remains in our sector understands and is committed to that.”

While the CTA applauds the government’s announcement of a mandatory entry-level driver training (MELT) program, it says a similar monitoring system is needed for new trucking companies to ensure safety on highways.

tions are being treated as moves in the right direction.

With the trucking industry being more of a focus of the general public, Sinclair reminds those on the outside looking in that the industry did not start working on safety initiatives like MELT just this year.

“These are long-term projects that industry associations and governments have been working on for a very long time,” she said. “Safety should not be reactionary. Unfortunately, changes happen much quicker when the world is looking at a problem and tapping their feet waiting on a solution than when it’s a company talking about their own industry.”

The STA will continue to work toward safety initiatives for the industry, calling on an immediate need for additional enforcement to cover the vast amount of highway miles blanketing the province.

“Companies with violations need to have regulations enforced upon them to create a level playing field,” said Sinclair. “Companies should not get ahead by breaking the rules while companies that spend thousands each year to be safe and compliant don’t. It’s backwards.” **TN**

The kind of program the CTA is lauding for could also require companies to submit evidence they are administratively and technically prepared to comply with National Safety Code (NSC) standards and regulations. There would also be intervention mechanisms for provincial enforcement agencies to monitor poor-performing carriers and take action against them.

“Starting a trucking venture should not be easy, there needs to be standards,” Sinclair said of the CTA’s recommendation. “Drivers are not the only ones who need training. When there are clear standards, it is easier to act when those

standards are not being followed.”

The CTA has established a Truck Safety Working Group made up of trucking industry representatives to address potential details of FRRCP and to promote the alliance’s 10-point action plan, which provides direction on the proposed program.

The top priority in the CTA’s action plan to raise the bar for truck safety is the introduction of the electronic logging device (ELD) mandate by this summer.

“Moving quickly on implementing tamper-proof, electronic logging devices to replace archaic paper logs to effectively monitor hours-of-service compliance is a good example

of the technology our industry is calling for,” said CTA president Stephen Laskowski. “This system needs to be implemented and enforced as quickly as possible.”

Other key points in the plan include exploring a possible regulation requiring forward-facing cameras in all new and existing federally-regulated commercial vehicles; the use of additional in-cab technologies that monitor distracted driving; assessing the readiness for advanced driver assist systems, such as speed limiters; expand the use of pre-clearance/pre-screening technology to assist enforcement officials pinpoint commercial vehicles needing intervention; and work to develop a proactive system to identify trucking companies and drivers who pose a risk to public safety. **TN**

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## Curriculum detail needed

Continued from page 1

The MTA has engaged in discussions with the provincial government what the curriculum of a MELT program should look like when it comes to in-class, on-road, and in-yard instruction.

“We don’t know, but we believe they are very closely going to mirror Alberta and Saskatchewan,” said Shaw. “If they do that, that’s something we’ve accepted as a political reality. Would we like to see some higher training? Sure, but we accept the political reality of our industry and our government partners.”

Shaw said the MTA will work with the government’s proposed 121.5 hours of training, examine the evidence and results of that amount of education, and let it guide future decisions.

He added that in order for the program to be successful it must be delivered effectively by appropriate educators and have proper oversight.

**“...we need to look beyond pre-licensing training and need to look at pre-employment training.”**

— Terry Shaw, MTA

“And that is that level of detail that we just don’t have right now,” said Shaw.

The Private Motor Truck Council of Canada (PMTCC) also voiced its support for the announcement.

PMTCC president Mike Millian said he is pleased to see Manitoba join Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario in making Class 1 driver training mandatory.

“The PMTCC has been involved in consultations in all of these jurisdictions and have long been in favor of making commercial driver training mandatory,” said Millian, adding that the PMTCC will continue to work with various industry stakeholders on an entry-level training standard that can be used as a baseline for a national MELT program.

Though he touted the recent announcement as a good first step, Shaw said training needs to go further if the province is going to find and train the best commercial drivers it has to offer.

“In terms of a pre-licensing standard, having something rather than nothing is fantastic,” he said. “But when it comes to the actual employability of a truck driver, we need to look beyond pre-licensing training and need to look at pre-employment training.”

In Manitoba, there is a standard for pre-employment training that is currently six weeks, with 244 hours of pre-licensing and pre-employment, with post-licensing and post-employment training that follows.

“Having people come to their licensing exams, and assume pass the exam, with some training as opposed to no training is a great first step,” said Shaw. “But for the majority in our industry, 121.5 hours probably doesn’t cut it.

“Raising the legal minimum is good, but our industry’s safety record is the way it is because the vast majority in our industry doesn’t work down to the minimum standard, they work well above the minimum standard.”

Manitoba Public Insurance and Manitoba Infrastructure are governing pre-licensing training. The MTA aims to provide input on the details of this training, and are also working with Manitoba Education and Training on pre-employment and vocational training for those who want to work as truck drivers, as opposed to people who are looking to secure a Class 1 licence.

As for the costs associated with MELT programs, Shaw said the commercial driving profession needs to be recognized nationally as a skilled trade, which would mean students would be eligible for grants to help pay for tuition.

“There are huge levels of support for vocational training, and truck driver needs to be looked at in the exact same fashion,” said Shaw. “The occupation of truck driver is a vocation. Manitoba Labour Market information clearly shows that of 500 listed occupations in Manitoba, truck driver is in the top 1%. There are only four occupations with higher net job openings.”

Manitoba does currently fund commercial driver training, along with other occupations, like carpenters, welders, and cooks.

Shaw would like to see this trend spread across all jurisdictions.

“At the end of the day, a Class 1 licence doesn’t qualify you to work as a truck driver any more than showing up on a jobsite with a hammer qualifies you to work as a carpenter,” said Shaw. “We need these people coming not only with the minimum tools, but with a knowledge and skill set. That is no different post-MELT than it was pre-MELT.” **TN**



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# 'You really have some work to do'

Data shows many young workers have mixed feelings about the trucking industry

By Derek Clouthier

## WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

The trucking industry has a lot of work to do if it wants to attract the next generation of workers.

That was the message from David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data, during a presentation at the Manitoba Trucking Association's (MTA) 87<sup>th</sup> annual AGM in Winnipeg April 5.

Having conducted research into the millennial generation and their willingness to enter trucking as a career choice, Coletto found there are several challenges facing the industry.

One is getting young people interested in trucking. Abacus' research found that 16% of men and 7% of women would strongly consider a career in trucking, while 29% of men and 62% of women would not even entertain the idea.

Specific to Manitoba, Coletto said 14% of millennials are interested in a long-haul truck driving career, while 48% wanted a blue-collar job and 38% a white-collar career.

Coletto pointed out that though these numbers seem low, with the number of millennial workers in

Canada now the highest of any generation, having passed baby boomers in 2015 and numbering 9.5 million, they offer a large number of potential workers to the industry.

"This is the most ethnically and culturally diverse generation ever," said Coletto. "Most millennials are over the age of 25 and looking to achieve all those life goals."

With the average age of those in trucking now at 55, and only 15% under the age of 30, Coletto said the industry must change its approach to how it recruits young workers.

"Doing the same thing over and over and getting the same optimal result is not going to work," he said.

Coletto highlighted a strategy he called "shift," which pinpoints what he believes carriers must understand in order to help attract more millennials to their workplace.

Coletto said "shift" means that millennials are "self-educators" and image driven; "hopeful" but increasingly anxious; require "impact" and passion in a career; need "feedback" that is personal and customized; and look for "transparency" and control in an employer.

Image is substantial for younger

generations when choosing a career, according to Coletto, who said millennials will ask themselves, "If I work in trucking, what does that say about who I am?"

Data collected by Abacus suggests today's youth have mixed feelings about the trucking industry.

