

TRUCK NEWS EAST

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Volume 39, Issue 10

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Taking a breather

Truck and trailer dealer Stoops Freightliner welcomes the return to more normal volumes.

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How to manage your tires in rugged vocational applications.

The new normal: Slow, steady growth

By James Menzies

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

There's little sign a recession is imminent, but economic growth will continue to be slow and steady.

That was the projection from Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist with Kleinhenz & Associates, who gave an economic update at the FTR Transportation Conference on Sept. 11. He acknowledged the long-running economic expansion is slowing, but added "I'm relatively optimistic about the economy."

Consumer spending and domestic demand remains strong.

"The U.S. economy remains resilient," said Kleinhenz. "In response to the trade war, I think it will weigh on trade growth, but I have the expectation some kind of trade truce will be enacted. The overall macro-conditions are not signaling a recession; I'd say more of a slowdown."

He did admit uncertainty remains high among consumers, which could have an affect on their spending.

Eric Starks, CEO of FTR, expanded on how slowing economic growth will affect transportation. He noted

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The Canadian Country Cruisers from Tillsonburg, Ont., entertain participants.

Woodstock rocks!

Trucking for a Cure convoy raises more than \$100,000

By Abdul Latheef

WOODSTOCK, ONTARIO

"Life is bigger than cancer, and we need to beat this," Joanne Mackenzie declared as she flagged off the 10th annual Trucking for a Cure convoy in Woodstock, Ont., on Sept. 21.

The veteran trucker is the founder of the event, which has been raising funds for the fight against breast cancer.

Mackenzie had set a goal of 100 trucks for this year's running, but she said some drivers were unable to make it because they had to take rush loads.

"That is what happens in the industry. They're dedicated," she told *Truck News*.

Still it was a big success, with more than 90 trucks showing up, and the Top 10 drivers alone raising close to \$60,000. As of the next day, the contributions had topped \$101,000, Mackenzie said.

Team OBAC (Owner-Operators Business Association of Canada) was in the Top 10.

The team, consisting of Joanne Ritchie, executive director of the association and journalist Jim Park, raised more than \$10,000. A longtime participant, Ritchie lost both her parents to cancer.

Adam Monckton of London, Ont., brought his entire family to the event.

"It means a lot to me because breast cancer affects a

lot of women, and I have a lot of women in my life," he explained. "My mother-in-law and my sister both experienced breast cancer, and I just like to stop it from hurting more women."

Another longtime participant was Kim Bolyea of Midland, Ont. Bolyea's mother and daughter accompanied her to the event.

"This is a fantastic event full of a lot of wonderful people, and we are out here for a great cause today," Bolyea said as she hung pink streamers on her rig.

Riley Geerts from Hagersville, Ont., came with his young daughter and mother for their first convoy.

"I thought it would be a great idea to bring my four-year-old daughter to get her to experience all the trucks and all these people can get together for a good cause."

Longtime trucker Rolland Paquin, of Kitchener, Ont., also wanted to contribute to the cause.

"Something has to be done," he said. "I know they're doing a lot of research...but there's always the one factor they can never solve and that is what they're trying to do: to stop breast cancer and other cancers."

Breast cancer accounts for 26% of new cases of cancer and 13% of all cancer deaths in Canadian women, according to the federal government. One in eight Canadian women are expected to develop breast cancer during her lifetime and one in 31 will die of it. **TN**

Continued on page 31



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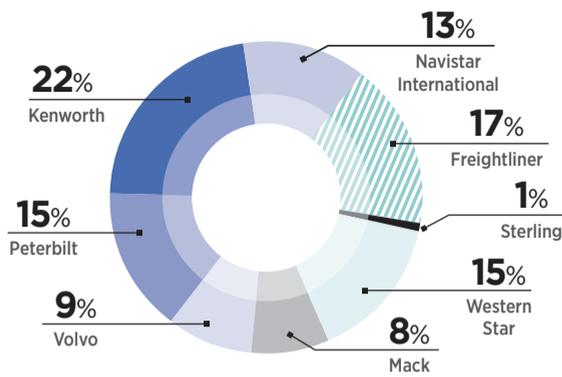
Personal preferences

O/Os outline what they look for in a used truck

Canadian owner/operators appear to have distinct preferences when it comes to selecting used trucks, our annual Equipment Buying Trends survey indicates. They don't seem to stray far from their current choices, in many cases showing strong allegiance to the brands they already drive. But there is some willingness to change brands with Peterbilts and Kenworths being the most sought after trucks among Canadian O/Os.

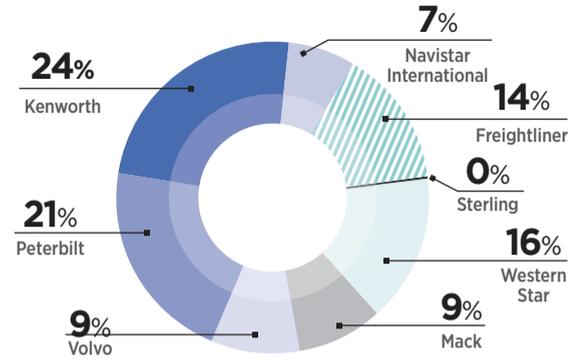
BRAND OF TRUCK CURRENTLY DRIVE

(% of respondents)



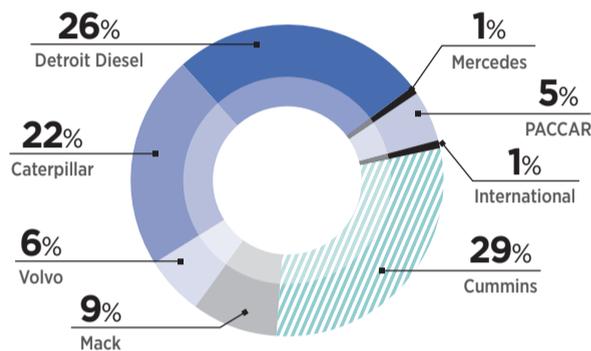
PREFERRED TRUCK BRANDS WHEN PURCHASING USED TRUCKS

(% of respondents)



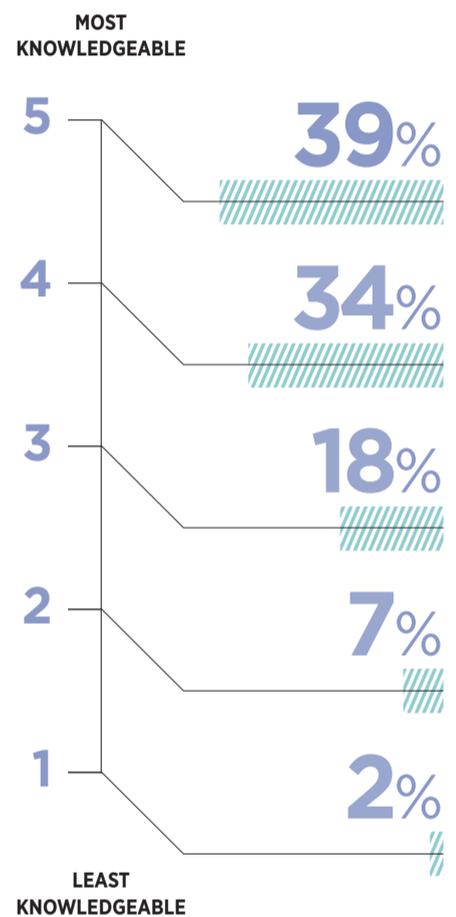
PREFERRED ENGINE BRANDS WHEN SELECTING USED TRUCKS

(% of respondents)



PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY TO PROPERLY SPEC USED TRUCK

(% of respondents)



MAIN REASONS PURCHASING USED TRUCK(S) AT THIS TIME

(% of respondents)

Current truck(s) have reached replacement mileage	28%
Increasing cost of repairs on used vehicle(s)	27%
Current truck(s) beyond repair	14%
Responding to fleet mandate to replace current vehicle(s)	4%
Looking to improve fuel economy	26%
Looking to avoid new engine emissions standards	35%
Adding to fleet due to growth projections	16%
Other	25%



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Driver pay rising among list of top industry issues

Last month in this space, I wrote about the impact driver and equipment detention is having on the industry. This year, for the first time, the issue appeared on the American Transportation Research Institute's (ATRI) annual list of top industry issues.

The other issue to appear for the first time was driver compensation. Interestingly, and not surprisingly, this was the top issue among drivers, and didn't even make the top 10 among motor carriers.

What's also interesting is that this issue surged to number one among drivers following a year in which most made more money than in the past.

But it's still not enough.

Bob Costello, chief economist of the American Trucking Associations (ATA), said during a panel discussion at the association's Management Conference & Exhibition, that driver pay packages have increased, but their take-home pay has not kept pace.

This is for a variety of reasons, including shorter lengths of haul. In 2000, the average dry van truckload of freight traveled 800 miles, which has diminished to 503 miles. Fleets that used to put 125,000 miles a year under the bumper are now struggling to get 100,000, according to Costello.

Drivers are spending more time bumping loading docks and less time traveling down the road, making money.

Which ties into last month's theme about driver detention, and how unacceptable it is. Drivers are being better compensated for every mile they run, but are now spending more time at shipper and



“As freight volumes soften and shippers flex their muscles, fleets will have to be very creative and forward-thinking to survive.”

receiver facilities, and in many cases, not being adequately compensated for that time.

And while everyone would agree drivers should be paid more, the reality is there's now an over-

supply of capacity. Fleets relying on spot market freight are struggling to get by.

“You can't unring that bell,” James Reed, CEO and president of USA Truck, said of driver pay increases that were put in place during a strong 2018. His company raised pay rates 6.5%.

Costello agreed.

“Now you have a softer rate environment,” he acknowledged. “I think a lot of those smaller fleets in the spot market are going to struggle this year. You can't walk that (pay increases) back. There's less freight and lower rates. It's tough.”

Already, we have seen a spike of bankruptcies among fleets south of the border. That trend has yet to surface in Canada, but can it be far away? As freight volumes soften and shippers flex their muscles, fleets will have to be very creative and forward-thinking to survive. **TN**



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Slow growth

Continued from page 1

inventory levels are currently high, due to a buildup in the third quarter of last year, placing constraints on freight growth.

Manufacturing is expected to remain flat, marking a correction.

“We are hearing things are starting to stabilize, things aren’t falling off a cliff,” Starks said. “But that doesn’t generate a substantial amount of freight, it basically holds the freight market where it is. We’re in a holding pattern. But this market is not used to a holding pattern. We don’t know how to hold steady – it freaks us out.”

Active truck utilization is on the decline, from nearly 100% in 2018 to about 88%.

“This is what makes people nervous,” Starks said, adding truckers shouldn’t be running for the hills. “It’s a steady-as-she-goes type of market.” But lower capacity utilization results in softer rates. “We’ve seen rates coming back down and easing,” Starks said. But he added “relative to history, rates are still at very, very healthy levels historically.”

“This is an environment where market conditions are still relatively healthy,” Starks said. “What happened was, 2018 was so unusually strong, it distorted a lot of things that were happening in the marketplace. As we come back down to nor-

mal, we’re now trying to understand, what does normal mean?”

Starks also refused to sound alarms about sharply falling Class 8 truck orders.

“What we saw last year was a huge increase in order activity,” he said, adding normally slow summer months saw abnormally high order activity. “We hit record levels at a time when, seasonally, we should’ve seen soft order activity. The decline we’ve seen recently is not unexpected. This is a normalization of what’s happening. Backlogs continue to be very healthy.”

When speaking to the issue of productivity, Starks said truckers should focus on decreasing detention time. An increase of 1 mph, if adopted industry-wide, would increase truck capacity by 2.5%. However, reducing detention time at loading docks by 30 minutes a day would see a 5.5% boost to capacity.

