

Vitran's Star Turn

Look after your financials and the rest will look after itself: page 34



CEO, Rick Gaetz

Today's Trucking

January/February 2005
www.todaystrucking.com

The Business Resource For Canada's Trucking Industry

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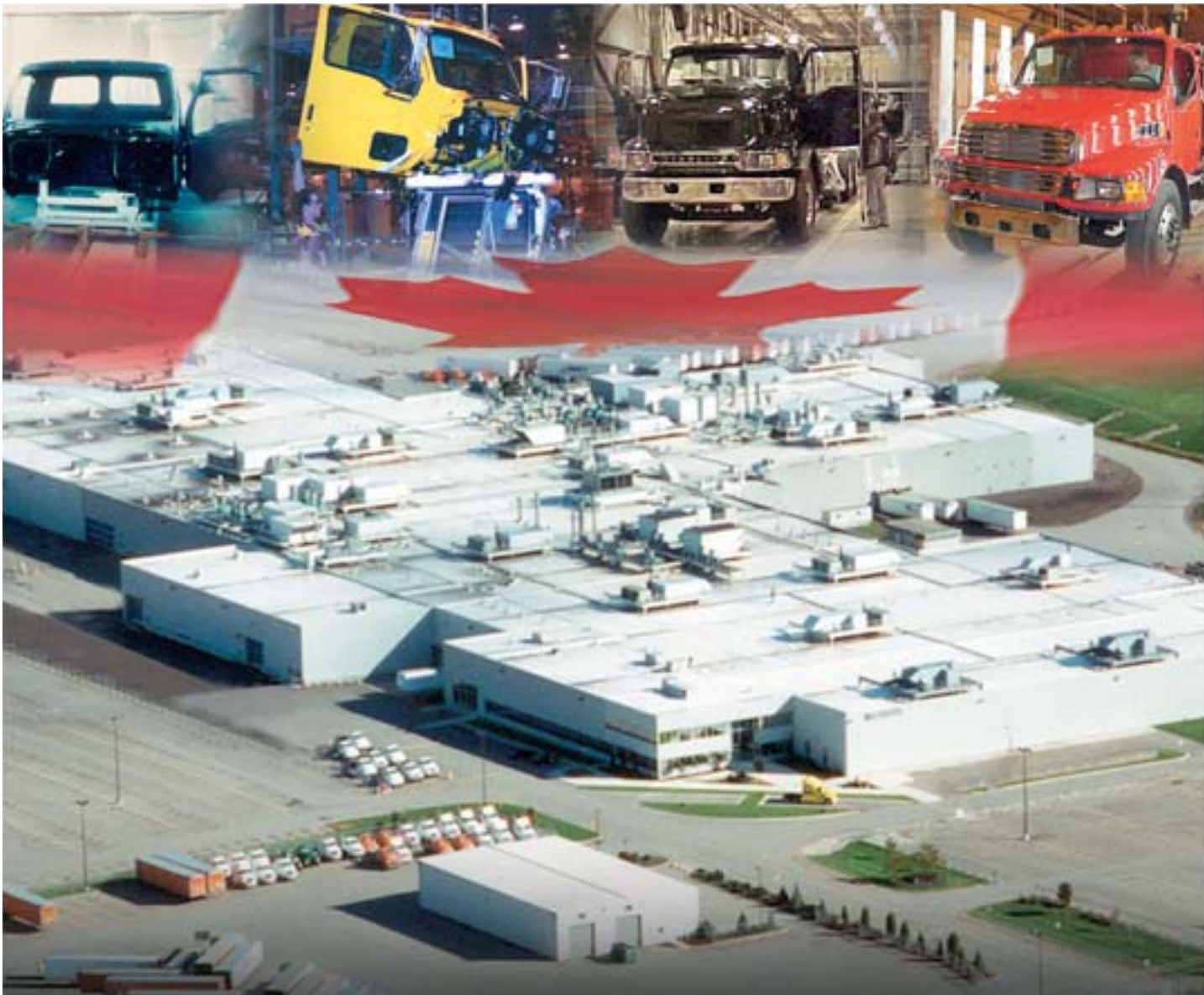
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STERLING CONTINUES TO BUILD ITS REPUTATION ON CANADIAN SOIL.

St. Thomas, Ontario – In 2004, Sterling remains the only manufacturer in North America to produce 100% of their medium- and heavy-duty conventional trucks in Canada.



John Merrifield

Senior Vice President,
Sales & Marketing

“From a North American perspective, it makes sense to consolidate our manufacturing operations in St. Thomas,” stated John Merrifield, Senior Vice President of Sales & Marketing. “Since the majority of our parts suppliers and customers are in the eastern half of Canada and the United States, this location allows us to more effectively streamline shipping and distribution.”



**Special Feature:
Sterling Truck Plant**

On nearly 80 acres in northeast St. Thomas, a 440,000-square-foot building handles the bulk of Sterling's assembly operation. Off-site, a 100,000-square-foot warehouse is tapped for additional storage, sequencing and some light fabrication.

"At full capacity, the Sterling Truck Plant is capable of producing nearly 30,000 units per year," said Plant Manager Terry Bruni. *"That figure includes everything from A-Line tractors to L-Line trucks to medium-duty Acterras."*

Since the brand was created in 1997, Sterling has continued to attract new customers and grow.

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Freightliner LLC built a heavy-duty truck plant that became fully operational in January of 1992. Six years later, the plant was completely converted to produce Sterling trucks.

"Everyone says we have a really great working environment here, not to mention a competitive wage and benefits package," proclaimed Pat Sage, Training, Development and IT Manager for the plant. *"It continues to be one of the most sought-after places to work in southwestern Ontario."*



Sterling employs skilled, enthusiastic workers at the St. Thomas manufacturing facility. These employees are assigned to work groups consisting of 10-30 individuals. Each work group actively participates in a culture that encourages input from all levels.