Fifteen per cent say they have a bad or very bad perception of trucking, while 40% is neither good nor bad, and 46% is good or very good.

Compared to trucking's biggest competitor in the recruitment of millennial workers, 68% have a good or very good view of the construction industry while only 5% negative.

In Manitoba, the numbers are slightly better, with 51% having a positive perception of trucking and 11% bad or very bad.

Comparing the perceptions of men and women, Abacus found that 71% of women feel the trucking industry is unsafe, and 54% of men agreed. Both 61% of men and women believe those in trucking are well paid, but a mere 26% of women and 34% of men said it is enjoyable work.

Only 22% of women and 24% of



David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data.

men feel a career in trucking would offer work-life balance, something important to millennials.

"You have to start telling your story much better," Coletto said, encouraging the industry to get positive stories out to the masses, "and you have to change where you tell that story."

Social media and other online sources are where Coletto said carriers must look to get the word out to millennials about what trucking has to offer. Facebook continues to dominate the social media platforms, with 68% of millennials using the site. YouTube is also popular, followed closely by Instagram, the fastest growing social media platform. TV news is watched by 31% of



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**Manan Gupta, left, and Lou Smyrlis of Newcom Media highlight the impact of the South Asian community on trucking during the MTA's 87th annual AGM in Winnipeg, Man.**

millennials, and 36% listen to radio news.

Young workers who are actively looking for or have chosen a career in trucking did so primarily because of what they perceive as good compensation. Other factors included the ability to explore Canada and not having to sit in an office or have a boss in the cab.

Manitobans who are interested in a trucking career note the high number of positions available as a drawing factor. They also said good pay, a chance to travel, and that both men and women are welcome were positive aspects.

But Coletto underscored the fact that 48% of respondents, along with 55% from Manitoba, believe the trucking industry is not respected by others.

"When I don't want this job to define who I am," he said, "I'm not going to do it for even a short period of time."

Coletto said the industry must change this perception if it is going to attract young workers.

Building what he called a "millennial-friendly sector" is key to achieving this goal, which includes companies outlining their intentions and purpose, being open and seamless, and providing constant feedback to employees.

"This is not a lost cause, it's not over," Coletto said, "but you really have some work to do."

### Changing face of trucking

Fresh on the heels of a series of features depicting the changing face of trucking, Newcom Media's Lou Smyrlis and Manan Gupta showcased the growing number of South Asians entering the industry.

Smyrlis, managing director of Newcom Trucking and Supply Chain Group, said the numbers are a "stunning detail that Canada has not seen in the last 50 years since after the immigrant boom following the Second World War."

Smyrlis said the notion that the trucking industry cannot attract new drivers is a myth, but the reality is that it is not bringing workers in quick enough to keep up with how fast the industry is growing.

As of 2016, research from Newcom Media indicates there are 175,450 male tractor-trailer drivers in Canada and 5,880 women.

One of the main concerns carriers have is the rising age of their workforce. Combined with 12% of drivers saying they plan to retire this year, and 30% in the next two to five years, carriers' concerns are justified.

"Just think about that," said Smyrlis, "42% of your workforce gone in the next five years."

The number of immigrant drivers, however, continues to grow, particularly from the South Asian community. In 2016, 32.5% of

Canada's truck drivers were immigrants, numbering 58,985, compared to 1991, when there were 7,390 immigrant drivers.

Though South Asian populations are growing nationwide, Smyrlis said many who are in the trucking industry are located in B.C.'s Lower Mainland, as well as the Greater Toronto Area.

"If you're looking for drivers in those metro areas and you're not addressing the immigrant labor pool, you're missing out on a large number of drivers," said Smyrlis. "India, Pakistan, the Philippines... that's where your labor pool is coming from."

Gupta, general manager of Newcom South Asian Media Company, said many South Asians who first immigrated to Canada were not in the trucking industry. But as more found success in commercial transportation by bringing their homegrown skills to the Canadian market, family members followed.

Challenges, however, still exist for South Asians in the industry, with the language barrier and, as a result, proper training, being at the top of list.

"They missed that element of being trained," said Gupta. "They entered trucking to make a career out of it, but they were missing those elements of training."

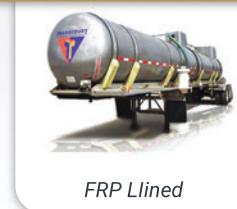
Gupta said many South Asians from the Punjabi area in India come from a trucking background, though comparatively different than the tractors used in Canada. With Canadian driving conditions vastly different than what is typical in India, Gupta said training, such as mandatory entry-level training, and building a culture of safety is vital to South Asian success in the industry.

"New immigrants can only succeed if they get the right information at the right time," said Gupta. "Timing is very important."

Gupta believes the influx of South Asians into the industry will continue, as Newcom Media data indicates they have embraced trucking.

Driving is not the only area where South Asians, who are characteristically entrepreneurial in nature, can thrive. Gupta said many have entered sales positions, as well as dispatchers, management, and ownership.

Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada, added that in 2017, Canada's temporary foreign worker program brought in 1,700 drivers, and that trucking is considered to be a "high usage" industry of the program. She said the industry must ensure it is diversifying, including attracting more women, millennials, and Indigenous workers, all of which are large employment pools not well represented in trucking. **TN**



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# New technology aims to mitigate vehicle interactions with trains

**WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

Technology company TRAINFO is looking for commercial carriers to help it develop a new safety system that will mitigate vehicle interactions with trains.

CTO and product manager for TRAINFO Neil Ternowetsky said the connected vehicle technology will work on three levels. The first will route vehicles around blocked rail crossings; the second will broadcast to vehicles a signal describing the state of grade crossings it is approaching; and finally, the technology will use in-vehicle perception systems as a redundancy to the previously mentioned broadcast to describe the state of grade rail crossings the vehicle is approaching.

“In short for today’s vehicles, the technology is designed to route vehicles around blocked crossings when possible and warn drivers of present or approaching trains,” said Ternowetsky. “In the future, the technology will support the robotics systems of self-driving cars in ensuring safe movements.”

Ternowetsky said his company aims to support a future of safe and seamless mobility.

With 465 million vehicles crossing railway lines across North America daily, 15.5 million of which being delayed for an average of eight minutes representing 10% of all vehicle delays, TRAINFO’s new technology could remedy some of these issues.

Each day there are also eight

incidents involving vehicles and trains, according to Ternowetsky, with one person being killed as a result of those interactions.

So far, TRAINFO has received support from the Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service, which is currently in the planning phase, and the Louie Riel School Division, which has conducted field tests using the technology.

Though no commercial carriers have yet come forward, Ternowetsky said any that would like to participate would need to provide access to three vehicles that frequently interact with rail crossings, install equipment on the vehicles, access train operators on the system to gather feedback on a quarterly basis, and

allow TRAINFO to track driver movements through the in-vehicle equipment.

Development of the technology is at various levels of maturity for each module, said Ternowetsky. The first module – connected vehicle communication – has been deployed in an alpha version and is being testing with the Louie Riel School Division.

The second – the routing module – has a production ready application that is being worked on to embed into systems like Google Maps, Waze, and TomTom.

The third module – perception and vehicle response system – is in the exploratory phase, with preliminary testing performed on core technologies. **TN**

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# CN finalizes TransX acquisition

**WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

CN has announced it has closed its acquisition of the TransX Group of Companies.

The deal was first announced Oct. 30, 2018.

“We are pleased to have concluded this important transaction that allows us to deepen our supply chain focus and to continue to offer the best services to our customers, from the first mile to the last mile,” said JJ Ruest, president and chief executive officer of CN. “This transaction will support the safe and efficient movement of our customers’ goods to their end markets in a fast-growing consumer economy.”

Mike Jones, chief operating officer of TransX added, “Through our talented team of people, we are looking forward to continue to improve our standard of excellence in our solution based, customer focused products, and integrated solutions.”