“So, where do you want to put your focus?” asked Starks. “This tells me things like hours-of-service and how well you do at the loading dock has a larger impact than investment in infrastructure and trying to get average speeds up. We need to understand, what is the impact? If we can get back 5.5% capacity, that would be huge.”

In summary, Starks said FTR sees the transportation market as stable. **TN**

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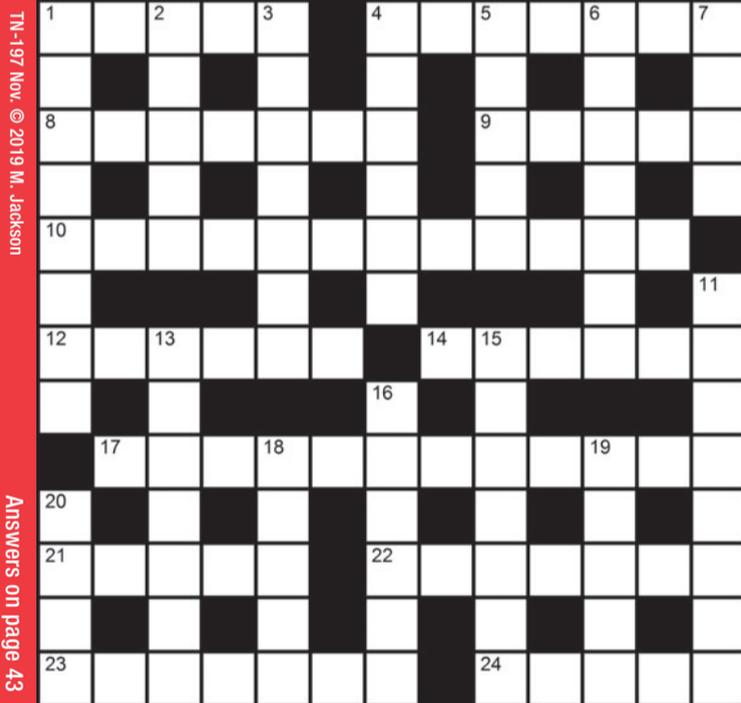
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Jimmy Zborowsky
President

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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- 4 In-cab devices, perhaps
- 8 Exhaust stack topper (4,3)
- 9 Truck wheel brand
- 10 Certain big rig tires (5,7)
- 12 Former flat front Freightliner
- 14 "Got your ____?" CB query (4,2)
- 17 2019 Ottawa-bound convoy (6,2,4)
- 21 Repair invoice items
- 22 Paid unloading help
- 23 Roadking truck stop city
- 24 Pickup & delivery, briefly (1,3,1)

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- 1 Medium-duty International
- 2 Tire type
- 3 Oversize load requirements
- 4 Smokey's ride (3,3)
- 5 I-95 southern terminus
- 6 Truck defect repair programs
- 7 In-bond trailer attachment
- 11 Thorsons car carrier type
- 13 '80s GMC conventional
- 15 Motel freebie, maybe (4,3)
- 16 Dual trailer connector type (1,5)
- 18 Electric tractor brand
- 19 NS and RI tags word
- 20 Truck design detail, briefly

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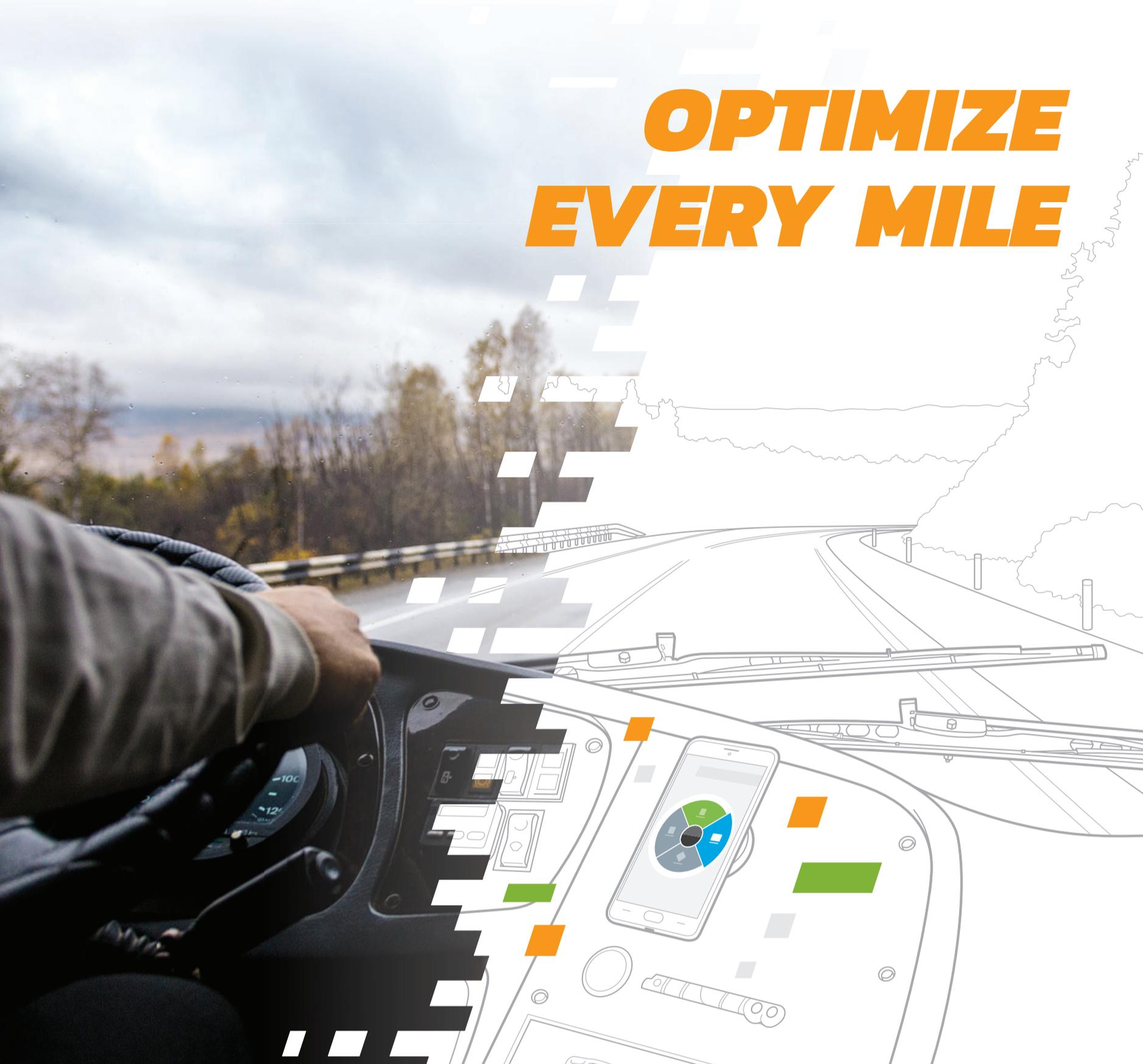
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Truck and trailer orders normalizing, not crashing: FTR

By James Menzies

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Class 8 truck orders have fallen sharply in recent months, but FTR forecasters aren't sounding any alarms, and say the drop marks a return to more normal levels.

Eric Starks, CEO of FTR, also chalked the decline up to uncertainty stemming from the trade war with China and other political issues.

"When you're a business decision-maker trying to decide, 'What should I be doing?', when that uncertainty enters, you say 'I'm not doing anything,'" Starks said.

While manufacturing is flat, the data doesn't reflect a recessionary environment, but rather a correction, Starks said. And consumer spending remains strong. FTR's tracking of monthly freight loadings has flattened out, but there's no downward spiral that should spark concern, Starks noted.

"The market continues to be relatively healthy," he said. "We are seeing a normalization within the market."

The spot market has seen rate declines, but remains relatively healthy, and above the five-year average, Starks pointed out. FTR is projecting freight growth of 1% to 1.5% through the balance of this year and next.

Don Ake, vice-president of commercial vehicles for FTR, reiterated that the Class 8 truck market is coming off some tremendous years; four of the top seven production years ever have occurred within the past six years. The Class 8 production rate this year is forecast to reach 353,000 units, compared to 323,500 last year. The all-time record was 2006, when 371,000 trucks were built, aided by the EPA07 emissions pre-buy.

But there's no hiding the fact Class 8 orders have plunged since the highs set in the fourth quarter of 2018.

"If looked at in a vacuum, you'd think things are horrible," Ake admitted. However, he noted if the 2018 and 2019 monthly order numbers were to be averaged out, they'd still come in above the seven-year average.

"The market is trying to get back to normal," said Ake. And he's also encouraged by the fact there's been no spike in cancellations. "I thought once we got into mid this year, we would see cancellations spike. What we saw was cancellations increase, but not spike. (Customers) are taking most of these trucks, which is a very good sign for the market. It's a normalization of the market, not a crash of the market."

Class 8 retail sales and build rates also remain strong, but Ake said most OEMs have announced build rate slowdowns. Backlogs are being



Eric Starks

drawn down, but remain at historically high levels. Ake said October will be an important month for orders. It's reasonable to expect 20,000 Class 8 orders a month in the coming months, Starks said. Truck inventories are high, meaning retail sales will need to pick up to prevent unhealthy inventories for dealers.

FTR's forecast for combined heavy truck sales in the US, Canada and Mexico are 260,000 units in 2020, 255,000 units in 2021, and 245,000 units in 2022. However, Ake admitted it's a "slightly optimistic" forecast. "We don't see the market crashing, as long as GDP stays up," he said. Starks added 245,000 units is about equal to replacement demand.

Trailer forecast

Forecasting trailer demand is a trickier business, Ake said, especially coming off record years.

"Trailer forecasting is tough and forecasting trailers in 2020 is enormously difficult," he said. "You thought the truck market was great over the last few years, the trailer market was even better. Five of the top eight trailer production years occurred in this cycle."

There were a number of variables driving strong demand for trailers, including pent-up demand (many carriers hadn't refreshed their trailer fleets since the Great Recession). Other factors include: an increase in drop-and-hook operations to get drivers home more often; consumer demand for faster deliveries of a greater variety of foods, increasing refrigerated van demand; an increase in temperature-controlled freight; a more widespread use of dry vans for storage; and even Amazon building its own fleet, rumored to amount to 25,000 trailers this year alone. Ake is anticipating some weakening in the trailer market over the third and fourth quarters.

He is predicting U.S. factory shipments of 326,000 units this year – a new record, 275,000 units next year, 260,000 units in 2021, 265,000 units in 2022 and a bounce-back to 280,000 units in 2023.

For the Canadian market, Ake sees 19,700 trailers shipped this year and 19,500 next year. **TN**

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Why companies need a tire management program

Since tires are one of the highest operating costs for a fleet and vital to their operation, they should be treated as assets, not expendable commodities.

They need to be tracked and managed through all their life phases, from their purchase to their retreading to their disposal. That's where a tire management program comes in. Northbridge expert Bill Cowan weighs in on what should be considered when creating and implementing a comprehensive tire management strategy for your fleet. With a program in place, a company could not only save money but be secure in the knowledge that they're doing what they can to help prevent any accidents.

CHOOSE WISELY

It may seem simple, but the first step to a tire management program is picking the right tires for the task at hand. Seek out a reputable supplier, whether you are purchasing retreads or new tires. Ensure you also use an experienced tire professional to properly install, repair, and maintain all tires. When selecting tires, there are several factors that should be considered: the type of truck, weight, and run time can have a big impact on what types of tires are best suited for the application or job.

Once the appropriate tires have been selected, it's important to not have mismatched tread or tire height. This generally occurs when one or more tires needs to be replaced early, due to something like a blowout. While it may seem like a good way to save money in the short term, it can lead to several issues. Paired tires that have too great of a diameter difference can place uneven strain on the tires, which will cause one tire to scrub and wear out faster.