Sterling Truck Plant

Location: St. Thomas, Ontario

Size: 440,000 square feet

Capacity: 120 trucks/day

Workforce: 1,150 employees

Bruni added, *"One of our best sales tools is extending open invitations to customers and prospects to visit our plant. Meeting the people who build the trucks is an important connection, because each Canadian-built Sterling carries a special pride that's unique to our brand."*

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Mack's new axle-back Granite dump package. See page 54 for more details.



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By Rolf Lockwood



Innovators Wanted!

An invitation to brag about the best in Canadian trucking.

Years ago, when I first launched myself into a career of writing about trucks and trucking, most of my friends wondered why. The gearheads among them understood my attraction to the machinery of our industry, but the rest... well, they were part of that large group I call 'civilians' nowadays. They just didn't understand. It took me a while to change their minds, but it didn't, on the other hand, take long for me to realize why I'd made a good move.

It was the people, of course. Trucking folks are not like ordinary mortals, and that was clear to me within weeks. They're not super heroes, nothing like that, and I don't mean to romanticize or exaggerate them—you—in any way at all. Our industry is like any other, holding some people I wouldn't take home to meet Mom!

Unlike those others, however, trucking is far more densely populated by people who are natural entrepreneurs, who innovate for a living. And I found them—still do—energizing. Challenging. Just plain interesting.

So I'm happy to say that we're about to launch an on-going series of articles, starting in March, profiling the most innovative people in Canadian trucking, as proposed by you, their peers and colleagues. It will culminate in our selecting an 'Innovator of the Year' in December, and will be sponsored by a company that is itself ready to innovate (which I can't name yet because the ink on this deal wasn't quite dry at press time). Look for details in our next issue.

I hesitate to add yet another award program to an already solid list, but as far as I'm aware, none of the others focus on innovation particularly. There's service to the industry, heroism, and a few others, all of them very worthwhile. But it seems to me that at this juncture in our joint history, the single talent that will best pave the way ahead is the ability to conceive and then actually do things that bust open the envelope, if I can murder a cliché.

So what do I mean by innovation? What kind of people am I talking about?

Innovators are different. They're curious, self-motivated and ready to take risks. Visionary and competitive, they see possibilities where others see blank screens. In 2005, the chances are very good that innovators will achieve business superiority through their use of information technology. New ideas in dealing with the human side of things—not just drivers but everyone—are also likely to separate the average company from the excellent one. But the point here is that innovators routinely break the mold, so I'm just guessing.

In thinking about all of this, I was taken back to an afternoon some time in the early 1980s when a young Tom Kleysen and I played hooky from the Manitoba Trucking Association convention for an hour or two. He wanted to show me around the Kleysen Transport facilities and I happily complied. Part of the tour included a trek out to the back 40 where there was ample evidence of Hubert Kleysen's —Tom's dad—inventive spirit. Experiments on the equipment side of things were everywhere, some of them used and then superseded by something better, others that never saw action. Big machines, some of them,

If we don't pat ourselves on the back, who will?

though 20 years later I can't remember much more than that. It doesn't matter, the point being that Hubert was forever thinking about ways to do things better. Curious, self-motivated, and ready to take risks—together with a welding torch—that was Hubert Kleysen. It's no coincidence that in later years it was him, with others, who spearheaded the idea that Winnipeg could be a multi-modal transport hub for all of North America.

A few years before that Kleysen tour I met and became friends with another pioneer, Max Rapaport. A much respected Toronto transport lawyer, just retired by the time I met him, he can be credited with some quite revolutionary out-of-the-box thinking—the inland sufferance warehouse was his idea, if I remember the story correctly. No small thing, no small innovation.

On a more tangible, practical level, over the years I've seen individual truckers invent things like ladders for climbing on to a flatdeck, brake-stroke indicators, you name it. Quite recently I had a close look at Transport Robert's home-grown tracking system that has every driver in Canada equipped with a Blackberry handheld device that links to the dispatch office. It's slick, it's easy, and it's definitely innovative.

The point is, there's no shortage of interesting breakthrough ideas in Canadian trucking, and we aim to celebrate them month by month. If we define innovation as the successful exploitation of new ideas, our industry does that every day. So tell me about the best of them in your world, please. If we don't pat ourselves on the back, who will? ▲

Rolf Lockwood is editorial director and publisher of *Today's Trucking*. You can reach him at 416-614-5825 or rolf@todaystrucking.com.

No complaints here

Re: "Customs and Border Protection agrees to Soft Enforcement," *todaystrucking.com*, Oct. 26, 04

First off, I agree that carriers and drivers who have joined the programs will not tolerate foot dragging. Wayfreight, for one, has gone to considerable expense to keep on top of the changes, join the programs available to carriers, and get our drivers through the FAST card process.

Time and time again when new programs have been initiated, many affected parties cannot comply due to their tardiness or lack of interest, so the government agency involved relaxes the rules as the implementation date draws near. For those of us who do comply, this is simply not fair.

Typically, those who did not go to the expense are the same carriers who beat us at the rate game when it comes time to quote prices. Sooner or later many of them will go out of business due to their shoddy practices, but how long do we have to wait?

Secondly, regarding the comments about the quality of FAST card applications, I was responsible for getting our drivers through the system. Initially, I printed off blank copies of the application, had drivers complete the application at their own pace, and return them to me to have the payment information added. Inspection of the returned applications revealed enough omissions and illegible information that our drivers would easily have reached the 30 per cent rejection rate you mentioned in the article. After the first applications were returned, I changed my approach. I now sit the driver down in front of my desk and complete the application for him on screen, with his input.