TransX will continue to operate independently out of Winnipeg, Man.

“CN and TransX have been supply chain partners for many years. With the acquisition of TransX, CN will continue to support the wholesale and beneficial cargo owner customers, including in the growing, service sensitive, refrigerated transportation business,” said Keith Reardon, CN’s senior vice-president, consumer products supply chain growth. “CN will continue to expand capacity and foster additional supply chain solutions to help our partners and customers win in their marketplace.” **TN**

# Trucking to the rescue!

Historic steam locomotive hauled to its new home at Aspen Crossing

By Derek Clouthier

## MOOSLEIGH, ALBERTA

The trucking industry came to the rescue this past March, helping to transport a 105-year-old steam locomotive to its new home at Aspen Crossing.

No longer capable of making the journey on its own, and unable to be relocated by rail, Kidco's heavy hauling division moved the 1914 locomotive from Prince Albert, Sask., to a location just down the highway from the Aspen Crossing grounds in Moosleigh, Alta.

Getting permits for the 789-km trip was not easy, as Aspen Crossing owner Jason Thornhill explained to *Truck News-West*, it took some time and even more planning.

"It took almost a month to get permits to move it. That was really the holdup, was the permitting," said Thornhill. "We were kind of hoping to move it with no road bans being on, but they came on the Monday we moved it. That's one of the reasons we had to use such a big trailer."

The trailer used to transport the historic locomotive was an Aspen

brand 92-wheeler. The load ended up being 17 feet, two inches in height and another 17 feet wide. The steam engine tipped the scale at 114 tons.

"It was a neat trailer because when they went over a railway track they could lift both ends of the trailer so they could raise it up two feet," said Thornhill.

The load was regulated to a maximum speed of 70km/h. Thornhill said training wheels on the trailer, which stretched out onto the shoulder of the road, can kick up a lot of debris, and is made worse at faster speeds.

The location where the locomotive currently sits was the one area where the Kidco truck and crane were able to access and unload the large steam engine.

In addition to the locomotive, there is also a tender – a rail car that holds a steam engine's fuel, such as wood, coal, or oil, as well as water. CDI International hauled the tender, but did not have large enough equipment to haul the locomotive.

CDI has helped move locomotives to Aspen Crossing before. In



Kidco transports a 1914 steam locomotive from Prince Albert, Sask., to Moosleigh, Alta.

Photo courtesy Barry Blick



The 105-year-old locomotive sits about a kilometer from Aspen Crossing.

September 2015, Thornhill purchased a locomotive from P&H Grain, and CDI was the trucking outfit that made the delivery from Lethbridge, Alta.

Thornhill said the 1914 locomotive they recently received was donated to Aspen Crossing because the previous owners said they gave the engine the best chance at being restored and bringing it back to running condition.

Over the next three months, Thornhill and his team will examine the locomotive and determine what needs to be done to get

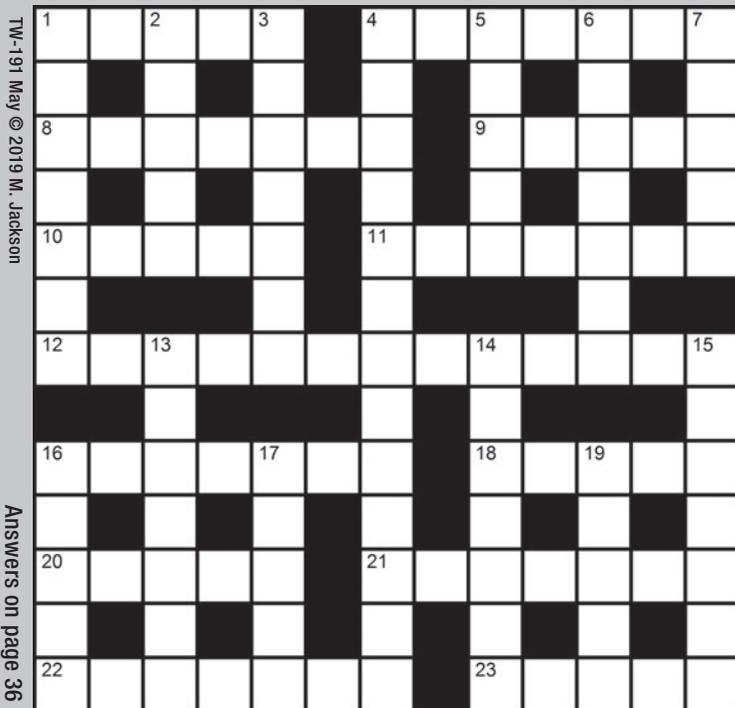
it operational again.

If they are unable to get it running, Thornhill said they will fix it up as best they can and have it on display at Aspen Crossing, a tourist location that offers themed train rides, camping, and various other activities.

But Thornhill is confident the piece of rail history will again steam down the tracks.

"From what we've seen so far, everything seems like it's in pretty good shape," he said, "so we actually think it has a chance to run again." **TN**

## THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



TW-191 May © 2019 M. Jackson

Answers on page 36

### Across

- 1 Trip odometer button
- 4 Brake system type (3,4)
- 8 Auxiliary axle type (3,4)
- 9 Common coolant colour
- 10 Cab body section
- 11 Double axle setups
- 12 Monthly obligations, for some (5,8)
- 16 Fifth wheel lubes
- 18 GPS selection
- 20 Hawaii plates word
- 21 Goods in excess of Bill of Lading
- 22 Low, heavy-haul trailer brand
- 23 Truck showroom deals

### Down

- 1 Pothole, you might say (4,3)
- 2 Ambulance wailer
- 3 Ottawa heavy haul carrier (6,1)
- 4 Hansens and Mackie speciality (4,9)
- 5 Diesel particulate filter cleanse, briefly
- 6 Hank Snow's "\_\_\_ Everywhere" (3,4)
- 7 Temporary traffic-control shapes
- 13 Recyclable lube-bay liquid (4,3)
- 14 Carriers' amalgamations, sometimes
- 15 Saskatoon-based transport group
- 16 New Hamburg, ON-based carrier
- 17 Roadside weigh station
- 19 Aptly named rent-a-truck (1,4)

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# Oil by rail shipments in jeopardy?



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

In order to solve a problem, you must first know, or at least acknowledge, that there is one. Then, according to my abacus of logic, take steps to solve the problem.

This seems “Aesop” simple to me, but not if you look at the Canadian energy sector which is marbled with so much political fat it can’t move quickly enough to keep pace with the economic reality it’s facing – or maybe ignoring is a better way to put it.

Ignoring is exactly what the global investment community is doing when it looks to the Great

White North. This is because the rules and rule makers are always changing and they can’t depend on the whims of whatever political power happens to be employed for any given period of time.

The motto on the Canadian Coat of Arms reads: A Mari usque ad Mare – From Sea to Sea.

This has a nice ring to it, but it’s the provinces in between the seas that are the problem.

With the assistance of Prime Minister Trudeau and the U.S. funded, ‘enviro-activists,’ British Columbia has more or less stopped attempts to move crude oil from the

third largest crude oil reserves in the world – the Alberta oil sands.

The only near-term viable solution to getting Alberta crude to tidewater, the owned-by-we-the-people Trans Mountain Pipeline, is stuck atop an enormous political mountain, all to the delight of B.C. Premier John Horgan, whose NDP government is controlled by three members of the oh-so-Green-Party.

So, although the expansion of the 60-year-old pipeline is in hover mode, which in theory eliminates the increased risk of pipeline spills, the much more spill-prone crude by rail numbers have neutered any

perceived benefit of stalling the Trans Mountain.