TRAIN YOUR EMPLOYEES

Investing in your drivers and maintenance staff's education and resources from the get-go could save you money down the line. By becoming accustomed to routinely checking their tires and responding quickly to road hazards, drivers may be able to avoid some incidents on the road entirely and if something should happen, they will be prepared. As an owner or manager, you need to establish the company's best practices for your employees to follow that will help reduce the risk of tire damage or disintegration.

As you put your maintenance and training strategy together, consider these key tips:

- Have employees check tires at least once a day, and always during a pre-trip inspection.
- Train drivers on how to identify the signs of tire failure and how to report defects based on company policies.

- Once out on the road, if a driver encounters road debris or is driving on rough terrain, they should be instructed to inspect all tires at the next stop or when it is safe to do so.
- Drivers should be trained in sound defensive driving techniques, such as active road scanning and how to safely avoid hazards.
- Educate your maintenance staff on how to safely uninstall, install, and inspect all tires for defects and damage.
- Have employees rotate, balance, and align tires periodically to ensure proper wear.

Drivers should also be instructed to drive according to the tire's maximum recommended speed. They should be aware of the tire's restrictions as sometimes it may be lower than the road's posted speed limit.

CHECK TIRE PRESSURE

Both over-inflation and underinflation of tires can change what areas of the tire are making contact with the road. This, in turn, can lead to possible loss of traction, excessive heat buildup, or increased vulnerability to cutting, punctures, or damage. The tread area may also wear irregularly when not contacting the road evenly, and this may cause tires to wear more rapidly. Proper tire inflation helps ensure the weight of the truck is distributed evenly, which can maximize treadwear life, provide quicker steering response, and provide better fuel efficiency.

That's why tire pressure should be checked regularly, especially during cold weather, to ensure the recommended tire pressures are maintained. Maintaining a record of not just tire pressure checks and adjustments, but also all performed maintenance can help ensure tires are checked frequently enough and no routine inspections are missed.

PLAY IT SAFE

Having a tire management program in place can help increase the lifespan of a fleet's tires and save the company money in the long run. It can also limit the chance of a tire blowout on the road, helping to ensure the safety of your employees and those on the road around them.

But even with proper maintenance schedules and regular training, accidents can happen on or off the road. The Northbridge Insurance Risk Services team can help your company with many aspects of your risk management program through assessments, education, and consulting. All services and training offerings offered by the Risk Services team are designed to help you run a safer, more profitable business.

Bill Cowan is a Senior Risk Services Trainer at Northbridge Insurance. Bill has served the trucking industry for 40 years as a driver, safety manager, driver trainer and in loss control and risk management.

Truck and trailer dealer welcomes return to normal

By James Menzies

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Stoops Freightliner and its network of truck and trailer dealers isn't sensing that the drop in new equipment orders is anything to lose sleep over.

Instead, Brian McCoy, president of Stoops, said the current environment marks a return to more normal levels and lets the dealer better serve its customers' needs. He provided a dealer outlook on the current truck and trailer market at FTR's Transportation Conference Sept. 12. He said retail sales remain strong, and year-to-date are up 23%. Used truck sales are down about 20% but there remains strong interest in new iron.

"We have not slowed down in sales, and we don't necessarily expect to in the next couple of months," McCoy said.

Mark Hall, general manager of Stoops' trailer business, said trailer sales year-to-date are on forecast.

"Overall, the unit count is right on what we forecast for this year," he said. "I think we will continue to see a strong remainder of this year, as we have a lot more build-to-order equipment in our pipeline. We haven't seen any types of cancellations or any of the big fleets having any nervousness right now."

"We haven't seen any types of cancellations or any of the big fleets having any nervousness right now."

— Mark Hall, Stoops Freightliner

But both McCoy and Hall admitted quoting activity has slowed. McCoy isn't worried, however, since quotes for 2020 deliveries don't usually pick up until October. On the trailer side, Hall attributed a slowdown in quoting activity to a still-lengthy backlog.

Because Class 8 trucks were in such high demand in 2018, many smaller fleets missed out on their buying cycles as they scrambled to secure credit, McCoy said. A slowdown gives them an opportunity to get their orders filled.

"We are getting back to those smaller and mid-sized fleets, trying to be more consultative with them and helping them through that buying process," he said.

McCoy and Hall said tariffs on imports aren't yet being reflected



Mark Hall (right) of Stoops Freightliner says the dealership hasn't seen any nervousness among customers.

in purchase prices. McCoy said there was some upward pressure on truck prices last year, due more to the strong demand.

"At this point, truck prices have been more impacted by demand than anything else," he said. "We are looking at probably a normal model year increase for next year."

He is not anticipating a big impact from tariffs, especially in a slowing market.

"The manufacturers want to keep their lines moving and they will have more incentive to keep the lines moving as opposed to when they were completely filled," he said.

Hall said trailer prices have risen over the past year, but have stabilized lately. "Every indication is the rest of this year should be relatively flat," he predicted.

Asked to predict truck sales for 2020, McCoy noted sales in 2019 are up 23% and could be up as much as 40% had he been able to secure the units. He sees 2020 returning to somewhere between 2018 and 2019 levels.

"I think we will sell probably 90% of the trucks we sold in this calendar year, next calendar year," he projected. "Freight is definitely slowing down, but our customers who have contracted business are still busy and doing well. The nervousness in

the market is maybe from people who rely more on brokered business who don't have contracts with customers."

Stoops has been unable to secure enough stock truck build slots, and any deliveries that go unclaimed are quickly sold, McCoy said. Across 24 dealerships, the company had only 15 trucks for sale in June.

"There's immediate demand," McCoy said. "The questionable demand is in 2020 and moving forward. The rest of this year there's going to be demand for trucks."

McCoy said demand for new trucks has been so high, it was impossible to order stock trucks as recently as three months ago.

"Probably about 90% of our orders are sold orders and 10% are stock right now," he said, adding the stock trucks are mostly vocational models to keep on-site for customers who need a specialized truck right away.

The record-high demand has placed challenges on the dealership, and has even cost it some business.

"On the truck side, we lost 800 truck orders we had in-hand that we could've filled if our manufacturer would've been able to build the trucks," said McCoy. "Of those, 300 ended up going to a competitive OEM." **TN**



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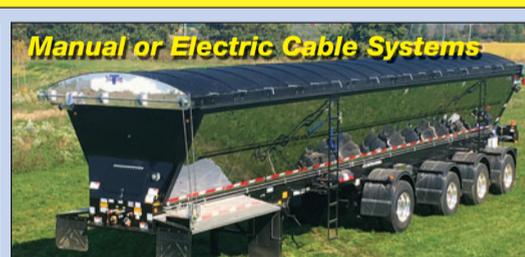
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Business

Hundreds of trucks go under the hammer



The auction in Bolton, Ont. attracted bids from 6,300 buyers, and fetched \$37 million, the company said.

By Abdul Latheef

BOLTON, ONTARIO

The world's largest industrial auctioneer held a two-day sale in the Toronto suburb of Bolton in the first week of October, with more than 4,000 pieces of equipment going under the hammer.

Among the items sold at the Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers event were hundreds of heavy-duty trucks, a large selection of construction and farm equipment, a wide variety of support tools and even a classic car – a 1965 Ford Thunderbird convertible. In all, 4,177 items were open for bidding.

The company sells them on behalf of their owners. The items are sold in an unreserved auction. That means there is no set minimum price, a business model Ritchie Bros. adopted when the company was founded in Kelowna, B.C., in 1958.

Anna Sgro, senior vice-president for Canada East sales at Ritchie Bros., called it a “complete transparent model” that has contributed to the company's success. She said the auctions typically attract customers from around the world.

“We had customers coming from Dubai, we had customers coming from all around the globe, really,” Sgro told *Truck News* as the auction got underway.

Buyers get a chance to inspect and compare the items days before the event takes place, and on auction day, equipment such as trucks are driven over a ramp in front of the bidders. Then, within minutes, they are gone in a bidding war.

In May, Ritchie Bros. set a Toronto record when it sold equipment worth \$46 million. The latest auction drew bids from 6,300 buyers, with revenues hitting \$37 million, the company said.

“It's the most lots we've ever had at this site,” said longtime Ritchie Bros. employee Derrick McWaters.

The Bolton auction came just weeks after a highly successful event in Edmonton, Alta., where a record 10,700 items were sold at the company's first-ever five-day sale, fetching more than \$100 million. **TN**



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Isaac Instruments in growth mode



SAINT-BRUNO-DE-MONTARVILLE, QUEBEC

Isaac Instruments is clearly in the midst of a growth mode, and a new 37,000 sq.-ft. building is just a sign of things to come.

The business – one of Canada’s largest telemetry and telematics providers – has made room for 133 seats inside its newly established headquarters. All but one of those will be accounted for as early as January. That’s when planning will begin moving forward on the second of four construction phases.

The facility will house as many as 400 employees when the work is done.

President Jacques DeLarochelliere says the need for a new corporate

home can be traced to a single theme: “Growth, multiply by growth, multiply by growth.”

As fleets increasingly invest in new technologies, the truck market itself continues to grow, he explains. And their technologies are not limited to electronic logging devices, either. “Most of the fleets we are working with have been using some form of electronic logbook for quite awhile,” DeLarochelliere says. “Some of our customers have been doing it for 30 years.”

Isaac has been growing in the midst of it all, and been recognized by Deloitte a one of the 500 fastest-growing technology providers in North America. **TN**



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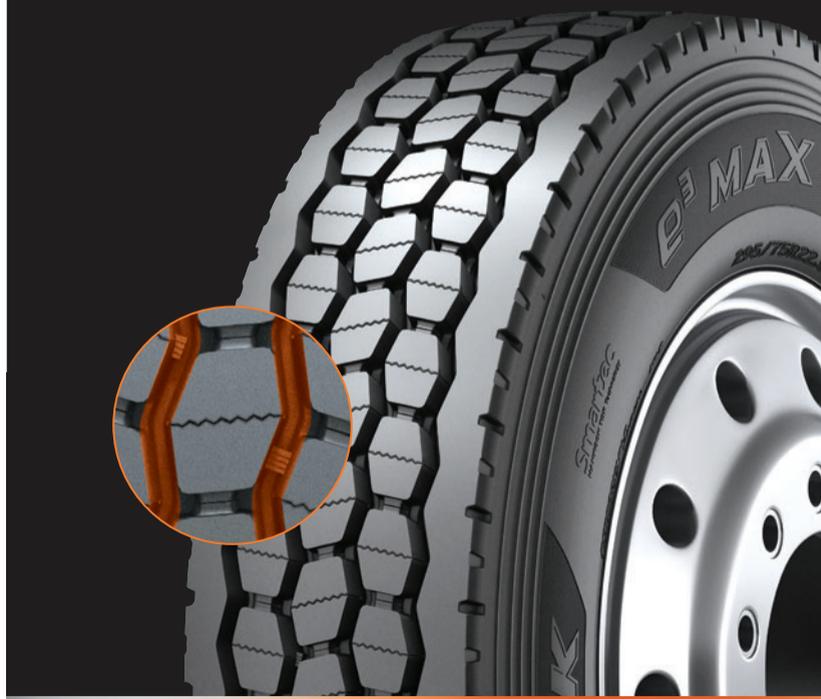
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Waste Management rolls out natural gas trucks in London

By James Menzies

LONDON, ONTARIO

Waste Management is deploying natural gas-fueled refuse trucks on its London, Ont., routes.

The company invited local dignitaries and members of the public to a ribbon-cutting ceremony at its London facility on Sept. 13, where it highlighted the environmental benefits of converting to natural gas.

"This is the 139th CNG fueling station we are christening across North America, and the 11th in Canada," said Aaron Johnson, area vice-president, Waste Management of Canada, adding about 50% of the company's fleet operating in Eastern Canada is now powered by natural gas.