After the application is completed, it is given to the driver to proofread, with the advice that it is his application, and he is the sole person responsible for its accuracy. I found that this method, although time consuming, takes less time than trying to track down multiple drivers to confirm details and/or add information to the application. This method resulted in a rejection rate of near zero.

And, finally, I would like to comment on the enrolment process. I attended the enrolment centre in Fort Erie to get my own card. My appointment was for 3:00 pm, and I was called from the waiting area at 2:58. It was as easy and fast as the Customs agencies advertise. We need to give credit where credit is due.

Jerry Krauskopf,
Wayfreight Services Ltd
Guelph, Ont.

Teach his own

Re: "1-800 How's My Writing," by Peter Carter, Oct. 04

How about 1-800 How's My Driver Training?

As the carnage continues on our highways I'm wondering out loud just how long it is going to take our government and law-enforcement agencies to start tracking individuals who have had an accident in a commercial vehicle to find out where and when they obtained their commercial licences.



Better yet, how about a legitimate body to monitor the truck-training schools and the talent that they are producing? The average Joe has no idea how many private schools are out there and I'm told it is close to 1,000. How can he tell which are reputable?

From my perspective as an educator in this industry for 20 years, the problem of poorly certified drivers is not going away. As the need for drivers continues so will the shortcuts.

Kim Richardson,
President KRTS
Transportation Specialists
Caledonia, Ont.

HOW TO REACH US: We want your feedback. Write editors@todaystrucking.com, or Letters to the Editor, Today's Trucking, 451 Attwell Dr., Etobicoke, ON M9W 5C4; fax: 416/614-8861.

Today's Trucking

NEWCOM BUSINESS MEDIA INC.

PUBLISHER & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Rolf Lockwood, MCR (rolf@todaystrucking.com)
416/614-5825

EDITORIAL DEPT.

Editor Peter Carter (peter@)
416/614-5828
Senior Editor Marco Beghetto (marco@)
416/614-5821
Contributors Jim Park, Stephen Petit, Allan Janssen,
Steve Bouchard, Raymond Mercuri,
Tom Berg, Steve Mulligan,
David Kosub, Steve Sturges

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Director Tim Norton (production@)
416/614-5810
Associate Art Director Frank Scatozza

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

Craig Macpherson (craig@) • 416/614-5804

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGERS

John Pallante (john@) • 416/614-5805
Joe Glionna (joe@) • 416/614-5824
Linda Nadon (linda@) • 450/224-1114
(Montreal)
Marketplace Advertising
Joe Glionna (joe@) • 416/614-5824

NEWCOM BUSINESS MEDIA GROUP

President Jim Glionna
V.P., Corporate Services Wilson Smith
Manager, Administration & Finance Anthony Evangelista
Production Manager Lilianna Kantor
(lkantor@newcom.com) • 416/614-5815
Director of Circulation Pat Glionna

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING OFFICES

451 Attwell Dr., Etobicoke, ON M9W 5C4
416/614-2200 • 416/614-8861 (fax)


CIRCULATION INFORMATION

P.O. Box 370, Station B, Etobicoke, ON M9W 5L3
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Dispatch

EDITED BY MARCO BEGHETTO

When the Rubber Doesn't Meet the Load

Some trailer OEMs are bitter. But not having tires on a box that needs to roll down the highway will do that to you.

Trailer OEMs aren't asking for the wheel to be reinvented—just some tires to dress the ones they have would be nice.

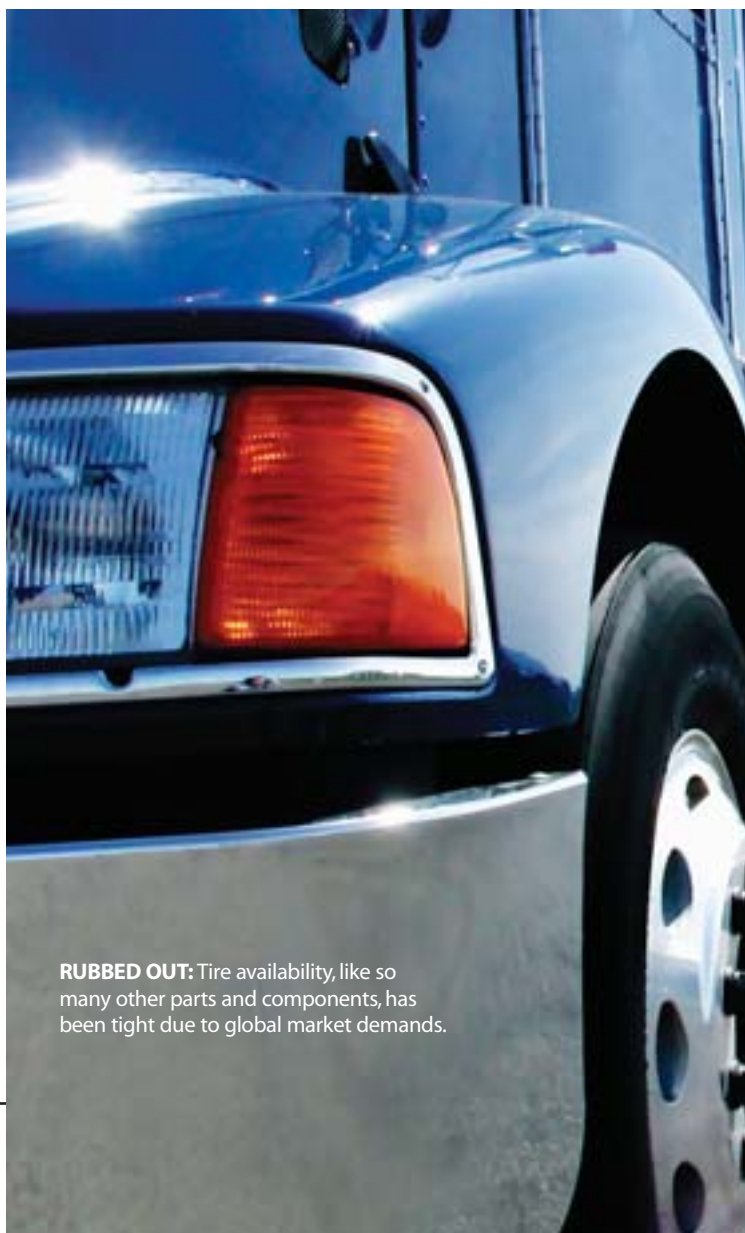
A few trailer makers are grumbling, both privately and publicly, that their tire suppliers have told them there's not enough rubber to go around. What is available is earmarked for specific, larger orders, meaning trailer companies don't have anything extra to play with, and some carriers and owner-ops aren't getting what they're used to spec'ing.