But you see, rail shipments and pipelines are under federal jurisdiction, as both modes of transport are interprovincial. What will Mr. Horgan do now? Ask, or tell, Prime Minister Trudeau to halt the shipment of Alberta crude by rail, as well as by pipeline?

My fear is with a federal election looming in October, Mr. Trudeau may actually agree in order to protect his voter base in B.C., since he has little or no support in Alberta, with only four seats adorned in Liberal red. And red is the color Rachel Notley’s face may turn – not in a blush, but in rage – as crude by rail is her strategy to get crude out of her province to tidewater.

**British Columbia has more or less stopped attempts to move crude oil from the third largest crude oil reserves in the world — the Alberta oil sands.**

But Ms. Notley is now facing resistance to this plan because producers like Imperial Oil and Husky are backing off shipping by rail because the Western Canadian Select to West Texas Intermediate discount has narrowed to the point that it is not economical to put oil on iron. By not shipping by rail, this will increase Alberta inventories and force the discount to widen to acceptable levels despite Premier Notley’s attempt to perform the OPEC-two-step to the tune of price manipulation.

So, with the Alberta election April 16, was the premier’s only vote-saving option to nationalize the oil industry in the same way the prime minister nationalized the Trans Mountain?

Bit of advice: don’t look to the prime minister for guidance, you may get as lost as the rest of us. **TN**

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# Seven key skill sets for success



**Terry Shaw** oversees the planning and priorities of the MTA, is the lead for political liaison and relations with all levels of government, media relations, and acts as a spokesperson for the industry. He is a member of several MTA committees and represents the association through his involvement with Trucking HR Canada, the Manitoba Employers Council, and the Winnipeg and Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. Terry also engages on national issues as a regional vice-president of the Canadian Trucking Alliance, of which he is a board and executive member.

One of the tenets of the Manitoba Trucking Association's (MTA) vision is to be the premier training provider for the trucking industry in Manitoba. This is a goal we have been working on for several years, but with its recent addition to our strategic plan, it's time for the rubber to meet the road and really develop that vision.

The recent announcement of mandatory entry level training (MELT) in our province is going to increase the knowledge, skills, and professionalism of new drivers. This announcement was long overdue, and while details are scant at this time, we expect the standard the government implements will be one that Manitobans deserve in order to drive on safe roads, no matter what industry or economic sector those trucks are moving freight for. A truck is a truck has long been our mantra, whether that trailer is hauling grain, televisions, or live animals. We look forward to seeing the government's plan to ensure drivers who come into our industry through this program have not only the pre-employment skills, but also the professionalism required to succeed as a commercial truck driver.

While we are encouraged by MELT, anyone in the trucking industry knows success comes from being a member of a strong team. In order to help our members ensure their teams are strong by planning, not by coincidence, we have recently undertaken a strategic educational directive. One of the first things we did was to hire a manager for our training and educational initiative. Neil Cooke has more than fulfilled our expectations of the person needed for this role. With his background in education and training, plus his network in the heavy-duty transportation industry, Neil is well-suited to what we do, and what we plan to do, at the MTA.

After hiring Neil, our initial undertaking was to reach out to a diverse audience, including the MTA executive, senior leadership, managers, supervisors, and administrators from member companies. We also spoke with members of the Associated Trades Division and those who work in peripheral industries.

These groups identified seven key areas where their employees needed to have top-notch skills in order for their organization to be successful: communications, technology, managerial, adult education

instructor, coaching and mentoring, logistics, and technical skills.

Within each of those seven areas, we have dug deeper to ensure we fully understand what industry needs. For example, what communication skills are companies looking for within their organizations? Based on our discussions, employers want their staff to know how to manage difficult conversations, how to communicate with empathy, how to be assertive, how to listen, and how to use emotional intelligence, among other communication skills.

Not every person at every organization will require all of this training. Some skill sets are more applicable to those who work in dispatch, whereas others are better suited to the driver services department. However, for smaller organizations where several hats are worn, responsibility for acquiring this training across different skill sets may fall on only one or a few people within the company.

Next we will be working to develop a curriculum that will allow us to focus on the trucking industry. Our goal is not to create a one-size-fits-all program; our audience is the trucking industry, and it is for the trucking industry that we will be

targeting our educational initiative. We are also not averse to sharing our findings with other service providers, such as secondary and post-secondary institutions that want to develop or enhance courses within their current offerings.

The more students exposed to the realities of our industry, the better they will understand it. The better students understand it, the more likely new employees will be successful. **TN**

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# AMTA gets funding for truck electrification project

By Derek Clouthier

## EDMONTON, ALBERTA

A portion of Emissions Reduction Alberta's (ERA) \$100 million investment into clean technology projects will be put into the province's trucking industry.

The Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) will receive over \$7.3 million for the Alberta Zero Emissions Truck Electrification Collaboration (AZETEC).

"This is a very exciting project for the AMTA and our member companies," said AMTA president Chris Nash. "This initiative is primarily about moving freight on Alberta's highways with zero emissions, but it is also about the future of the Alberta economy. Alberta is in the transportation fuel business, and that business is changing. The AZETEC project demonstrates that Alberta's commercial transportation industry is leading the transition towards innovative, zero-emission trans-

portation that meets the province's unique needs."

Funding projects were selected through the ERA's Best Challenge, which provides funding for biotechnology, electricity, and sustainable transportation innovations.

"Our Best Challenge is about accelerating the most promising clean technology solutions across multiple sectors – from new solar opportunities in coal-impacted communities to electrification of bus fleets to energy storage and bold new uses for hydrogen," said Steve MacDonald, ERA CEO. "These projects will help demonstrate and scale-up innovative technologies that can be adopted in communities across Alberta and around the world. They support economic growth, community health and demonstrate environmental leadership on a local, national and global scale."

According to the ERA, the combined value of the new clean technology projects is \$600 million, and if successful, would lead to a cumu-

lative greenhouse gas reduction of more than 2.5 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> by the year 2030.

Bison Transport and Trimac Transportation will be the carriers involved in testing for the hydrogen fuel freight project, which will run until mid-2022.

**"The AZETEC project demonstrates that Alberta's commercial transportation industry is leading the transition towards innovative, zero-emission transportation that meets the province's unique needs."**

– Chris Nash, AMTA

Two heavy-duty, extended range, hydrogen fuel cell electric hybrid trucks will haul freight between Calgary and Edmonton. Capable of traveling up to 700 km, the 64-ton, B-train tractor-trailers will be the first vehicles of this size and capacity built and tested in the world.

Marcel Pouliot, vice-president, industry and regulatory affairs at Trimac, said this will be the first hydrogen fuel cell electric (HFCE) truck the carrier has operated.

He said the AZETEC project is important for several reasons, including meeting sustainability commitments to lower greenhouse gas emissions, maintaining supply chain efficiency, and supporting the development of a hydrogen economy in Alberta.

"In regard to the supply chain, we want to ensure the trucking industry has access to low emissions tractors that provide the required operating range, rapid 'refueling' to maintain fleet utility levels, and have electric drive systems rated for 63,500 kgs," said Pouliot. "New tractor technology is typically initially released for the 80,000 lbs trucking market in the United States. For heavier gross weight markets such as Canada, we often have to wait several years before that same technology is released for the 63,500 to 140,000 lbs market."

The two tractors being tested by Trimac and Bison will be assembled by Nordresa, which will integrate a Ballard hydrogen fuel cell and a

Dana TM4 electric drive system on a Freightliner Cascadia glider.

Pouliot said Trimac will haul B-trains of either dry bulk products or liquid, while he believes Bison will move combination trailers in general freight.

Trimac expects the trucks to be ready in the third quarter of next year and testing to go on for two years.

"We want to better understand the HFCE tractor technology and its applicability to our business going forward," said Pouliot.