In addition, Waste Management now produces enough renewable natural gas to power 40% of its CNG fleet. It has nine renewable natural gas sites in production, with more set to come on line this year.

In London, the company has eight CNG front-end loaders on the streets today, with eight roll-off trucks arriving in the fourth quarter. A rear-loader will bring the total to 17 trucks this year, with six more being delivered in 2020. There are 36 fill lines at the London terminal, where trucks are fueled overnight.

Johnson said Waste Management is close to opening two more CNG stations in the coming months, in Toronto and Mount Forest, Ont.

CNG trucks produce 15% less greenhouse gas emissions than diesels, and eliminate the need for about 8,000 gallons of diesel per year. NOx is decreased by about 50%.

"And for the community, they're much quieter. You don't hear the rumbling of those diesel trucks at 5 or 6 a.m.," Johnson noted.

Jeff Yurek, Ontario's minister of the environment, conservation and parks, and an MPP for London, was on-hand for the ceremony. He said the conversion plays into the province's environmental plan, involving the wider adoption of lower carbon-emitting vehicles.

"We've taken a special turn toward focusing on heavy-duty trucks," he said of the province's environmental strategy. "We will have a Drive Clean program for heavy-duty vehicles coming soon. We are very proud you are taking the opportunity to use CNG in your fleet. It's greener, it's better than diesel and it's a step further in lowering our emissions."

He also said the province is committed to maintaining the tax

exemption on natural gas, and will remove red tape to allow more filling stations to be built along the 400-series highways.

Joey Meyers, district fleet manager, said the new technology is being embraced by drivers and technicians at the fleet. The trucks' CNG tanks have a capacity of 3,600 psi. They're brought in for preventive maintenance inspections every 200 hours. The trucks are powered by the Cummins ISL G 9-liter engine. **TN**



Waste Management continues to convert its Canadian fleet to natural gas.

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Road Today-Truck News Jobs Expo a big hit

By Abdul Latheef

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

Bob Whitesell was at the *Road Today-Truck News Jobs Expo* in Mississauga, Ont., in September, looking for “unique drivers.”

His company, Robsan Transportation, based in Hamilton, Ont., works in the nuclear industry, transporting used material such as clothing, pumps and motors to a decontamination center for recycling. The items are then returned to the original location.

Whitesell said it is very hard to find drivers who are highly-specialized in such jobs.



Bob Whitesell with his daughter Patricia Whitesell

“Because we’re nuclear, we have a very high standard for drivers. It is not the typical driver job.”

Whitesell also wanted to see the turnout at the show to decide whether to have a booth at the fair next time.



Davinder Pandher

In fact, the fall edition of Jobs Expo was a runaway success, its organizers said. It attracted hundreds of job-seekers and scores of recruiters. There were drivers with decades of experience looking for new challenges, newly minted MELT graduates and even aspiring truckers still trying to get their A/Z licence.

Among the new MELT graduates itching to enter the trucking industry is 24-year-old Davinder Pandher.

She has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and music as well as a diploma in events management, but she wants to be a trucker.

“It is my choice,” she said looking at her father.

Pandher said a couple of recruiters she approached told her they were only hiring experienced drivers.

Other recruiters, however, told *Truck News* that the lack of experience is not a problem as their companies provide several weeks of intensive training.

“We will hire newly-licensed drivers. We will. Absolutely,” said Tim Downton, recruiting manager at the Rosedale Group.

Kari Ranonis of Arnold Bros. Transport agreed.

“We’re hiring new drivers... know quite a few carriers in this aisle alone are hiring new drivers.”

Twenty-five-year-old Michael Brynton came from British Columbia in search of a longhaul position that will “keep him going.”

He has been driving for just six months, but Brynton said he had some positive responses from exhibitors at the show.

The North American trucking industry is reeling under a severe shortage of drivers. In Canada, the sector is estimated to face a deficit of close to 50,000 drivers by the end of 2024.

In the U.S., the driver shortage rose to 60,800 last year, up nearly 20% from 50,700 in 2017, according to the American Trucking Associations.

The group has warned that the shortage could hit 100,000 in five years and 160,000 by 2028.

The event was organized by Newcom South Asian Media Co. **TN**

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Canadian ELD mandate, U.S. deadline will have impact on industry

By Derek Clouthier

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Trimble executives identified Canada's upcoming electronic logging device (ELD) mandate as the most influential factor altering the country's trucking landscape going forward.

Paired with Canada's June 2021 ELD regulation is a big change in the U.S.'s rule coming Dec. 16 with carriers no longer being able to use automatic on-board recording devices (AOBRDs), and having to make the switch to ELDs.

"The sooner you recognize this as a major change and not a minor change, the better off you'll be," said Shaun Callaghan, vice-president of transportation, Canada and enterprise sales for Trimble Transportation, during the in.sight User Conference in Houston, Texas.

Callaghan said carriers in Canada must realign their policies to meet these new U.S. regulations, as well as prepare for the upcoming Canadian mandate, by implementing company policies and training both drivers and administrative personnel.

One of the main differences the Canadian ELD mandate will have from the U.S. version will be third-party certification. Callaghan said this will result in a smaller number of certified devices than in the U.S., which currently has more than 400 to choose from.

Another difference between the two rules is how each recognizes personal conveyance time. In the U.S., there is no mileage limit for drivers using vehicles for personal conveyance, while Canada will cap the distance at 75 kms.

Drivers in the U.S. crossing into Canada must be aware of Canada's 75-km limit, and with Trimble's ELD devices, it will be made easier, as they automatically switch over to the appropriate rule depending on where the truck is being operated.

Making the switch

With both Canadian and U.S. carriers needing to adopt ELDs sooner rather than later, Chris Harmon, senior technical trainer with Trimble, offered a four-step process to make the transition as easy as possible.

Priority number one is for companies to prepare for the transition. This includes holding a kick-off meeting to relay the message to employees. Carriers should then create policies, review migration documentation, and schedule data uploads to prepare for the move.

Once policies are established, companies should prepare their team on the new ELD applications.

Uploading necessary data, such as terminal and driver information, is the third step in the process.

Finally, carriers need to prepare their drivers for the switch by going over day-to-day considerations and policies to ensure success.

Driver certifications, personal conveyance, yard moves, ELD malfunctions, editing ELD records, and unassigned driving time are all areas drivers must be educated on.

Despite the U.S. ELD mandate having been passed two years ago – which came with the AOBRD grandfather clause until December of this year – and the deadline for ELD adoption three months away, a poll of those attending the ELD session showed the vast majority are only now starting to migrate over to ELDs, with one carrier still not making the move to switch. **TN**

WSIB cracking down on Drivers Inc.

TORONTO, ONTARIO

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has intensified audits, looking more closely at carriers using the Driver Inc. model to avoid paying premiums, according to the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA).

"The WSIB has already conducted audits of two trucking companies, each of which has had corrective debit adjustments of over \$200,000," the association said.

It said it expects more corrective measures as the targeted enforcement continues.

OTA chairman David Carruth said it is important that drivers and shippers understand what is at stake.

"Both OTA and the WSIB know that through the prevalence of Driver Inc., not everyone is playing by the rules and paying their fair share, leaving some drivers vulnerable," he said.

"We are encouraged WSIB has recognized this is a major problem, and is focusing on making sure that businesses are paying what they should be for covering their drivers."

Driver Inc. is a controversial business model that classifies fleet employees as independent contractors. The drivers are incorpo-

rated and receive their pay without any source deductions.

That helps them offer rates no carriers can afford. Industry lobbying groups and major fleets have been fighting the model for years. **TN**

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PSI produces 1.5-millionth tire inflation system

By Steve Bouchard

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

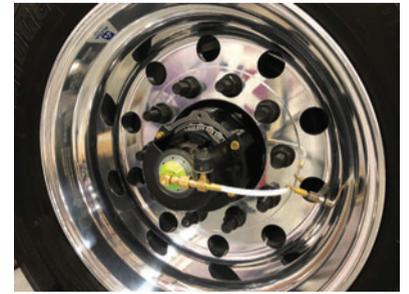
Business is booming for Pressure Systems International (PSI) – a privately held Texas company that invented automatic tire inflation sys-

tems (ATIS) about 26 years ago, says Jim Sharkey, vice-president, global sales and marketing.

The business has reached the milestone of producing 1.5 million systems. It took 22 years to build the first million units, but only four to

produce 500,000 of them. PSI counts on a solid partnership with Meritor, which handles North American sales, marketing, service and distribution of the Meritor Tire Inflation System (MTIS) by PSI.

Twenty years ago, the company



was selling the concept of the technology. But once fleets began to introduce the equipment, and saw returns on the related investment within a single year, then sales followed a “hockey stick” growth pattern, Sharkey says.

Users saw fuel economy improve, tread wear reduce, road calls drop, and labor savings emerge. One fleet even saw ATIS extend tire life by 16 to 24 months, he adds.

Regulatory changes are influencing interest in the technology in their own right. California’s Phase 2 emissions standards that apply to trailers will take effect Jan. 1. And those standards can be met using technologies such as tire pressure systems, among other options like low-rolling-resistance tires. Canada is expected to adopt similar standards in May 2020.

“ATIS is one of the most rapidly adopted technologies,” said David Schaller, industry engagement director at the North American Council for Freight Efficiency (NACFE), during a presentation at a PSI event.

Automatic tire inflation systems are used by 70% of the Top 200 for-hire and private fleets in U.S., said Sharkey. And more than 65% of all new trailers built in North America today have a tire solution, whether it comes in the form of ATIS, a tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS), hub-mounted pump, tire equalization system, tire sealing technology, or nitrogen.

“Tires continue to be the number one maintenance cost for commercial fleets. In every trucking magazine, there is always a story saying inflation pressure is the biggest issue facing fleets today. The thing is, it takes way too long to check 18 tires or more,” said tire expert Al Cohn, director of new market development and engineering support at PSI.

Trailer tires always have the worst air pressure, Cohn added. “The steer tires always have the best air pressure. The further back you go, the standard deviation increases. The outside duals are always better than the inside duals. And the driver side is better than the right side. The worst tire is the right rear inside trailer tire. People just never get to that tire.”

ATIS, while a flagship product, isn’t the only product by PSI. In 2018 the business acquired TST and its tire pressure monitoring system known as TireView. **TN**

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Mercedes now offering gas-powered Sprinter

By James Menzies

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Mercedes-Benz Vans ushered in a comprehensive refresh of its Sprinter van with the 2019 model year, with the biggest development being the arrival of a gasoline engine.

The gas engine, available on the models 1500 and 2500 cargo, crew and passenger vans, are best-suited for lower payloads and allow Mercedes to better target Ford's customer base. It also gives a lower acquisition price for cost-sensitive customers, or those who want to avoid complex diesel exhaust aftertreatment.

Fuel costs are expected to be about 5% higher for the gasoline model, Mercedes-Benz announced at a Fleet Ride-and-Drive in Toronto Sept. 17. The Sprinter's versatility was a key talking point for Mercedes. There are now 90 variants available between the Sprinter and its smaller sibling, the Metris mid-sized van. That doesn't include options and configurations, which bring the total ways a Mercedes van can be spec'd to about 750 variations, according to Iain Forsyth, national manager, vans with Mercedes-Benz.

Taj Gill, product specialist for vans, said Mercedes is considering bringing its Master Solutions program to Canada. That would see Mercedes deliver vans that are already equipment-upfitted. About 75% of its vans are upfitted and dealing directly with Mercedes will simplify the buying process.

Mercedes is also delivering vans in Canada that have been pre-wired for Intelligent Connectivity, which is not yet offered here. When it is brought to Canada, existing vans will be able to easily connect to the service.

Gill said Mercedes is the only OEM to offer a mid-sized cargo van in Canada today, in the form of its Metris.