The stories—a mix of anecdotes and perhaps a dash of urban legend—are bountiful. One has truck and trailer dealers getting equipment with a variety of tire brands and then calling each other to trade and match up;

another has a tire supplier telling the trailer OEM to take its entire 2005 order now or get nothing; while still another tale describes how tire company X tells trailer company Y that they'll be cut off in six months. Period.

As *Today's Trucking* reported extensively last year, parts and component suppliers—tiremakers included—are at full capacity, and the appetite of other foreign markets for raw materials is driving North American manufacturing costs higher, taxing the ability of assembly lines to ramp up, and squeezing availability for the end user.

"We have seen a very high increase in demand for tires in the aftermarket and in the OE market," says Clark Johnson, commercial OE



RUBBED OUT: Tire availability, like so many other parts and components, has been tight due to global market demands.

ches



International CXT

account executive for Bridgestone Firestone. "Like other parts and component suppliers, we have experienced heavy cost increases for the raw material. Natural rubber has increased

dramatically over the past few years, and the cost of crude oil affects our manufacturing costs, not to mention the cost of steel and other things."

Bridgestone's North American plants are operating at full capacity, and Johnson admits it's getting hard for the industry to keep up. "It's nice to be able to sell everything you make, but it's not easy to be able to make everything you could sell."

Still, while tiremakers acknowledge that global raw-material demand is squeezing supply in our own backyard, most deny a widespread problem exists.

Don't tell that to Manac Canada President Charles Dutil, the only one of several trailer OEM officials that agreed to comment.

"Absolutely," said Dutil when asked if his Quebec-based company is experiencing difficulties getting tires. And he's got some fightin' words for those who insist it all has to do with manufacturing capacity.

"When a tiremaker says 'I'm limiting my sales to you, but if you need tires here are the names of some of our distributors, you can get them there,' it's not because they run out of tires, it's

MOVE OVER HUMMER: There isn't a pick-up or SUV around that can compete for road space with International Truck & Engine's new CXT.

The CXT—short for commercial extreme truck—is built from the same platform as the truckmaker's dump, snowplow, and other severe-service machines. While aimed at the commercial market, the company says the truck will make a statement for anybody wanting to dwarf today's SUVs.

At 21.5 feet long, the CXT is about 4-1/2 feet longer than the new Hummer H2 pickup, and about 2 inches longer than the F-350 Crew Cab. At over 9 feet high, the CXT towers not just above most trucks, but over the tallest players in the NBA too.

It hauls three times the payload of consumer pickups, has all-wheel drive, uses air brakes, and offers tilt-bed capability. The truck features the International DT 466 diesel with 220 hp and 540 lb ft. of torque. It's mated to an Allison 2000 Series automatic transmission. Its crew cab seats five and can be customized to the owner's needs.

While it doesn't expect to make a big splash in the consumer market off the bat, Navistar International has begun marketing the vehicle to the general public. One thing to keep in mind: It sells for about \$115,000 US, fully loaded. So Bay Street types looking to impress their friends may want to find a load to haul on the way into work.



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because they want to re-focus their sales through their distribution network instead of selling direct to OEs," he says without hesitation. "Tire makers were probably overcommitted to OEs for a while and they realize today they were not maximizing their margins this way. They have a better margin in selling to distributors instead of OEs."

That theory is quickly brushed off by Michelin North America Marketing Manager Ralph Beaveridge. While some tiremakers may be fed up with trailer and truck manufacturers buying tires at OEM prices and then putting them out on the market, Beaveridge denies any systematic attempt, with Michelin at least, to eliminate that trade channel or



logbook

february **22-24** Clean Heavy Duty Vehicle Conference 2005, La

Quinta Resort, La Quinta, Calif. Presented by the American Trucking Associations, this event focuses on advanced transportation technologies and fuels for heavy-duty vehicles (trucks, buses, on-road, non-road). Contact: Susan Romeo at 626/744-5686 or click www.truckline.com

27-March 1

AmeriQuest 2005 Transportation Industry Symposium, Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort, Sunny Isles Beach, Fla. The AmeriQuest-sponsored symposium brings together executives from private fleets, truckload common carriers, and truck rental and leasing companies for a high-level business agenda. Contact: Frank Daley at 888-999-6957 or go to www.ameriquescorp.com

march **3-5** The Work Truck Show 2004,

Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore. Held in conjunction with the National Truck Equipment Association annual convention, the event includes more than 30 educational sessions, the latest work truck equipment from Classes 1-8 displayed by 450 exhibitors. Contact: 1-800/441-6832, or www.ntea.com



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restrict availability.