Some of the specific areas Trimac will be focusing on during testing include reliability in various weather conditions, range, the impact on driver retention and recruitment, tare weight impact on freight efficiency, total cost of ownership, and GHG reduction.

Pouliot also expects the new hydrogen trucks will require significant driving behavior changes if they are to operate in a safe and optimum manner.

"To ensure our drivers understand how to operate this equipment, we will develop a training program and ensure every driver will be certified prior to driving or refilling the hydrogen tanks on the HFCE tractor," said Pouliot. "We will also gather ongoing feedback from the drivers during the test about their driving experience."

By the end of the project, the hydrogen trucks will have traveled more than 500,000 km and carried around 20 million ton-kilometers of freight.

Pouliot said Trimac's participation in the AZETEC project is a natural extension of the carrier's focus on innovation of its fleet.

"In 2017, we set a sustainability goal of improving our fleet fuel consumption by one mile per gallon, which will lower our greenhouse gas emissions by 55 million kgs, or 55,000 tons in 2019," said Pouliot. "As a result, we continuously upgrade our tractors with specifications to include the most efficient fuel saving technology, including the use of solar panels and testing diesel – electric hybrid drive system."

Other projects receiving funding from AZETEC include Shell Canada Energy for the Shell Alberta Bioenergy Project, eCamion for a demonstration of battery-based bus charging routes, and Enmax Generation Portfolio for its e-fleet pilot.

The ERA receives grants from the Alberta government from the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund and provides funding to reduce emissions by investing the carbon levy paid by large industrial emitters into clean technology solutions.

So far, the ERA has committed more than \$572 million in funding to 164 projects. **TN**

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# Bison's Ester Nemeth wins Driver of the Year Award at TCA convention

By Sonia Straface

## LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Ester Nemeth, a long-time professional truck driver for Bison Transport, was named the winner of the Company Driver of the Year Award at the 81st annual Truckload Carriers Association (TCA) convention.

The award is given to one company driver each year who is safe, enhances the public image of the trucking industry, and makes influential contributions to his/her communities. There is also an award for Owner Operator of the Year, who exemplifies these same attributes. The winners of the awards represent the most professional drivers in the industry.

Nemeth is the first female to be nominated for the award since 2005. She has been a driver for



Ester Nemeth (second from left).

more than 30 years, almost 20 of which have been with Winnipeg's Bison Transport.

Throughout her career, Nemeth has accumulated more than 3.75 million accident-free miles. She was also the first female driver to hit one million accident-free miles at Bison.

"Wow, I'm just amazed," she said upon accepting the award. "Thank you, this is such an honor..."

to be recognized among all these professional drivers is unbelievable. What's more amazing is to be the first woman nominee since 2005. I'd like to thank the TCA for giving us such an unforgettable evening...and I'd like to thank the sponsors and everyone in my Bison family. And it truly is a family. So to my fleet managers, dispatchers, and support staff, thank you. I would not be here tonight if it wasn't for the encouragement I receive from them. My commitment to safety and my love of driving is what brought me here tonight."

Runners up for the Company Driver of the Year included Donald Lewis of Wilson Logistics and David McGowan of WEL Companies.

The winner of the Owner Operator of the Year was Danny Jewell of Warren Transport.

Jewell is 73 years old and has been driving trucks professionally for 51 years. He's been with the same trucking company, Warren Transport based in Iowa, since he started his career in 1968. In his time as a driver, Jewell has accrued more than six million accident-free miles.

"First of all, I want to thank my wife, we've been together for 56 years," he said. "I also want to thank the TCA...what they do for the trucking industry is really great...I'm really thankful for all the hospitality I've had this week. Thank you very much."

Runners up for the Owner Operator of the Year award included Robert Roth of Ontario's Erb Transport and Kevin Kocmich of Diamond Transportation System.

The grand prize winners took home a US\$25,000 check as part of the award. **TN**

# Bison acquires H.O. Wolding

## WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Bison Transport announced it has acquired Amherst, Wis.-based H.O. Wolding (HOW).

HOW is a 320-truck, dry van fleet with truckload operations in the U.S. Midwest, northeast, and southeast regions.

"We are very pleased to welcome the drivers, staff, and partners of HOW to the Bison family," said Bison's executive chairman, Don Streuber. "From the first conversation we had with Don and Dick Wolding, I knew there was a lot of two organizations had in common surrounding drivers, customers, safety, and doing what is right. We thank Don, Dick, and the team for placing their trust in us."

Rob Penner, Bison Transport's president and CEO, added: "The HOW acquisition represents a strategic investment in U.S. domestic transportation services that will work alongside Britton Transport, another of our U.S. subsidiaries, to add scale and provide a wider breadth of services to our customers. Our goal as the new owner is to empower HOW leadership with access to our expertise, resources and cost models. The people at HOW have built a great reputation for how they serve their customers and their team of professional drivers and we want to see that continue to thrive and grow...I am happy to announce that Marc Wolding has accepted the role of president of HOW. Marc, a third-generation Wolding, grew up in this business and has clearly demonstrated his leadership skills and business acumen as he helped

build HOW's reputation as a go-to carrier and an employer of choice in its operating regions."

Don Wolding, past president and CEO of HOW, said: "When

Dick and I first discussed selling, we agreed that the most important factors in our decision would be the cultural fit and the commitment to the future of our people. In early discussions with Rob, Don, and Bison Transport's leadership team, it was clear to us that

Bison was the right fit. They care about and invest in their people and they are highly focused on providing best-in-class service with reputation as being North America's safest fleet."

Financial details of the transaction have not been disclosed. **TN**



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# Medium trucks require big decisions

Tips for buying medium-duty trucks in a hot market

By James Menzies

## TORONTO, ONTARIO

The medium-duty truck market has been steady over the past year; healthy, but lagging the historical pace of orders seen in the Class 8 segment.

Medium-duty Classes 5-7 truck orders declined in March, according to the latest preliminary data from ACT Research.

“Classes 5-7 orders took their first respite in more than a year, falling to the 20,000-unit mark in March,” said Steve Tam, ACT’s vice-president. “Regardless of the time period comparison, March orders declined, coming in 23% below February and 32% lower than March 2018.”

However, reports from the ground show there remains strong demand for medium-duty trucks.

“The demand seems to be picking up on our side of the business,” Jason Cuddy, account manager with Rush Truck Centres of Canada, told *Truck News*. “There are a lot more guys enquiring for the spring. Build rates for us, like most OEMs, are out to November for a lot of products. You’ve got a backlog of stuff on order. The market seems to be fairly robust.”

Blaine Nicholls, salesman with Metro Truck Group, said because of the order backlog, more planning is required of medium-duty truck buyers than in the past.

“Build dates are pushed way out,” he said. “Traditionally, this market was a reaction market. They get a project, they need a truck and go out and buy a truck. Because of the lack of inventory, customers are realizing they have to forecast ahead, the same as the Class 8 market.”

So, what are medium-duty truck buyers looking for? Box trucks. And lots of ’em.

## The effect of e-commerce

With online shopping continuously reaching unprecedented levels, more box trucks are required for package delivery.

“For me, personally, I see a lot of box trucks for local distribution,” Cuddy said.

It’s a trend that Steve Kljajic, truck sales manager with Humberview Trucks, has also noticed. He said it’s also driving increased demand for Class 5 cabovers.

“Cabovers, over the last five years, in the city are increasing all the time,” said the GMC and Isuzu dealer. “That won’t change, because congestion is going to become worse. The turning radius on a con-

ventional truck with a 16-ft. body can’t touch a cabover with a 20-ft. body. Our most popular body length is 20 ft. The cabover is safer, too. Visibility is better.”

Nicholls, however, says driver comfort is greater in a conventional.

## Spec’ing for the driver

Automatic and automated manual transmissions have almost completely replaced manual transmissions in the medium-duty segment.