The gas-powered Sprinter is a good fit for parcel delivery, florists, bakeries and other businesses that don't require heavy payloads. The 1500 model with the four-cylinder gas engine has a GVWR of 8,850 lbs, which Gill said is best-in-class.

For heavier payloads, the 4500 and 4500 crew vans are good options. The crew van seats three extra passengers and adds cargo space.

Because both the Metris and Sprinter got a complete overhaul in 2019, the updates to the 2020 models are modest in comparison.

The Metris now comes pre-wired for connectivity services, when available, and a couple new paint options. The 2020 Sprinter will now be available with Sirius XM satellite radio, and Mercedes' MBUX infotainment system will be available with a seven- or 10-inch screen without navigation,

giving cost-conscious customers a cheaper infotainment system option.

Because the Metris and Sprinter carry the Mercedes emblem, they're naturally not the cheapest vans to buy. But the company is shifting the discussion to total cost of ownership, which paints a more favorable picture.

"The calculation is done to give the customer an idea of how much they're going to be paying through the overall life-cycle," said Gill. It encompasses annual kilometers, fuel cost, depreciation, maintenance, repairs and insurance. Gill gave some examples for both the Metris and Sprinter.

A Metris cargo van with a three-year life-cycle (32,000 kms per year) with a four-cylinder gas engine and 126-inch wheelbase will carry an MSRP of about \$36,000. With 54% depreciation, total fuel costs would be about \$15,282, bringing the total cost per kilometer to about 48 cents. The 135-inch wheelbase model would be about two cents per kilometer higher. That's about three to four cents more per kilometer than a small van, while offering greater payload.

The Sprinter's operating costs range from 46 cents to 53 cents



The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter can now be ordered with a gasoline engine in Canada.

per kilometer, based on engine and wheelbase, based on the same three-year ownership cycle.

Focus on safety

Also on display was the suite of active safety systems available on the Sprinter. They were demonstrated in a controlled environment in the Toronto Congress Centre parking lot, where only orange cones could be injured if things went awry.

Active brake assist and blind spot assist were demonstrated. Active brake assist measures the distance in front of the van and will apply the brakes if the driver does not when following too closely. Blind spot assist is useful when backing, as it recognizes vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists and applies the brakes before the van backs into them.

On the road

Out on the busy roads around the Toronto airport, the Sprinter handled well for a large vehicle. The gas engine was extremely quiet. I drove a 2500 model with a 9G-Tronic smooth-shifting transmission. The diesel are mated to a seven-speed.

Visibility was excellent, and the van was easy to maneuver even without the optional 360 camera. There are some clever updates built into the 2019 model year Sprinter. Gone are the plastic bumpers that used to be mounted to the sides of the van to protect it from dings and scratches caused by the opening of the rear doors.

A more advanced hinge has been incorporated, which stops those doors from contacting the sides, and can withstand 80 km/h gusts. **TN**

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Continental debuts 'intelligent' construction tires

By James Menzies

UVALDE, TEXAS

Continental has come to market with a new line of "intelligent" construction tires, which come equipped with a sensor that reads temperatures and inflation pressures.

The sensor was designed by Continental to last six years or 400,000 miles. They're mounted to the inner liner on all third-generation Conti construction tires, and are part of Continental's suite of digital solutions.

"These tires in the construction segment see a lot of hazards," explained Continental's director of R&D, Marco Rabe, who updated truck and tire journalists on the new rollout at the company's massive Uvalde, Texas, proving grounds. "Fleets often come back to the same location overnight."

Fleets have several options for monitoring the new line of intelligent tires. They can install the ContiConnect Yard Reader at their terminal, which will read tire temperatures and inflation pressures when the trucks return to the yard. ContiPressureCheck is an in-cab monitor that displays the same data.

In addition to being the construction industry's first intelligent tires, the new design also improves on performance and wear. A new tread compound has been developed to provide a more even footprint, and the tire has been widened to 250 mm. The extra width improves how the tires feel when new, according to the company. They also wear slower than the first-generation construction tires they replace.

Continental is touting a 20% improvement in removal miles versus the predecessor. A deep tread gives added sidewall protection to help prevent damage from curbing. This was demonstrated at the proving grounds, where a truck equipped with the new tires was intentionally driven against curbing. Testing showed a 50% reduction in cuts than the HSC 1.



There are three new tires in the portfolio, each with a matching retread.



Torqued tread blocks reject stones, making the new Conti construction tires "self-cleaning."

Torqued tread blocks help create a self-cleaning tread, which repels stones. To showcase this, a truck fitted with the new tires was driven on a gravel track, comprised of rocks that were the ideal size to stick within the tread. But after a short drive on pavement, all but a couple of the stones had been ejected. This will reduce failures and also improve retreadability, Continental claims.

Matching retreads will also be offered as part of the Conti construction tire line.

The new tires were put through their paces at Continental's sprawling 5,000-acre proving grounds with



The third-generation Conti construction tires outperformed a competitor when it came to braking on a slick surface.

as many as 30 different tracks. Traction was showcased on a wet cobblestone hill featuring a 5% grade. Competitive tires were also tested on the same course to demonstrate the grip of the new series.

The stopping capabilities of the tire were also showcased on a slick surface. The Continental tires provided about a 20% reduction in stopping distance compared to a competitive design, and were noticeably more stable in a panic braking situation at 52 mph.

While Continental is best known for its tires, they account for just 26% of its total sales. It's the third larg-

est automotive supplier in the world, ahead of household names such as Magna and ZF. It's also the fourth largest tire maker in the world.

Seventy-five per cent of all vehicles on the road have at least one Continental product in them, according to marketing director Carol Wagner.

The company is also growing. Rabe said it produces about eight million truck tires a year, about a third of them in the U.S. at its Mount Vernon, Ill., plant. Up to five million pounds of rubber are mixed at the plant each day. The company recently opened a pre-cured tread plant next door.

"Now our retread designers sit right next to the new tire designers," Rabe said.

A new \$1.4-billion plant is being built in Clinton, Miss., which will produce about 750,000 truck tires annually beginning in 2020.

Wagner said the company's goal is to transition from tire supplier, to complete solutions provider. It targeted the construction segment for its first intelligent tires because of the punishment those tires take, the fact they often return to base regularly, and because it represents a large market.

In the U.S., there are more than a million construction truck tires in the aftermarket, in addition to 400,000 on the OEM side. In Canada, the number is 300,000 in the aftermarket and 20,000 between OEMs.

"It's a very important market and it makes a lot of sense for us to put the effort into bringing the best solution out there," Wagner said of the construction market. In addition to construction, the new line is aimed at forestry/lumber, heavy-haul, special loads, waste and sanitation applications.

The new line consists of the Conti HSC 3 steer tire, the Conti HAC 3 all-position tire, and the Conti HDC 3 drive tire, each with matching retreads. The new 3G casings come with a six-year, three-retread warranty. The sensors are available for retrofit in existing tires. **TN**

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Seeing the light

Taking a holistic approach to light management

TORONTO, ONTARIO

When it comes to keeping a clean safety record, and reducing maintenance costs, a good light management program is essential. Spec'ing quality light emitting diode (LED) lights, and properly maintaining them is the key.

A holistic approach

Lights are an easy thing to overlook, but taking a holistic approach to managing a lighting system will yield the best results, according to Grote.

"Fleets with a complete lighting strategy in place will not only enhance the safety of their fleets but also virtually eliminate CSA and other fines as well as minimize the cost of repair and downtime," says Kevin Cornelius, global marketing manager of power delivery at Grote Industries.

Go for quality

LED lights have become a no-brainer in most applications, having come down considerably in price, and lasting much longer than incandescents. Quality LED lights can be expected to last up to 15 years on a trailer.

According to Grote, a fleet with 1,000 trailers can expect to encounter three failures per day if running incandescent trailer lights. This could cost as much as \$3 million over the life of those trailers, taking into consideration installation costs of \$11.25 each time a bulb is replaced, as well as downtime.

Brent Edmonson, a technician with Vision Truck Group, says the market is rife with poor-quality off-shore LED lights.

"They have vibration problems, they get full of moisture, the lenses crack and discolor," Edmonson says of poor-quality LED lights. Even body builders will frequently install poor-quality LED lights on equipment, he notes.

"You have a nearly \$1-million concrete pumper that will have crappy Chinese LEDs on it," he says. "But there are lots of good ones out there."

When Edmonson takes delivery of new equipment, he often swaps out no-name LEDs for brand name products.

The case for LED headlights

Some truck manufacturers have begun installing LED headlights in tractors.

Because the color of LEDs is closer to that of daylight than the yellowish hue of halogens, it appears brighter and can illuminate details of objects in the distance better. They also help a driver see more at the edge of the road, where traditional lamps tend to fade out even on high beam, according to Grote. This improves safety

and reduces eyestrain since it helps the driver more quickly and easily spot vehicles, pedestrians, signage, road conditions, and wildlife to prevent potential collisions and driving errors.

Some LED headlights can last 30,000 hours, or about 10 years.

"Incandescents are old technology," says Meredith Vincent, regional sales manager, Ontario, for Truck-Lite. "That's what fleets and owner-operators used forever, because that's what was available. Now that the LED is readily available and more cost-effective, it's lower maintenance and takes years of usage before you need to change anything."

But the argument against LED headlights is that they don't generate

enough heat to keep snow and ice off the lens. Some manufacturers have come up with solutions to this, however. Volvo has an LED headlight with a fan at the back that directs the heat to the front of the lamp. (LED lights actually do produce heat, but at the back).

Truck-Lite has heating elements in the glass that can be activated to melt snow and ice.

Don't forget the grease

Since corrosion is the number one killer of lights and wiring harness connections, Vincent said it's important to make inspecting connections and applying dielectric grease when necessary, part of the routine maintenance on a truck or trailer.

Mistakes she frequently sees in the field include not using enough dielectric compound, or using an alternative product such as brake clean, which is conductive and shouldn't be introduced to the wiring system. When a light isn't working, she suggests troubleshooting the electrical system before assuming the light itself is to blame.

"It could be plugged in incorrectly, or a connection could be loose. There are a lot of variables why (the light isn't working)," she explains.

Asked what mistakes Edmonson has seen in the shop, he rhymes off "Too much electrical tape, not enough dielectric grease, and not enough shrink tube." **TN**

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The man behind Volvo Dynamic Steering



Volvo Dynamic Steering is designed to help reduce driver fatigue and increase road safety.



Technology specialist Jan-Inge Svensson in Dublin, Va.

By Abdul Latheef

DUBLIN, VIRGINIA

It happened almost 13 years ago.

Technology specialist Jan-Inge Svensson and his colleagues at Volvo's Advanced Steering Systems in Gothenburg, Sweden, were brainstorming about making truck steering controls more driver-friendly when an idea struck them.

They had experienced the ease of steering on new passenger cars.

'Why not try adding an electric motor to control the steering in a truck?' Svensson and his team asked themselves.

"We knew a lot of drivers complained about pain in the shoulder and back. So, we wanted to make it easier for the drivers to steer a truck," Svensson recalled in a conversation with *Truck News*.

"We understood that an electric motor on a truck would not be possible due to the high axle loads. So, we combined an electrical motor with a traditional hydraulic steering gear – hydraulics to provide torque and the electrical motor to provide control."

That was how the Volvo Dynamic Steering (VDS) system was born in 2008. As envisaged, it features an electric motor mounted on top of the hydraulic steering gear.

Input from multiple vehicle sensors, at over 2,000 times per second, determine the appropriate steering wheel response.

The system continuously monitors drivers' actions, environmental factors and road conditions faster than the blink of an eye, according to Volvo.



"We built a prototype, and when people tried it, we saw that it had a lot of potential," said Svensson.

Production started in 2013, and VDS has been in use on some Volvo trucks sold in Europe since then.

Svensson said the reaction from truckers had been extremely positive, with many saying the system had helped them get rid of back pain.