“What is happening really is not a big mystery,” he says. “We build our inventories, plan our production, and manage our costs based on our forecasts. Now the market in 2004 was up over 20 per cent versus what we forecast. To increase tire production over what the current capacity is, takes two to three years of advanced notice. You can’t just flip a switch.”

Beaveridge maintains that Michelin has not had a problem fulfilling its customers’ orders over the last year, although he admits that an overnight boost for some customers isn’t going to happen.

“I can’t say that if they ask for two extra tires they won’t get them. What I’m saying is if we weren’t a primary supplier and they’re buying, say, 20 tires a month, and now come to us and ask for 150, well, the bottom line is, no, we’re not in a position to do that,” Beaveridge says.

“Can we send 24 instead of 20? Chances are we could

if they’re available. But we have planned our production based on the demand shared with our customers in advance.”

Asked if some trailer OEs are now paying for lack of loyalty to the tiremakers over the years, Dutil became slightly annoyed. “I cannot comment for other trailer manufacturers, but Manac for the last 10 years bought 80 per cent of the tires we installed from one main supplier,” he says. “We changed our suppliers in 2003, but overall Manac is very loyal to its suppliers.”

HOS

18-Hour Window Closed

Who says things move slow in this industry? Almost as quickly as it tried to jam it through the backdoor, the Canadian Trucking Alliance, (CTA) in a surprising reversal, announced it’s dropping a proposal for what amounts to an 18-hour working window for Canadian drivers.

That means the 18-hour issue will likely die before

Transport Canada publishes its final hours-of-service proposal.

The intention of the 11th-hour move by the CTA to modify the current Canadian HOS proposal was to give drivers an additional two hours of off-duty time within the workday to prevent delays from impinging on a driver’s ability to complete his day’s work. The additional two hours, if used, would have extended a driver’s workday from 16 hours (which now includes the 14 hours of on-duty time and the possible use of two discretionary hours by drivers for breaks, delays) to 18 hours—hence the term “18-hour window.”

While it’s said that regulators weren’t originally keen on the 18-hour proposal, the CTA took their case to Transport Minister Jean-C. Lapierre, who allegedly put his weight behind the plan and directed Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (Transport Canada’s regulatory body) to work on it.

But subsequent publicity



TIME’S UP: It’s all but over for the CTA’s 18-hour window plan.

wrongly suggesting that drivers would be forced to drive for 18 hours a day when in fact allowable behind-the-wheel hours would not change from 13 took its toll. Unions, anti-truck lobby groups, and the general public polled by national survey firms, all spoke out against the plan.

Moreover, an expert scientific panel commissioned by the CCMTA as well as driver focus groups gathered by the CCMTA, overwhelmingly opposed the 18-hour plan.

The CCMTA's final report reveals support for the current HOS proposal, but not the suggested 18-hour window as put forth by CTA.

It also notes that most of the focus-group drivers had never heard of the 18-hour proposal until questioned.

As *Today's Trucking.com* exclusively reported in December, the proposal fared no better in the expert panel review, which stated that "the (proposal) is not consistent with the 24-hour day, which was a core, scientifically

"There are only 24 hours in the day. If there were more hours they'd simply be wasted." — NLITA president Jon Summers

supported recommendation of both the Canadian and U.S. expert panels."

Although he denied the CCMTA's expert panel played any role in the CTA's decision, CEO David Bradley did say that the media's handling of the issue, as well as the lack of support among driver groups and unions, is what cracked the 18-hour window. "Absolutely we're disappointed," he told *Today's Trucking*. "We still think it was a good idea. It

arose from discussions we've had over the last few years with stakeholders that were concerned with being penalized if they took more than the prescribed amount of rest time.

"But at the end of the day it became clear the support was not there in a variety of quarters for a variety of reasons. So rather than hold (the current HOS proposal) up any further, we said 'lets get on with it.'"

Several driver and owner-operator groups taking part in CCMTA's focus sessions are relieved that the 18-hour plan is all but dead. Most insisted that the plan would have given a bigger window for shippers to hold up drivers without compensation.

"Building in 'flexibility' doesn't address unpaid delay time, which is the real issue here," Owner-Operator's Business Association of Canada (OBAC) Executive Director Joanne Ritchie said. "The truck driver has been absorbing inefficiencies in the supply chain for

decades—why do we want to perpetuate bad custom and practice, rather than work toward positive economic change?"

Jon Summers of the Newfoundland and Labrador Independent Truckers Association echoed that position. He added that although drivers would not be driving more, the extra two-hours would still tax the driver's ability to manage his day. "No matter how you look at it, there are only 24



HOOVED OFF: While Bush's border reopening plan was still a go at press time, the March 7 schedule is being threatened by U.S. anti-trade groups.

CP Photo

hours in a day. If there were more hours, they would simply be wasted by poor management, and become more unbillable hours in a driver's logbook," he said.

Bradley says he isn't too surprised that some drivers couldn't see the issue the same way CTA did, and even questioned if the groups truly represented the opinion of most Canadian drivers and owner-ops. "I never expect uniformity among drivers on anything just as I don't expect uniformity with carriers on every issue," he says.

Agri-trucking Not Now Mad Cow

Canadian cattle haulers and beef industry workers are having a cow after two

Alberta cattle in as many weeks were found to be infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)— otherwise known as mad cow disease.

That brings the number of homegrown cattle diagnosed with the brain-wasting disease to four—including one originating in Alberta but found in Washington State December 2003, as well as the original Alberta cow, which sparked a 19-month border closure to live cattle exports seven months before in May 2003.