“We barely spec’ or stock manual transmission trucks anymore,” Cuddy said.

Owners are also trying to bring more driver amenities into the cab, especially for delivery routes with lots of stops, and are trying to reduce the rigors of the job for drivers.

“Everything has a tailgate,” said Kljajic. “In the past, it was maybe 50-50 whether they’d get a tailgate and walk ramp or no tailgate. Now, for dry freight, I’m noticing 80% want a tailgate loader.”

This is being done to accommodate aging drivers, but also to make the job more attractive to new hires. Spec’ing a truck that doesn’t require a D/Z driver is another consideration.

“Keeping a truck within a G class in Ontario has been beneficial,” Cuddy said. “The driver pool is so tight, it allows anyone with a licence to drive the truck. It’s a different category and probably a different pay scale.”

## Alt-fuels

The alternative fuel that’s commanding the most attention in medium-duty circles is electric. Urban delivery trucks are ideal for electric powertrains. They typically don’t cover a lot of miles, so range anxiety is limited. They frequently stop, enabling regenerative braking to push power to the batteries. And they’re quiet and environmentally-friendly. Freightliner has announced plans to electrify its M2 medium-duty trucks, and some turnkey systems are available on the market today.

Nicholls said he sees the eM2 having a home in Canada, especially among landscapers.

“I don’t know if it will have an impact initially on the waste industry. They require too much horsepower to run PTOs and crush garbage. For landscapers, when they want to silently pull into residential areas, do what they’re supposed to do and pull out, I think it’s a fantastic opportunity,” he said.

The North American Council for Freight Efficiency (NACFE) pub-



lished a report that found medium-duty trucks with one shift per day are the best fit for electrification, as those trucks sit for long periods when they can be recharged.

“The operational complexity increases as the number of duty shifts increases,” NACFE concluded.

But the biggest shift Kljajic sees is a move from diesel to gasoline.

“We see the trend growing towards gasoline, especially in the city with lower mileage,” he said. “People are getting diesel fatigue with diesel exhaust fluid, regenerations, more maintenance. Gas is a really simple truck to operate – you do your oil changes and go. There are less electronics.”

## Don’t do this

Medium-duty truck dealers help steer buyers toward the right truck for their business, but sometimes, mistakes are made. It could be out of ignorance, or it could be because operators are stuck in their traditional way of thinking and don’t always consider how trucks have evolved. Kljajic cites an example.

“I find people sometimes get too much power,” he said. “Everyone is used to the North American way of doing things, which is high horsepower and high torque. If you look at the Asian products and some from Europe, those places in the world are surviving with a lot less torque and horsepower and that is coming into the North American market.”

Increased congestion, rising urban populations, and more effi-

cient engines are a few reasons customers may want to consider a downsized engine or rating.

Ontario customers can also be caught off-guard when they realize moving into a bigger truck may put them into CVOR territory.

Any Ontario trucks with a GVW over 4,500 kgs require a CVOR, and that can take quite some time to obtain.

“Anything we sell is at 4,500 kgs for the chassis alone,” Cuddy said. “Some guys get down the line, make a deposit, and then the CVOR takes months to get and they learn the hard way.”

If upsizing to a larger truck, ensure the CVOR is in place before taking delivery, or else the truck will serve some time as an oversized lawn ornament before being put into service.

Nicholls said another mistake to avoid, especially in this environment, is settling for any old truck that’s available.

“For buyers who haven’t planned ahead and need a truck, don’t react and take whatever is in front of you because you need a truck right now,” Nicholls said. “You’re going to have it 10 years. Step back, take a breather, and make sure you’re getting the right truck. With medium-duty buyers that’s a big thing. A lot of these guys don’t buy trucks regularly – they’re used to walking to the car lot and choosing a blue one or a brown one. If you buy a truck like that, it may suit you today, but it’s not going to suit you in three weeks. Do your homework.” **TN**

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MERCEDES ENG; MBE4000, 450 HP, 12,000 LB FRONT / 40,000 LB. REARS AXLE(S), AIR RIDE SUSP; 244" WHEELBASE, 10 SPD, AUTO TRANS; 22.5 FRONT 80% REAR 40% TIRES, EXPEDITOR 1,446,122 KMS. -1277801  
**STOCK#Y19018**



**2013 INTERNATIONAL PRO STAR HIGHWAY TRACTOR**  
MAXXFORCE 13, 450 HP, 12,350 LB. FRONT / 40,000 LB. REAR AXLE(S), AIR RIDE SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, 11R22.5 TIRES. 1,032,711 KMS. -1282319  
**STOCK#Y19061**



**(8) 2005 & 2007 FREIGHTLINER M2 - 106" REAR PACKER GARBAGE TRUCK**  
MERCEDES ENG; MBE906, ALLISON AUTOMATIC TRANS; 250 HP, 18,000 FRONT & 40,000 REAR AXLE(S), WALKING BEAM SPRING SUSP; 260" WHEELBASE, 315/80R22.5 TIRES, 75 - 25 SPLIT REAR PACKER, DOUBLE FRAME. 143,603 KMS. -114352  
**STOCK#Y16090**



**2007 INTERNATIONAL 9900I HIGHWAY TRACTOR**  
CUMMINS ENG; ISX, 450 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 12,000 LB. FRONT & 40,000 LB. REAR AXLE(S), AIR RIDE SUSP; 244" WHEELBASE, 22.5 TIRES, ALUMINUM WHEELS. 1,345,255 KMS. -1281152  
**STOCK#Y19108**



**2012 PETERBILT 337 EXPEDITE TRUCK**  
60" SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; P6, 6 SPD TRANS; 12.3 & 23 AXLE(S), AIR RIDE SUSP; NEW DPF FILTER AND DOC. -1277804  
**STOCK#EXPEDITE**



**1992 KENWORTH T600 ROLL-OFF TRUCK**  
DETROIT ENG; 365 HP, 15 SPD TRANS; 12,000 LB. FRONT & 40,000 LB. REAR AXLE(S), AIR RIDE SUSP; 232" WHEELBASE, 24.5 TIRES, 22 FOOT ROLL-OFF. 589,169 KMS. -1281156  
**STOCK#Y19074**

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**2020 MACK AN64T HEAVY-HAUL TRACTOR**  
 MACK ENGINE: MP8 13 LITER, 505 HP, M-DRIVE TRANS, MERITOR 46,000 REAR AXLE(S), 46,000 AIR-RIDE SUSP, 227" WHEELBASE, 70" MID-RISE SLEEPER, 1800 WATT INVERTOR, DELUXE CABINTRY, ALL POWER GROUPS, 3 OF THESE AVAILABLE! -1282314



**2020 MACK AN64T HEAVY-HAUL TRACTOR**  
 MACK ENGINE: MP8 13 LITER, 505 HP, M-DRIVE TRANS, MERITOR 46,000 REAR AXLE(S), 46,000 AIR-RIDE SUSP, 215" WHEELBASE, 48" FLAT-TOP SLEEPER, COLLISION AVOIDANCE SYSTEM, DELUXE CAB WITH ALL POWER GROUPS. IN STOCK.-1282315

**2020 MACK GU713 GRANITE B.C. TANDEM TANDEM CONCRETE MIXER**  
 MP7-425 HP, FULLER RTLO16909LL, DUAL 20,000 FRONT AXLES, MERITOR RT46-164EH ON HENDRICKSON HAULMAX WITH DUAL LOCKERS, LONDON BRIDGEMASTER (3) MIXER ..... AVAILABLE FALL 2018 -455755