"When I hear things like that, I feel that we made something good for the truck drivers."

Volvo Trucks North America (VTNA) plans to offer VDS as an option on trucks starting next year, the company announced at a media event in Dublin, Va., in September.

Volvo will start taking orders for VDS in the fourth quarter of this year, with production starting in April 2020, said Chris Stadler, product marketing manager at Volvo.

The mechanism is ideal for diverse and changing terrains, and automatically adjusts to handle any roadway condition, Stadler said.

It will be available as an option in the Volvo VNL and VNR models.

Stadler said tests had shown that VDS has the potential to cut muscular strain by up to 30% and for some specific motions, strain can be reduced up to 70%.

Key VDS features include:

- Vehicle Stability Control leads to increased directional stability on the highway, which offers a more relaxed and safe driving experience with full control at all speeds.
- Return-to-Center, or Zero Return, enables the steering wheel to return to the center position when the vehicle is in motion, making it

easier to reverse the vehicle and maneuver in tight areas.

- Dampening allows the steering system to filter inputs from the road surface and, based on feedback from multiple sensors, helps improve handling and vehicle stability.
- Lead/Pull Compensation provides a torque offset within the steering system to compensate for crowned roads, steady crosswinds and other short-term conditions that can affect handling.

"In the event of a VDS failure, the system will convert back to conventional steering," Stadler said.

Peter Voorhoeve, president of VTNA, said he is optimistic that the introduction of VDS will lead to a surge in demand for Volvo trucks.

"This is really a breakthrough in terms of safety and in terms of driver comfort," he told *Truck News*.

He said certain carriers were using Volvo trucks to attract drivers and the VDS "will only reinforce it." **TN**



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VNR Electric to make California greener



Chad Burchett, project manager of VNR Electric and Brett Pope, director of electric vehicles at Volvo Trucks North America, at the unveiling of the new rig.

By Abdul Latheef

DUBLIN, VIRGINIA

Southern California will soon see the deployment of electric rigs, produced by Volvo Trucks North America in partnership with 15 stakeholders, with some of the funding coming from the California Air Resources Board.

The first Volvo VNR Electric regional haul tractor was unveiled last month at a media event at Volvo's New River Valley facility in Dublin, Va., where all Volvo trucks sold in North America are built.

Volvo plans to deliver five trucks by the end of this year, and another 18 by April 2020 under the Low Impact Green Heavy Transport Solutions project, also known as Volvo LIGHTS.

The platform for the VNR Electric driveline is based on technology used in the Volvo FE Electric trucks, which is currently available in Europe. Commercial production of the vehicle will start by the end of 2020, said Brett Pope, director of electric vehicles at Volvo Trucks North America.

"We will start with a limited amount of production as we work to ramp up and secure the builds in our manufacturing facility," he told *Truck News*.

Volvo has not announced the range of the battery, but Volvo FL Electric, the company's first electric truck, offered a range of up to 300 kilometers per charge.

The project will also see the establishment of 58 public and private charging stations, including one of America's first publicly accessible

fast charging truck stations, as well as 29 zero-emission forklifts.

In addition, solar panels will be set up to mitigate grid impacts and energy costs.

Volvo had previously considered bringing its European electric trucks to North America, but opted instead to electrify the VNR.

"This project will demonstrate the ability for heavy-duty, battery electric trucks and equipment to reliably move freight between two major ports and inland warehouses with less noise and zero emissions," the company said.

Volvo will use a variety of smart technologies such as remote diagnostics, geofencing and the company's web-based service management platform to monitor truck performance, it said.

Volvo LIGHTS will reduce an estimated 3,020 tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually, according to the company. **TN**

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TIP buys Trailer Wizards

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Equipment service provider TIP Trailer Services has signed an agreement to acquire Trailer Wizards. Financial details were not revealed.

A portfolio company of I Squared Capital, TIP first expanded from Europe into Canada in 2016 with the purchase of Train Trailer.

The acquisition of Trailer Wizards will add 21 locations, more than 400 employees and a diversified fleet of over 23,000 units in Canada.

"This is our second recent acquisition and a key step in our growth plan to expand the business to become a leading global provider of trailer services," said Adil Rahmathulla, chairman of the TIP Trailer Services board and managing partner of I Squared Capital.

"Acquiring Trailer Wizards will make TIP one of the leading trailer service providers in Canada, further diversify our geographic footprint, expand our service offering and broaden our customer base."

Following the transaction, TIP's Canadian division will have a combined fleet of more than 33,000 trailers, reefers, chassis and flatbed/

drop-deck configurations.

The agreement is subject to customary closing conditions and regulatory approvals. **TN**

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Thanks a million!

15th Convoy for Special Olympics tops \$1 million; 131 trucks take part

By Harry Rudolfs

PARIS, ONTARIO

The 15th anniversary edition of the Truck Convoy for Special Olympics on Sept. 14 was, “the best ever, the most trucks, the most donations,” according to organizer Tammy Blackwell, who had to limit the number of entrants to 131 trucks.

Still that’s an amazing spectacle of trucks pulling out of the Paris Fairgrounds: many kilometers of shiny rigs and wagons interspersed with the sirens and flashing lights of cruisers from six police services (OPP, Halton, Hamilton, Woodstock, Brantford and CP) making the annual 140-km trek down Hwys. 403 and 401.

This year Blackwell had her eyes on the prize. The convoy is a premier event run under the direction of the Law Enforcement Torch Run, and has raised \$930,000 for Special Olympics in the last 14 years. The goal was to raise another \$70,000 to bring the total over \$1 million, and Blackwell was waiting anxiously for the trucks to return to announce that they were over the top.

Dozens of companies, owner-operators and new carriers signed on this year. Challenger entered 16 trucks with owner Dan Einwechter behind the wheel of his personal tractor. Vernon Erb of Erb Transport and Mike Millian of the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada were also driving units displaying their brands. That’s 131 drivers with 65 athletes and various friends and family members riding shotgun in the trucks alone.

Meanwhile, an army of volunteers and sponsors were getting ready to serve lunch to 450, and emcee Jim Park was talking up the 50/50 tickets. But the atmosphere turned electric when the trucks started streaming back into the yard amid the welcoming whoops

and cheers and the blasting air horns.

Drivers and companies make a minimum \$100 donation to register a vehicle in the Convoy, with the top 15 donors getting to lead the pack. Fred Busch was a long-time supporter and fundraiser for the event since its inception.

Unfortunately, he died in a workplace accident this year and his son Brian was particularly emotional about this round-trip. Brian Busch, owner-operator of Karefree Transport, raised \$7,135 to acquire the lead truck position and was presented with a memorial plaque by Blackwell.

“My dad always started in the top 10 every year, so it was important that I start first this year in his honor,” he said.

Convoys for Special Olympians are held across North America every year. The athletes at the Paris Convoy, many of them proudly wearing the medals they’d won at competitions, were clearly enjoying the camaraderie with the drivers and their supporters.

“This event has developed friendships that go beyond this one day,” said Blackwell. “Over the past 15 years we have seen familiar faces, year after year, and more supporters each year, because of the strong impact this day holds for both the truckers and the athletes.”

Emily Snider, whose grandparents once owned Drumbo Transport (still active in the convoy but now owned by Heritage Transport), is a special athlete who has competed in swimming, snowshoeing and five-pin bowling. She was paired with Brian Hilton, a Contrans driver pulling a flatdeck.

“I do this every year - I like going for a ride and coming back,” said Snider.

Leonard Taylor and Einwechter from Challenger were presented with an award for entering the most trucks.



The organizers celebrate a milestone.



Challenger founder Dan Einwechter (left) drove in this year's convoy.

“It’s all about teamwork,” said Einwechter. “My drivers want to be in it and I support them. They lead the charge, they’re committed and I think if they can do it, so can I. This is my second year doing this but some of our drivers have been doing this for years.”

Blackwell was ecstatic with the final tally.

“We raised \$133,000, which is way more than our best previous result of \$108,000,” she said. The event wrapped up with afternoon baseball game between the Olympians and the Law Enforcement Torch Run participants. As happens every year, the result was a lopsided victory for the special athletes. “They slaughtered us 18-5,” said Blackwell. **TN**



Lynn and Emily Snider

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Human Factors

Driver shortage? Look at the numbers

“If I had a dollar for every time I heard the term, ‘truck driver shortage,’ I wouldn’t be here today.”

Those are the words of Kristen Monaco, associate commissioner at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Office of Compensation and Working Conditions, speaking to a conference of fleet managers and business analysts last month. She’s extensively researched the labor market for truck drivers, and challenges claims that a shortage exists. Just pay people more, she asserts, and you’ll have more applicants than you can handle.

Personally, if I had a dollar for every time I’ve heard the term ‘driver shortage,’ I’d be on a beach somewhere, too. I’d be living even larger if I had a dollar for every overly-broad statement or sensational narrative I’ve heard about this topic.

Things like, “If fleets only increased wages...” or, “There are a million people in Canada with a Class AZ/1 licence, shame on the industry for not being able to attract them.”

Finding qualified people to drive trucks is a complex issue, and clearly we need more information before we

can reach any conclusions. Let’s first address some of the common points:

Wages

Because of the sheer number of truck drivers, and the varying nature of their work, it’s hard to capture accurate and timely wage data.

We’ve done several recent studies into the issue. Our Labor Market Intelligence (LMI) research shows an upward surge in driver compensation. Our youth research says that millennials considering a career in trucking think they can make a good salary. And our Top Fleet Employers survey says one of the keys to reducing driver turnover is a clearly communicated pay package.

All of this research tells us that competitive wages are important, but so is ensuring that drivers under-



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

stand their compensation. Additionally, our most recent youth research, *Millennials Have Drive 2* shows that younger workers value work-life balance, respect for the job, and training as well as wages and benefits.

Possession of a licence

The vast number of Class AZ/1 licence-holders in Canada is often used to indicate a large pool of potential truck drivers.

But there are many jobs that require an AZ/1 licence, from utility workers, construction workers, and more. This statistic is not an accurate reflection of the number of people who are attracted to the type of work and lifestyle that truck driving entails.

Labor data

Our interim labor market information, compiled with input from the Conference Board of Canada, tells us the industry’s job prospects are better than ever. The trucking industry employs 318,000 drivers and has the highest job vacancy rate among all Canadian industries, averaging 6.6% in 2018 with some 22,000 vacant positions. That’s more than double the national average.

The face of the Canadian driver is older. Only 28% of truck drivers are younger than 40, compared to 45% of the entire Canadian labor force, and 32% of truck drivers are 55 years or older. Nearly 7% of truck drivers are older than 65, compared to 4% of all Canadians of that age that are working.

The high vacancy rate, combined with employment growth, low unemployment, and an upward surge in wages, provide compelling economic evidence of a labor shortage.

Additionally, with 6.6% of our transport truck drivers being 65 or older, that is another 20,000 or so truck drivers that could potentially retire and leave the industry (this is on top of the current 22,000 vacant positions).

It’s clear that there are numerous job opportunities available. And the fact remains that competition for workers among all industries is intensifying.

What we need are solutions, and positive messages that speak to the economic opportunities the industry offers. And we need government officials to be working with us, not against us. **TN**

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Put incorporation on the menu

As an accountant, I deal with a lot of numbers all day long. But a few figures stand out. Twenty years ago, 36% of our owner-operator clients were incorporated while 64% were sole proprietors. Today, those percentages have flipped. Roughly 72% are incorporated and 28% are sole proprietors. Incorporating is a big step, and for most people, it will pay for itself in the long run. A corporation separates your personal life from the business, which helps shield you from liability if things go wrong. It also gives you more flexibility in your tax planning and dealings with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

I ultimately don't care whether you incorporate or not. I just want you to be a happy and successful client. But any discussion of the pros and cons of incorporation has to include meal deductions. Because once CRA decided that sole proprietor owner-operators had to use actual receipts to support their meal expenses, we saw a rush of clients wanting to change their business structure.