It remained unclear as *Today's Trucking* went to press how the latest case would affect the U.S.'s plan to reopen the border on March 7, 2005 to live cattle under 30 months of age.

While the U.S.





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A Knock at the Window

right turn *The CTA usually does a lot of good work. But this time it gave some real ammunition to its critics. By Marco Beghetto*

Other than my short stint in a big daily newsroom, this industry has the highest collection of cynics per capita I've ever witnessed.

Believe me, I can roll my eyes with the best of them, but one bandwagon I've never jumped on is the knee-jerk dismissal of regional and national carrier associations by non-member fleets and independent truckers. While I'm quite aware not every Canadian Trucking Alliance project benefits all the industry all the time, you can't deny that some things could be a lot worse—especially U.S. border policy—if not for CTA's lobbying efforts.

That said, the CTA really gave the cynics fodder this winter when in a two-month span they first developed, and then dropped their pursuit of a proposal which would have increased a driver's daily workday from 16 to 18 hours under the new upcoming hours-of-service rules.

The story goes that the last-minute proposal was supposedly in the bag—alleged to have had the full support of the transport minister after being reassured of industry-wide demand. The truth is, it was tough to tell what industry really wanted. CTA looked to avoid, as CTA CEO David Bradley later described in an interview, a public debate within the industry.

Then two things happened: The mainstream media picked up on the story, mis-

representing the issue somewhat by describing it as something that would force drivers to be behind the wheel for 18 hours. The public, not fully understanding the plan, was to say the least, not happy about sharing the road with "overworked" truck drivers. Then opposing feedback started to roll in from drivers and owner-op associations through focus groups conducted by CCMTA—

"Unfortunately, the 18-hour window would have been seen as a get-out-of-jail-free card instead of what it was designed for"

which, it's rumoured, was not keen about implementing this new amendment at the 11th hour anyway.

Now, were those sessions an accurate barometer for where drivers are on this issue? I can't say. But with only a few months left until the inking of the final HOS plan, this small, but surprisingly loud, opposition is what we got.

I personally think CTA and most of its upper brass had the proper intentions. But this proposal was a fools' game from the start. While the CTA was correct to point out that the plan would not force additional driving, the main argument from driver groups like OBAC should be

well taken: that 18 hours on duty—made up of driving, waiting, or cat-napping—is still a long and taxing day.

Moreover, the extra hours, the truckers argued, may act as a disincentive for shippers to turn trucks around faster, knowing drivers have an extra two hours of "flexibility." The problems at shipping yards need to be tackled head-on, they say, not covered with this 18-hour Band Aid.

Some industry pundits have categorically dismissed this theory, saying that carriers should be compensating drivers for that time through surcharges, and if they aren't, maybe drivers should move on. Great idea. How come drivers haven't thought of that?

Look, *Today's Trucking* has documented the evolution of profit, driver pay and lifestyle taking place in this industry more than anyone (see this month's feature on page 30), but we're still not where we need to be.

While the carrier-shipper relationship is maturing, the shippers and consignees that haven't "gotten it" by now, are more likely to see the 18-hour window as a get-out-of-jail-free card rather than what it was designed for. Anyone who thinks those guys and the kinds of carriers that cradle them no longer have a significant grip on our largely uninformed driver pool, needs to shelve the rose-coloured glasses for a while.

Now back to the cynics for a second. Some say that after

going straight to the Minister for support on this issue, the CTA may have burned some political capital when the bottom dropped out from the proposal. Bradley scoffed at the suggestion. "I don't think that CTA can ever be faulted for doing what it believes is right for the industry," he said. "Going about it in the proper way, subjecting it to a rigor and peer review, and then knowing when to gracefully back away, is what wins you political capital."

Time will tell. But there are other ripples from this pond that should be addressed. First, while no one would say so publicly, there's talk the 18-hour issue pushed the final HOS proposal back several months.

Also, in the days after the media began reporting on this issue, I was doing some headline scanning and noticed that for the first time in years a release by the anti-truck, railway-funded lobby group CRASH made it into a huge chunk of Canadian newspapers. Capitalizing on the media's pack mentality for any big story, CRASH—which has been largely marginalized by a media education campaign by CTA—was made relevant again almost overnight. Let's hope it was a one-time thing and the media has had its fill of sensational sources. ▲

Marco Beghetto is the associate editor of *Today's Trucking*. He can be reached at 416/614-5821, or marco@todaystrucking.com.



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Department of Agriculture held firm to the scheduled date after the December 2004 BSE discovery—saying that officials factored in the possibility of future mad cow cases when making the decision to lift the ban—it did not immediately reiterate its backing of the plan when the latest cow was found 10 days later. “As always, protection of public and animal health is our top priority,” the agency said. “The result of our investigation and analysis will be used to evaluate appropriate next steps in regard to the minimal risk rule published last week,” the USDA said in a statement.

The back-to-back cases immediately deflated some of the optimism sparked by the Bush Administration’s long-awaited announcement to end the 19-month border shutdown of live cattle shipments.

Some Canadian beef workers don’t think the government will be able to withstand mounting opposition from U.S. cattle farmers and protectionist interests who are demanding Bush abandon his promise to open the border. In mid-January the United Stockgrowers filed a federal lawsuit against the government in an attempt to stop the March 7 opening.