**2014 MACK CHU613 RAWHIDE EDITION HEAVY-HAUL TRACTOR**  
 MACK ENGINE: MP8 13 LITER, 505 HP, M-DRIVE TRANS, MERITOR 46,000 REAR AXLE(S), 46,000 AIR-RIDE SUSP, 243" WHEELBASE, 70" MID-RISE SLEEPER, TIRES ALL 70%, LOW MILEAGE, MOOSE BUMPER, TOOL BOX, CHAIN HANGERS, NEW 6 MONTH MVI. -1282316

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 MP8-505C Eng., mDRIVE-HD, 14.6/46 Axles, 213" W/B, Holland 5th Wheel, Stk: 026858 -1270477



**2019 Mack Pinnacle 64T 70"**  
 MP8-505C Eng., mDRIVE-HD, 13.2/46 Axles, 243" W/B, 70" Stand up sleeper, Stk: 026693 -1269361



**2018 Mack CXU613 70" MR**  
 MP8-505C Eng., mDRIVE-HD, 13.2/40 Axles, 221" W/B, Stk: 024413 -1259017



**2019 Mack Anthem 64T D/C**  
 MP8-505C Eng., mDRIVE-HD, 13.2/40 Axles, 3.79 Ratio, 197" W/B, Stk: 027899 -1276897



**2019 Mack Granite 64FR**  
 MP7-425M Eng., mDRIVE-HD 14 Speed, 20/46 Axles, 3.58 Ratio, 299" W/B, Stk: 027076 -1276269



**2018 Mack CXU613 Dump Truck**  
 MP7-345C Eng., mDRIVE, 14.6/40 Axles, 16' NeuStar gravel box, Electric tarp, Stk: 023216 -1273133



**2019 Mack Anthem 64T 70"**  
 MP8-445C Eng., mDRIVE-HD, 13.2/40 Axles, 221" W/B, 70" Stand up sleeper, Stk: 027077 -1269363



**2019 Mack Pinnacle 64T 48"**  
 MP8-505C Eng., mDRIVE-HD, 13.2/44 Axles, 3.56 Ratio, 231" W/B, 48" Sleeper, Stk: 031195 -1276900



**2018 Mack CHU613 48"**  
 MP8-505C Eng., mDRIVE-HD, 12/46 Axles, Wet kit, Dump switches/wiring, Stk: 023165 -1278048



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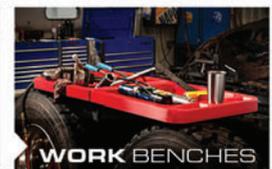
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**2020 KENWORTH T800 HIGHWAY TRACTOR**

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**2019 KENWORTH T680 HIGHWAY TRACTOR**

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**2019 KENWORTH T800 DAYCAB TRACTOR**

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# CTA highlights ELDs, training, and rest stops to livestock committee

## TORONTO, ONTARIO

The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) addressed the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food March 21 about electronic logging devices and training.

CTA president Stephen Laskowski and director of policy and industry awareness programs Lak Shoan said issues such as driver training and attraction are more acute for livestock transportation in Canada.

The CTA stated in its submission to the standing committee that the driver supply-demand gap for 2024 is estimated to be approximately 34,000 drivers, with a possible increase to 48,000.

Though these figures are based on the industry as a whole, the CTA says different sectors of the truck driving profession could see higher levels of shortages than others. The attrac-

tiveness of the job, for example, could diminish significantly with the added responsibility of caring for live animals while in transit. This could lead to higher driver shortages in the livestock sector.

The CTA said carriers involved in the transport of livestock could need to increase driver compensation to compete with other more attractive positions.

The CTA also said the implementation of an ELD mandate can lead to improved animal safety and welfare due to a more efficient manner of recording commercial drivers' duty status.

Because ELDs offer a more effec-

tive and efficient way to record hours-of-service (HoS) compared to paper logs, the CTA said their use can prevent drivers from falsifying entries to extend their driving hours.

To safely comply with new regulations that decrease the maximum time animals can be confined on conveyances without feed and safe water, there needs to be additional rest stations to accommodate, according to the CTA.

In addition to the feed and rest area near Thunder Bay, Ont., Laskowski said more are warranted west of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as well as across

the country, for carriers transporting livestock from Ontario to Western Canada.

Shoan also stressed that training of commercial carriers directly or indirectly involved in any aspect of animal transport is vital.

"Our industry should be treated like other sectors in Canada when it comes to funding for training," Shoan told the committee.

In addition to mandatory entry-level driver training (MELT), Shoan stated in the CTA's submission that the transportation of live cargo adds significant complexities, including fitness, loading and unloading, driving, and ongoing care of the animals.

The CTA said there is a need for additional funding for training for all aspects of the trucking industry, not limited to drivers, but anyone involved in animal transport. **TN**

## Petition gains support from parents of Humboldt victim

### RED DEER, ALBERTA

A petition calling for more stringent commercial driver training standards has gained support from a couple who lost their daughter in the Humboldt Broncos bus crash.

Athletic therapist Dayna Brons suffered fatal injuries in the April 6, 2018 collision with a semi-truck, and her parents, Carol and Lyle Brons, support the call for stricter industry regulations.

"We commend some drivers for their skill and professionalism, but there are also many drivers who have not had adequate training and are a danger on our roads," Carol said. "We don't want anyone else to experience the type of devastating loss we have."

Petition E-2005 was launched by Pattie Fair a year-and-a-half ago. Fair lost her husband, who was a commercial driver, after a collision with another semi-truck March 13, 2017 on Hwy 1 east of Revelstoke, B.C. when the truck entered his lane.

In addition to mandatory entry-level training, Fair would like to see Class 1 drivers classified as a skilled trade, modifications to the National Occupational Classification Code, and the collection and storage of training providers with a record of each commercial driver.

For more on this story, see our cover story in the March issue of *Truck News-West*. **TN**

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# Magnum delivers custom-designed, live-haul poultry trailers



Thirty-five of these newly designed trailers were delivered to Maple Lodge Farms in Ontario.

“Magnum’s engineering team worked with us to design features that would improve poultry welfare, which is really important to us,” said Fred Marques, COO of Maple Lodge Farms. “We were impressed with their material

**ABBOTSFORD, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Magnum Trailer and Equipment has manufactured new poultry trailers aimed at improving the well-being of the birds being transported, decreasing load times, and easing maintenance.

“These trailers are designed to improve the internal environment for the birds by moderating the temperature, improving on-off loading, and using smooth steel surfaces that are quick to clean for improved biosecurity,” said Mel Wubs, vice-president of trailer and engineering for Magnum.

choices and manufacturing process to deliver a quality trailer that is expected to significantly increase the life expectancy over our previous fleet.”

The trailers boast multi-zone, full height, electric sliding vent panels for airflow and temperature and humidity control. They also have a Stenx 100XF steel deck surface for high durability and light weight, a clear-span hydraulic raising roof, and roll-up curtains.

Based in B.C., Magnum has been manufacturing and servicing heavy-duty trucks and trailers since 1984. **TN**

# Driver safety focus of new WorkSafeBC videos and information sheets

**RICHMOND, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

WorkSafeBC wants truck drivers to be safe, and has released a new video series and information sheets to help them do just that.

According to WorkSafeBC, truck drivers in B.C. had over 20,700 time-loss injury claims and 140 work related deaths from 2008-17.

In partnership with SafetyDriven – Trucking Safety Council of B.C., WorkSafeBC has introduced the video series and

corresponding resources to reduce these risks.

The videos tell the stories of professional truck drivers whose lives changed after they were injured on the job. One depicts the story of a long-haul driver, the other short-haul, and a third about a delivery truck driver. Three new information sheets will assist employers provide ways to reduce the risk of injury to truck drivers when using pry bars, landing gear, and straps. **TN**

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Mark Dalton: Owner-Operator

By Edo Van Belkom

# Safety First

## - Part 3 -

**THE STORY SO FAR**

*Mother Load is in need of her annual safety inspection and while Mark is talking about that with another driver, a third man approaches and tells Mark he knows a mechanic that does inspections for \$500. Mark checks out Ralph's shop and isn't impressed. There are no trucks, no mechanics, and little equipment. On top of that, he says the inspection will be done in an hour. Mark tells him he's leaving the truck overnight.*

After a great night catching up with friends and watching a hockey game over a few beers, Mark returned to the repair shop ready to pick up Mother Load and be on his way.