Once CRA decided that sole proprietor owner-operators had to use actual receipts to support their meal expenses, we saw a rush of clients wanting to change their business structure.

Simplified method

An incorporated owner-operator who is an employee of his own company and travels far enough and long enough away from home can use the simplified method (logbooks and TL2 form) to claim meal expenses.

This eliminates the hassle of keeping receipts for each individual meal away from home and can substantially save on taxes, making incorporation worth the effort.

Here's how it works.

If you're away from home for five days a week and work 50 weeks a year, your maximum meal claim would be \$10,200 (50 weeks times \$51 times 80%). As a sole proprietor, do you really think the total dollar value of meal receipts you collect in a year will reach this limit? There's no way it's even close. You could be on the hook for \$2,500 to \$3,500 more in tax compared to what you'd pay by incorporating and claiming meals using the simplified method.

Some sole proprietors continue to use the simplified method to claim meals anyway and hope to not get caught by CRA. A meal claim of this size getting denied will surely lead to big reassessments.

Other benefits

Incorporated owner-operators who are employees of their company can take advantage of other travel-expense benefits. For instance, a per diem or travel allowance paid to you by your corporation is a tax-free benefit, which means you don't report it as income on your personal return.

Let's say your company policy on meal and travel expense reimbursement for employees is \$80 per day. Taking a per diem could put as much as \$400 a week – \$20,000 a year – into your pocket tax-free.

At the same time, you could lower your taxable income from salary or dividends and make up the difference with the non-taxable travel and meal allowance. Your corporation would also save payroll-related expenses (CPP and WSIB) because it would pay you less taxable income even though the net amount you take home – salary plus per diem – would be the same.

Audit-proof strategies

Like any other tax-saving strategy, you need to make sure your actions will stand up in case of audit.

For example, the per diem amount must be reasonable. Is \$80 reasonable? That's for you to judge, but our own federal government uses \$108 per day to compensate civil service employees for travel expenses.

Does your corporation have policies and procedures for travel allowances and expenses? For instance, as an employee, you could be required to submit travel expense forms before you get your travel allowance.

As you look ahead to 2020, there's still time in 2019 to talk to your accountant about incorporation. It's a little more complicated than

being a sole proprietor, but the ability to reduce your taxable income and streamline the deduction of an important daily expense could save you thousands of dollars in tax each year. **TN**



Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, a Waterloo, Ont., company that provides accounting, fuel tax reporting, and other business services for truck fleets and owner-operators. For information, visit www.tfsgroup.com or call 800-461-5970.

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Keep on rollin'

Best practices for tire management in heavy vocational applications



Checking inflation pressures regularly is key to making tires last in rugged vocational applications.

By Andrew Snook

Few things take as bad a beating on jobsites as the tires for fleets of heavy equipment. So, what can operators and fleet managers do, in terms of tire management, to ensure their operations run as smooth as possible? Well, the most important item on the to-do list – which, in many cases, is often overlooked – is to properly manage the air pressure in the tires.

“Air pressure is the killer of the tire industry – air pressure and speed,” says George Brown of Professional Tire based in Gander, Nfld., who has 45 years of experience in the tire business.

He says getting operators to manage their air pressure on a regular basis can be a big challenge, thanks partly to the technologies now available in the equipment. Before sensors were installed in trucks to help drivers maintain their oil levels, operators would regularly monitor them. Brown says that kind of diligence has become a thing of the past.

“Now they’re all relying on the gauges and the lights, and it’s the same thing with the tires,” he says.

Brown says this challenge is largely a generational difference between veteran drivers and young operators.

“Some of the old truck drivers I know can take a small baseball bat and from the thump pretty well tell your air pressure from within five pounds,” he says. “But some of these young guys, they go around and kick

the tire and they think it’s great, but the tire could be 50% underinflated...I get about 5% of my commercial guys that really maintain their tires, and you can tell when they come back to the shop with mileage. I can see it.”

Brown says air pressure inspection should be performed once a week, but in some cases, you’d be lucky to get the tires inspected once a month. He adds that the owner-operators tend to be more diligent in checking the air pressure than company drivers, due to the financial ramifications of poor tire management coming directly out of owner-operators’ pockets.

Operator awareness

Keeping an eye on your surroundings, especially in heavier applications, is also vital for prolonging the life of the tires.

“Operators have to be aware of their surroundings – their work area,” says Mark Montico, account manager of the mining and commercial division for OK Tire’s location in Timmins, Ont. “An example of that more in the mining side and in the quarries is if an articulating truck leaves and material falls out the back, the operator needs to pick that up. That spillage can’t remain there because that spillage will eventually just puncture tires,” he says.

Being aware of the type of material your tires are regularly traveling on is also very important.

Tim George, customer service and logistics manager for the aggregates division at Lafarge Canada in

Edmonton, Alta., says the quality of the roads can vary greatly from one site to the next. George spent many years in Fort McMurray, Alta., before coming to Edmonton, and he says the roads at the Fort McMurray sites were definitely different from the roads in Edmonton.

“The 20-mm down here, and the pavement our guys are running on here, get them a little more use than they would in a dusty setting like McMurray,” he says, adding that the way an operator drives their truck is also very important for prolonging the life of the tires. “It’s like your car. As fast as you drive, your brakes, your turning – all of those things – slow and steady wins the race, and preserves the tires.”

George says his company’s main priority is preventing the roads from being damaged, so they keep the speed in their pits limited to 10 or 20 km/h. Lafarge’s Edmonton operation also makes an effort to keep roads smooth and free from any loose materials and waters them regularly.

“We just maintain the speed and regulate, and have designated haul lanes for them,” he says. “We definitely try and control the speeds that way.”

George adds that the age of the pits can also play a factor on the wear of tires on hauling trucks.

“Most of our pits are long-term pits, so those roads are tire-friendly,” he says. Greenfield grounds are soft, it wears a little harder.”

Perfect match

Tire matching is also important to optimize the life cycle of the tires.

“If one tire is worn and the tire across from it fails and is now disposable, putting a new tire on and the OD (overall diameter) is not the same, then the tire will wear out faster,” Montico says.

Preventive maintenance is key

When managing an equipment fleet, knowing when to replace your tires can make a huge the difference in preventing costly downtime. In George’s situation in Edmonton, where Lafarge subcontracts out its aggregate hauling fleet, he recommends to operators that they replace tires before they encounter an issue.

“It’s better to replace it before it goes,” George says. “We do try to get our guys to err more on the side of caution. I always tell them it’s \$200 per hour now or \$2,000 per hour later.”

You get what you pay for

There is a wide array of tires that fleet managers can choose from, and many of them offer technologies that can assist with preventive maintenance – such as tire pressure sensors. But for many contractors and fleet managers, buying decisions are dictated by price.

“The biggest thing, for my guys anyways, is they go for price,” George says. “It may not be the best available tire out there, but when you’re replacing, a \$1,000 tire will pop a hole same as a \$300 tire. That’s kind of the mentality of a lot of these guys.” **TN**



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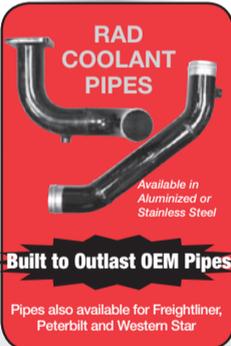


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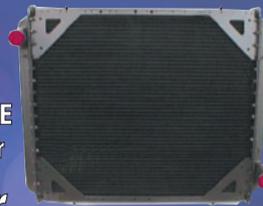
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Kriska buys Trailwood Transport, Nexus

PRESCOTT, ONTARIO

Kriska Transportation Group (KTG) has acquired Trailwood Transport and Nexus Freight, both operating out of Alliston, Ont.

The two fleets will continue to be led by general manager Lorie Thompson and their current management teams. Former Trailwood owner Mark Beckstead will represent the company going forward, with a focus on maintaining key customer relationships and growth, Kriska said in a release.

“Trailwood and Nexus are great strategic fits with the Kriska Transportation Group,” said Kriska CEO, Mark Seymour.

“Their culture and results are a welcome addition to the KTG family. Trailwood’s expertise in the automotive industry brings further diversification to our industry mix. The addition of Nexus gives us the local capacity to help supplement our current network needs. We expect to find many synergies and opportunities to help both businesses grow profitably.”

“Becoming part of KTG offers Trailwood and Nexus the opportunity to lower our cost base, bring long-term stability to our business and collabo-



rate with other transportation professionals in the KTG family,” added Beckstead. “We’re excited to be part of a group that values our brand strength and who are like-minded as it relates to trucking.”

Trailwood was founded in 1984 as a family-run transportation company offering domestic and cross-border truckload services, specializing in the automotive industry. It runs 112 power units and 385 dry van trailers.

Nexus Freight is a local cartage carrier, servicing Southern Ontario with both 53-ft. dry vans as well as a small fleet of straight trucks. It operates 20 power units and 12 trailers. **TN**

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Products

International Truck is improving the visibility and maneuverability of its all-wheel-drive International **HV Series trucks**, adding a high-visibility hood and set-back axle to the available spec's.

The features are seen as especially important for vocational applications, especially for utility companies that work in remote areas that require both a 4x4 chassis and maximum maneuverability.

This HV607 is powered with the Cummins B6.7 and L9 engine. **TN**



Cooper Tire's Roadmaster lineup is expanding to include the Roadmaster RM832 EM steer tire.

The new tire is verified by SmartWay and features an 18/32 tread depth along with an improved tread design and advanced rubber compound.

The RM832 EM has a wider footprint than the Roadmaster steer tire that went before it, and also incorporates second-generation Energy Max compounding to improve fuel economy.

The wider footprint better distributes weight, while a newly designed decoupling groove helps minimize shoulder wear, the company says.

The new Roadmaster steer tire comes with a six-year, two-retread warranty, and is available in seven sizes: 295/75R22.5, 11R22.5, 11R24.5 in Load Range G or H, plus in 285/75R24.5 (Load Range H). **TN**

As drivers keep their eyes on the road, **Wabco TailGuard** can now keep an eye on the space behind the trailer.

The latest Wabco offering combines a blind spot detection system with active braking when paired with the Wabco Roll Stability Support on trailers. Trailer-mounted sensors will monitor a six-foot radius behind reversing vehicles, activating brakes if they are not applied within two or more feet of the object.

The technology monitors stationary and moving objects, whether they come in the form of pedestrians, vehicles, cargo or infrastructure, and will activate brakes to slow or stop vehicles, the company says. **TN**

Autocar has announced the launch of **two truck models** for the concrete and construction industry.

The Autocar DC-64M for concrete mixers and the DC-64P for concrete pump applications represent a completely new conventional truck that was designed specifically for those applications, Autocar announced.

"The new DC models are the result of extensive input we received from our advisory board of concrete professionals," said Eric Schwartz, managing director of Autocar Trucks. "Every inch of these trucks has been reviewed and improved based on the decades of experience of people operating concrete mixer and boom pump trucks. We're grateful for their help and proud to bring to this market trucks that are honestly customer-built."



The cab is built from a combination of steel, aluminum and corner castings designed to withstand punishing work. The workspace of the cab was designed for productivity and to accommodate drivers of all sizes.

A wide, raked windshield optimizes visibility, according to the company.

They also feature high-strength 160,000 psi steel frame rails, which Autocar claims are 24% stronger and lighter than the rails on competitive trucks, eliminating the need for frame liners on nearly all mixer applications.

"This breakthrough results from the requests of mixer operators who were frustrated by corrosion caused by moisture and muriatic acid penetrating the gap between frame rails and liners," said Tom Harris, vice-president for concrete mixer trucks with Autocar. "We've routed air lines and self-cleaning electrical harnesses on separate sides of the frame rail to make service easier. But even more importantly, everything is mounted away from the frame rail channels where concrete and liquids accumulate, so that will avoid additional problems we've all had to deal with before."