Keith Horsburgh, owner of Brooks, Alta.-based Grace Cattle Carriers and president of the Alberta Livestock Carriers Association, says it’s déjà vu all over again. “I always get accused of being the eternal optimist but I’m very pessimistic about this. This should put a good dent in things,” he told *Today’s*

heard on the Street

■ **ATTENTION! SPECTRA INC.**, a designer and manufacturer of brake stroke indicating systems and air brake diagnostic tools, announced recently the appointment of retired **Canadian Brigadier General Ernest Beno** to its newly created industry advisory board. “We are looking forward to benefiting from General Beno’s military experience and insights into the needs of the Canadian Forces for reliable and safe operating equipment,” said Andrew Malion, chairman of Spectra Inc. www.spectra-ssa.com

■ **PACCAR** is contributing \$1 million to the American Red Cross—Tsunami Relief Fund to help humanitarian efforts for those hit by the Indian Ocean Tsunami. “The tragedy has had a terrible impact throughout Asia and the east coast of Africa,” said Marc C. Pigott, the OEM’s chairman and CEO. “All PACCAR employees worldwide send their prayers and support to the families impacted by the devastation.” www.paccar.com

■ **ARMOUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS’ ATLANTIC CANADA** courier services subsidiary has changed its name. City Wide Courier has announced it will change its name to **ARMOUR COURIER SERVICES** to better reflect its growing customer base in the Atlantic region. www.armour.ca

Trucking. “I would imagine they might now go back to politics instead of science. If they paid attention to science in the first place, the border would have been opened a long time ago.”

However, he’s hoping U.S. President George Bush reaffirms his commitment to the border opening initiative.

“All we can hope for is that because this is a directive from the president of the United States, it carries a fair bit of clout,” he says.

“Hopefully (U.S. anti-trade interests) would have a pretty good fight on their hands if they want to step on the president’s toes.”

But even if live exports are allowed on schedule, Horsburgh doesn’t think there’ll be a mad dash for the border. Any cattle haulers still alive have been forced to diversify, becoming more dependent on the Canadian market as well as other sectors than on U.S. business. Moreover, the

■ In an attempt to make bigger footprints in the U.S. LTL market, **CONCORD TRANSPORTATION** of Toronto has signed a strategic partnership with Duluth, Ga.-based Saia Inc. Concord, which was recently sold by Clarke Inc. to Andlauer Transportation Services, provides LTL and TL services through a network of both Canadian and U.S. terminals, warehouses and facilities.

www.concordtransportation.com

■ **TRANSPORT ROBERT**, a division of Quebec-based Groupe Robert, has opened a brand new 195,000-square-foot facility in Mississauga, Ont. The facility will employ 200 administrative, warehousing, and driving personnel and has a fully-paved 19-acre yard. www.robert.ca



Claude Robert

■ **KENWORTH TRUCK** has named new members to its 2005 Kenworth Service Council, including two Canadian dealers. **Frank Chiarizia** of Inland Kenworth, Burnaby, B.C., and **Jody MacDonald** of Tandet Kenworth, Kingston, Ont. were the two Canadians that made the council, which consists of leading service managers from Kenworth dealerships in the United States and Canada. www.kenworth.com

industry doesn’t have the drivers or equipment to gear up in time.

“You’re not going to see hundreds of trucks looking to get cattle over the border even if it does open March 7,” he says. “There’s such a stigma in the livestock hauling sector because of the uncertainty of what’s going to happen. Until we see something written in stone and things actually start moving again, I don’t think you’re going see that trust yet.” ▲

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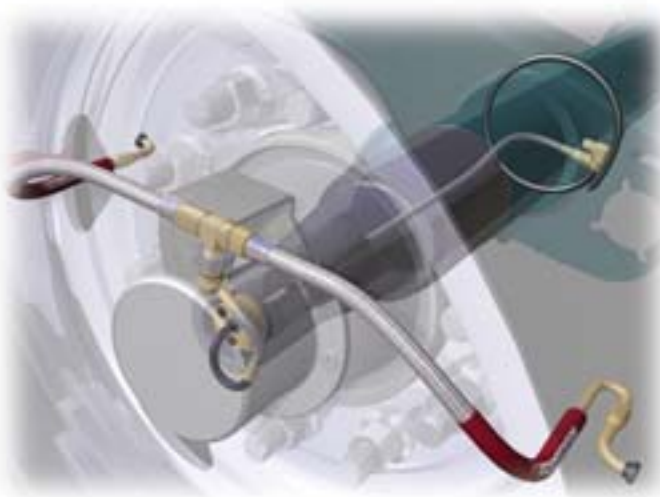
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A Failure to Communicate

driver's side *How to keep your drivers on side.* By Jim Park

I recently spent an afternoon with a small fleet owner, Brian Taylor of Liberty Linehaul in Ayr, Ont., who wanted to know how he could entice drivers—good drivers—into his operation. He shares a problem with most fleets these days in that he can't attract the talent he needs to move all the freight he has. Taylor might be a bit unique because he's in the LTL business, a field that drivers don't take to readily, but his pay package makes the extra effort more than worth the driver's time. He has several company drivers earning in excess of 70 grand a year, and many more pulling down considerably more than \$60,000.

I know of another small LTL operator that pays owner-ops more than a buck-fifty a mile, while requiring nothing more than payment of the base plate, and he's no more successful than Taylor in attracting owner-ops.

At the same time, I get more calls than I care to talk about from drivers complaining about being screwed out of fuel surcharges or demurrage time, losing their holdback to a bunch of bogus charges, or being left high and dry by an insurance policy that won't pay but about 75 percent of the bluebook value for a wrecked truck.

Taylor's overarching question was why do drivers continue to work for lousy carriers when there are good jobs going begging? We

spent four hours debating the question that afternoon and failed to come to a conclusion, but among the suspects: marketing, education, employee support, and honesty, among others.

We talked about how carriers spend millions of dollars on software packages to track driver performance and prescribe appropriate mileage to pay drivers while one of the biggest irritants for drivers remains getting shorted out of a few miles here and there by the difference between shortest and practical routes on the mileage program. Taylor pays hub miles and works with his drivers in planning out their own routes.