He'd taken his time that morning, doing some laundry at his buddy's house, then getting in some shopping and buying stuff to restock Mother Load for his next cross-country haul. He'd also taken his time to make sure the mechanic had all the time he needed to do a thorough inspection and make all the necessary repairs.

But when he arrived at the shop at around two in the afternoon, Ralph wasn't there. Instead, there was a young man – almost a teenager, really – in the shop and not another single truck to be serviced.

"Where's Ralph?" Mark asked.

"He's working at the other shop," the young man said. "He says you owe \$500."

Five hundred dollars, thought Mark. That's an insanely cheap price for what his truck needed done to it. He had the money in cash, in fact he had three times that amount creating a bulge in his shirt pocket. It was nice to know he'd leave here with most of that money still in his possession, but would his truck be deemed safe?

"Okay, \$500," Mark said. "But what about the repairs? The tires?"

"He said \$500." Obviously, this kid had been instructed on what to say and he was going to stick to the script no matter what Mark had to say about it.

Mark decided on another tract. "Where's my truck?" he asked.

"You have the money?"

This guy was good at following orders.



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

Like a dog on a bone, it seemed. "Yeah, I have money, but I want to see my truck first."

"Money first. Then you can see the truck."

Reluctantly, Mark took the wad of cash from his shirt pocket and pulled off five \$100 bills. He held out the money and without hesitation the kid pulled them from his fingers as if they were a receipt from a cash register.

"This way," he said, walking toward the rear of the shop.

Mark followed him through the mostly empty repair shop and out the back door of the unit. There, parked just where he'd left it yesterday was Mother Load. In fact, it looked as if she hadn't been moved at all.

"Okay," the young man said.

Mark didn't answer right away, but it didn't matter. The young man had already turned and was entering the shop through the rear door.

"Hey, wait a second..." Mark said, but it was too late. The door to the shop was closed and Mark was alone with his truck...and down \$500.

He took a few steps closer to his truck and checked where the safety stickers were supposed to be affixed. To his amazement, they

were there all shiny and new and proclaiming that Mother Load was good to go for another year on Canada's highways.

He outstretched his hand and ran the tip of his finger over the sticker. It was real, and it was on his truck.

"But how?" he wondered.

Mark dropped down to inspect his brakes. They hadn't been touched.

He checked the tires. They had not been replaced. "So that was how," he thought. They didn't do a damn thing to the truck other than slap a safety sticker on it.

Mark stood there for several moments, thinking.

So, they didn't do an inspection. But the sticker was on the truck and he could get the repairs Mother Load needed at some other shop and the net result would be that his truck would be safe and legal for another year on the road... all for several hundred dollars less than if he'd gone about his safety inspection in the usual way.

So, he was coming out ahead.

But was he really?

As he started Mother Load and let her idle a while to warm up, the ethics of what he'd just done began to weigh on his mind.

Sure, he'd gotten a new sticker and he'd saved a few hundred dollars, but there was something really wrong with this transaction.

First of all, it was illegal, and as much as Mark could say he didn't know they hadn't done an actual inspection, no one would ever believe him. He'd been driving too long to convince anyone he was so naive.

And then there was the matter of safety. What these guys had done was put trucks on the road that were potentially dangerous – for the truck owners to drive and for other drivers who share the road.

That just wasn't right. It was bad for truck drivers, bad for the industry, and bad for road safety in general.

Mark wanted to do the right thing, but how? **TN**

*Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of Safety first.*

# GAME CHANGERS

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# 'Canada's best truck stop' has all the amenities, looks for support

By Derek Clouthier

## NISKU, ALBERTA

Blackjacks Roadhouse may not have its own fleet, but on any given night, the Alberta truck stop is a home away from home for hundreds of gassed, hungry drivers.

Clarence Shields is the owner Blackjacks and is proud of the fact he is able to provide truck drivers and all travelers a place that offers pretty much any service a driver could need. Showers, laundry, long-term truck parking, shuttle services to the airport, Wi-Fi access throughout the property, plugins, a weigh scale, a 24-hour restaurant, a bar, gaming facility, a hotel, and 24-hour security. There's even a dog park set up for drivers who can't leave home without their furry companions.

"That's the sort of level of rest stop I think everybody is looking for," said Shields. "I've got it all here. That's exactly what truckers are looking for. They are coming in because they have a clean shower facility, convenience store, laundry mat, 24-hour restaurant, they have a bar."

Shields said his bar is a place where drivers, who spend most of their time alone in a truck, can socialize with other knights of the road.

"If you're a single driver and you're on the road all the time by yourself, there's a social interaction part that is missing at truck stops," he said. "That's what happens here."

Located in Nisku, Alta., along Hwy 2 at the south edge of Edmonton, Blackjacks is right at the entryway to a large oilfield industrial park.

In the trucking business for around 40 years now, Shields said he has invested approximately \$15 million into the industry and his facilities.

Blackjacks encompasses 12 acres of space, which has been converted



Blackjacks Roadhouse is a popular spot for truckers to get a good meal, some rest, and a hot shower.

into a parking lot for truckers and others in transportation, with 160 overnight parking spots for trucks.

"There's such a mass shortage of spaces for truckers to stop and it's only because the land value is so high that in great locations they are being built out to the max," said Shields. "They wipe out any real parking or overnight parking for people."

Despite the services available to truckers at Blackjacks, Shields continues to get pushback from some carriers because he charges a fee to stay on his property.

"I'm talking about major trucking companies," he said. "And I'm thinking, are these guys so tight that they aren't going to accept a receipt for \$5 or \$10 for someone to park in a 24-hour secure yard with all the services and amenities their drivers need?"

Shields said he is one of the lone truck stops in Western Canada that charges a fee for drivers to park overnight on his property, but it is a common practice in the U.S., Eastern Canada, and in downtown Vancouver. He said more Alberta truck stops are looking at charging fees, with some setting up reservation systems where drivers

can call ahead and pay to book a space. Shields added that in major U.S. centers, truckers book ahead and pay \$20-\$25USD for a stall, and that's becoming the norm in most cities.

There are some carriers, however, that are not happy with the idea, according to Shields.

"I've had major companies say their guys will never park here, and I look at that and I can't believe it," he said. "I'm not asking for a penny from government, and here they are spending \$20 million to build three rest stops, where there's probably a bunch of guys just like me who could use that extra help or support for the services we provide."

Shields is referring to the recent announcement by the Alberta government that it will fund construction of three new rest stops, two along the Yellowhead Highway and another on Hwy 2 at Wolf Creek.

But it's the news that the government is also supporting a private sector rest stop near Bowden that raises a red flag for Shields.

"I'm never afraid of competing, it's just that I hate to see somebody subsidized by government

to compete with me," said Shields, who is confident his location with its myriad of services will ultimately win drivers over.

Though he supports the opening of additional rest stops, Shields said three new locations is "absolutely nothing" in the grand scheme of things.

"I can't imagine what the government is going to do, and what the trucking industry is going to do, when Jan. 1 comes around and single operators are forced to stop for 36 hours," he said. "Where are they going to go?"

"These guys will be parking in shopping center parking lots because they'll have no other place to go." **TN**



Derek Clouthier can be reached by phone at (403) 969-1506 or by email at derek@newcom.ca. You can also follow him on Twitter at @DerekClouthier.

## SPILL RESPONSE

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