An interior display notifies drivers or technicians of faults and offers one-touch diagnostics that show them how to fix it.

"It's a game-changer that gets trucks back into service and making money faster than anything anyone has had before," said Harris.

The new models are available with the Cummins X12 engine with up to 500 hp and 1,700 lb.-ft. of torque, with additional engines to come in the future. Allison transmissions are available. Autocar says it has already taken firm orders, which will be delivered in the spring.

Additional details are available at: www.AutocarTruck.com/my-new-truck. **TN**



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Mark Dalton: Owner-Operator

By Edo van Belkom

Mark was on his way back from a nice easy trip to Calgary where he'd been able to stay a couple of nights between loads, and take in a Calgary Flames home game and have one of the best steak dinners he'd had in a long, long time.

The ride was almost over as he passed through Barrie on his way into the Greater Toronto Area. From here there was a load to Montreal and then in three days, on the 10th, he'd be on his way to California with a sweetheart load and three days on the beach already booked and paid for.

But then his phone rang.

He was expecting it to be Bud, but instead of Bud's usual caller ID, it was a call from an Ontario government number.

"Hello?" Mark said.

"Hello," said the voice on the other end. "Is this Mark?"

"Yeah, who is this?"

A pause, then, "Mark, my name is Ricardo Rivard, I'm a duty counsel lawyer here at the Davis Court-house in Brampton."

"What the hell?" Mark thought. "What do they think I did now," he wondered. "Okay," he said slowly, unsure of what to make of the call.

"Do you know someone named Bud?"

Relief washed through Mark and he was tempted to say, "Bud who?" but this just seemed a bit too serious for those sorts of games. "Yes."

"Well, Bud gave me your number and asked me to call and see if you would be willing to be his surety?"

'Surety,' Mark thought. That's what people needed when they were in jail and needed someone's help. If Bud wanted Mark to bail him out, he must be in some pretty serious trouble. Either that, or he'd done something really stupid. Mark figured it was likely a combination of the two. But regardless of the circumstances, Bud was Mark's friend, and he was in a position to help him out.

"I suppose I could, if I had to," Mark said. "Doesn't he have someone else?"

"He does actually," said the lawyer. "But his brother is out of town until the 10th. He'll be back on that day, so you could be his surety for a few days, then pull your bail and let his brother would take over."

Mark thought about it. "So, it's just for three days?"

"Yes."

Mark said nothing as he thought about it further. He had a sweet load to California that was to be picked up on the 10th and a vacation scheduled after that which was not to be missed for any reason. But that was on the 10th. In the meantime, he



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

Bud's bail buddy

– Part 1 –

had a nice easy run to Montreal to fill in the three days in between.

So, if he did help Bud out, all it would entail was basically having Bud tag along for the ride to Montreal, and then Mark's responsibility would be over and done with. 'Heck,' Mark thought. 'It might even be fun to spend some time with Bud.'

"Yeah," Mark said at last. "I can do that."

"Are you anywhere nearby?"

"Just north of Toronto right now."

"Great. If you can get here before 4:30, I can ask the court to hold Bud's matter down, or if you think you'll be later than that, I can put the bail in place and you can just go to the Justice of the Peace office before it closes at 5 p.m. Your choice."

"You're in Brampton, right?"

"Highway 10 and 407."

"Let's go with the second one, then. I should be there in plenty of time, probably by 3:30, but you never know."

"Alright, I'll get the bail in place."

Mark arrives at the courthouse around 4 p.m., which was obviously late in the day judging by the number of empty parking spots there were scattered about the lot. Mark opted for a spot at the far end of the lot as Mother Load took up four full spaces and he wanted to have plenty of room to drive out of the lot when he was done.

After the long walk to the front entrance, he passed through the airport-like security and then

got directions to the Justice of the Peace intake office.

After a short wait in a tiny room where Mark filled out a sort of questionnaire, Mark was allowed inside and escorted to an office with a Justice already seated behind a desk. It was an older Asian lady with short hair, glasses and dressed in a black robe with a wide green sash over one shoulder.

"You're here for Bud?" she asked him.

"You know it's a residential surety?" the JP said.

"What does that mean?"

"It means he'll have to live with you for a while."

A pause. "Where do you live?"

"I really don't have an address," Mark said. "I live in my truck."

She looked confused a moment, then said. "He's going to have to stay with you."

"I was planning on that."

"And you'll need to provide an address."

That wasn't a problem. Mark's P.O. Box was his address on all of his government documents and there was no reason why this government document would be any different. He handed over his driver's licence with the address of his P.O. Box on it. "That's my home address."

"This is a bit unusual, but if you're sure he'll be staying with you, then I guess it should be fine."

Mark waited as the papers were drawn up, and as he signed, the JP explained to him that if at any time he wanted to relieve himself from being Bud's surety, he could do so at either a courthouse, or police station.

"You mean I have the power to pull the bail and put Bud in jail any time I want?"

"Well, yes, but it's usually only if he's not following the rules."

"My rules."

"Yes."

Mark liked the power this arrangement gave him over Bud. And to be honest, it was about time the tables were turned.

Mark sat in the lobby by the elevators for a half hour waiting for Bud to be released.

When Bud stepped out of the elevator, Mark got up to greet him without saying a word. They embraced a moment and Bud began to explain, but Mark cut him off. "I'm sure there's a really interesting story here," Mark said. "So, let's hear it over dinner. You're buying."

Bud exhaled and pressed his lips together hard. Finally, he said, "Fair enough. Let's get out of here." **TN**

Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 2 of Bud's bail buddy.

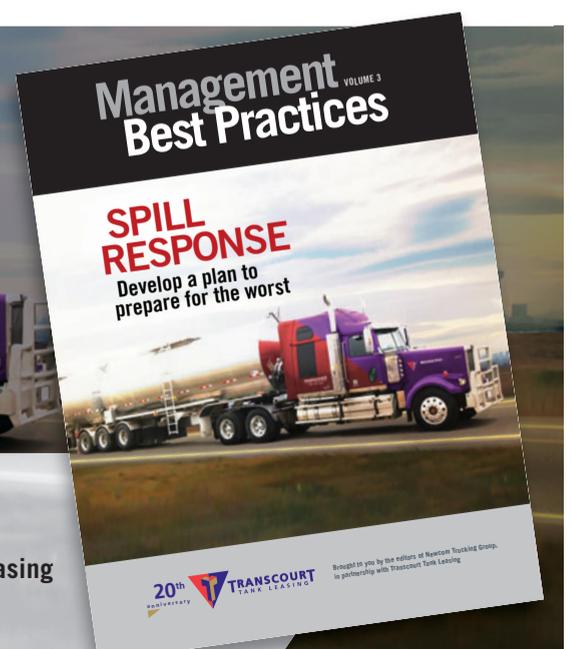
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Keeping our head in the game

You can make sure your phone is in airplane mode when you drive, never snack when you're behind the wheel, always have both hands on the wheel, and yet still be a distracted driver.

Keeping your head in the game is the greatest challenge professional drivers face when it comes to keeping ourselves and everyone around us safe from harm. It's a delusion to believe we can focus solely on the task of driving when behind the wheel, or that the solution to this challenge is mandated rest.

I firmly believe that road safety starts with the right attitude in your head. For example, you shouldn't be driving if you're filled with any destructive emotion such as anxiety, anger, or depression. The same applies if you are experiencing fatigue, burn-out, or exhaustion.

But is that even possible in the world that commercial drivers' move in? How many of you professional drivers reading this have made it through a week without experiencing at least one of the physical or emotional factors I alluded to? And what do you do, if anything, about it?

I'm pretty sure that every dispatch office - as well as every shipping and receiving office - has experienced the angry, irate, or emotionally-charged truck driver. Very often, we drivers are a pressure cooker filled with nuggets of emotion stewing in a broth of fatigue. Woe betide the dispatcher or shipping clerk that pops open the lid without backing off the pressure first.

Having a fellow driver you can call and just shoot the breeze with when anxiety and fatigue start to take hold is important. I'm no psychologist, but I know that talking to someone who shares your same experience and background in the industry is a fantastic way to change the channel in your head.

Often, that is all that you need to dissipate the anger or frustration you are feeling. It's a simple way of



Eighty percent of ongoing driver training (if you get any training, that is) should be learning about how to keep your head in the game and how to recognize the emotional and physical factors within yourself that put you at an increased level of risk.

releasing that pressure you're experiencing. In the two decades that I've been trucking, I have never sat in a safety meeting that has discussed the everyday emotional challenges that drivers - especially longhaul drivers - face with any great depth.

The closest to this topic we ever seem to get is when employee benefits are discussed and employee assistance programs are on the agenda.

But what about fatigue, weariness, exhaustion, and burn-out? Well, to be honest, those are things we only talk about in terms of hours-of-service regulations and drivers know those rules are not a magic elixir to eliminate fatigue.

So, in my opinion, distracted driving results from the debilitating emotional and physical responses we experience as a result of the work we do. You get emotionally charged, or fatigued, or both, and your mind wanders off to deal with those issues. Your head is no longer in the game. You are now experienc-

ing a much higher level of risk and you probably aren't aware of it.

Eighty percent of ongoing driver training (if you get any training, that is) should be learning about how to keep your head in the game and how to recognize the emotional and physical factors within yourself that put you at an increased level of risk. I think this is the most important step towards improving the dismal safety record within our industry.

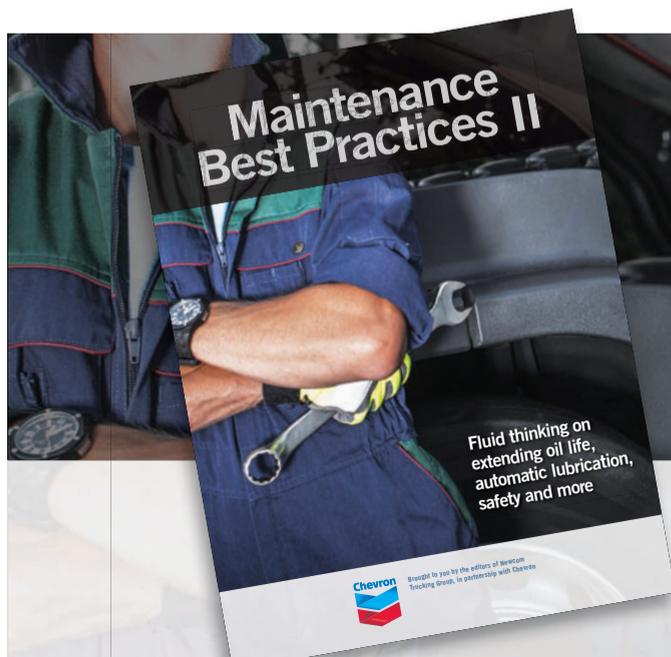
I'm raising this topic because for the last several months, I have been feeling a heightened level of anxiety and burn-out. As a result, I have become hypersensitive to requests from the folks in operations that place any additional demand on my time, even if those requests are reasonable and not at all unusual, which is the majority of the time.

I have a high degree of respect for the people I work with. I've worked with many of them for more than 16 years now, so the last thing I want to do is act like a jerk and be disrespectful or unreasonable.

How our mental wellbeing affects our personal safety and the safety of others on the job, is a huge topic. I think workplace safety in the trucking industry deserves a driver's point of view from the front lines. Hopefully I can bring you some of that perspective over the next several months with a break here and there for any hot topics that grab my attention. Be aware and be safe out there drivers. **TN**



Al Goodhall has been a professional longhaul driver since 1998. He shares his experiences via his blog at www.truckingacrosscanada.blogspot.com. You can follow him on Twitter at @Al_Goodhall



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