Rather than relying on the software, he encourages his drivers to think on their feet and plan deliveries according to schedules, etc., not simply a practical route. Often, he says, drivers faced with traffic congestion or an early closing will choose a route other than the recommended one to get the freight delivered. Come payday, his drivers are not short-changed for running off route, instead, they are rewarded for using their heads.

Taylor's approach sends a more positive message than fleets that insist on paying shortest mileage in a situation where it's clearly not the most practical route. Drivers react

negatively to that kind of management, and given their choices today, it's incumbent on fleets to look at what they can do to minimize the irritants. Why risk losing a good driver by shaving 20 or 30 miles off a trip because the computer says there's a shorter way?

Taylor says, and I have to agree, that many of his competitors just don't want the drivers to know how to make money. Or how poor their pay system is, how one-sided the contract is, or how the insurance policy is stacked against them.



A good driver today pretty well has his or her pick of where to work, yet if you could spend a day answering my telephone you'd come away shaking your head at what you hear from drivers. Sure, some are whiners, impossible to please, but many are guilty of nothing more than being poorly informed. They don't know how to make money.

I wonder how many carriers have ever spent a day with their drivers talking about cost per mile or dollars per hour, explaining how the pay package works so the driver can take advantage of all the earning opportunities?

If I were a carrier today hoping to attract the best of the best drivers, I'd sure be out there marketing my fleet as a place where drivers can make a good living, and I'd be explaining exactly how my pay package worked for them, not against them. And I sure wouldn't be spending money on software that creates problems: I'd be using it to my driver's advantage. There's only so many of the good ones out there—why drive them off to your competitors? ▲

A former owner-operator, Jim Park is the editor of *highwaySTAR* magazine. Reach him at 416/614-5811 or jim@todaystrucking.com.

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MANAGING PEOPLE, TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS, AND SAFETY



Uniform Appeal

branding *How clothes make the man richer. By Peter Carter*

Bruce Campbell treats tow-truck driving so seriously he has his crew wear uniforms. They look like park rangers—or peace officers—and Campbell says the uniform makes the drivers more respectable, productive and loyal.

Campbell operates a 15-truck fleet called Standish Towing&Recovery out of Banff and he is indeed a professional. He's been rescuing folks in the 2,500-square-mile Banff National Park since the '70s and has found himself performing winching feats that would make mere mortal tow-truck drivers cower. Like the time he used a team of horses to dislodge a car that some hooligans had swiped and left abandoned near a river bank. The thieves had joyridden the car down a mountain-bike trail and it flipped at the bottom, right beside the river.

It was impossible to get a truck down there, so Campbell rented a team of sure-footed horses to descend the slope and

upend the vehicle. (Now that's horsepower!) He then rescued it from the other side of the river after towing it over the water from the far side.

In the wintertime, he gets about 200 calls a day on average, and in the years since he began towing, he's seen all manner of rescues. But the one thing they have in common is the people involved are emotionally upset. Hence the uniforms.

"I thought, these people are already scared enough. And I wouldn't want my wife and kids picked up by some greasy lookin' tow-truck driver with a dog sittin' in the passenger seat of his truck," Campbell says.

"We're skilled tradesmen and we need to remember that we are in front of the public."

Campbell is indeed skilled. A few years ago, he was named one of North America's top 10 towers by Wreckmasters, a training and certification group. He was also one of the first tow-operators in the province to

ROADSIDE DISTRACTIONS

WHAT TO DO IF YOU COME ACROSS AN MVC

BY TT STAFF

It's winter at its harshest. So what do you do if you happen upon an accident? We asked a few experts—Mary Ann O'Neill-Park of the St. Catherine's Ont.-based transport safety consulting company Incident Recovery Training Group, and Jesse MacNevin, a Toronto-based paramedic who has seen more mvc's than most people.

"Use your vehicle to protect yourself—secondary accidents caused by panic and distraction aren't uncommon," says MacNevin.

Park well off the traveled roadway, lights on, so that your vehicle is between traffic and the patients. If you have flares use them.

Call 9-11. Be specific as possible with your report.

Assess the scene for hazards before you approach. "There could be falling rocks, fire, weather," says O'Neill-Park. Spilled lubricants can be especially dangerous.

Count the people in, under, and all around the car and rank them based on injuries and condition. Turn off the engines and electrics of any damaged vehicles, and be cautious of other engines due to carbon monoxide.

Reassure everybody that help is on its way. Stay on the scene to answer any questions the pros, when they arrive, might have. "The more information you give them when they arrive, the faster they can get to the job at hand," she says.

Comfort the injured, physically and psychologically until help arrives.

"Keep them where they are, but get them as warm as possible," says MacNevin. If people are walking at the scene, help them into your truck.

equip his team with traffic-control equipment, so motorists will be alerted when a recovery is in process.

As for the nifty uniforms with the crisp stripe down the trousers, Donna Pierson of the National Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Dealers, agrees. Customers, staff and Campbell's bottom line all benefit.

"When you see somebody arrive in a uniform like that," she says, "you get the feeling that this person is ready, reliable and well trained. He's also accountable." If a fleet owner's having retention problems and part of that problem includes the drivers feeling they don't get the respect they deserve, Pierson says, a uniform can go a long way to alleviating the problem.

SUIT YOURSELF

Over-the-road drivers need different uniforms than day-cab operators or urban couriers. For one thing, some uniforms get slept in, so the material has to be more versatile. There are other issues to think about, but if you want to know more about outfitting your people, the folks at NAUMD would be glad to refer you to a reputable manufacturer who'll cut the cloth you're looking for.



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Pierson recommends more fleets invest in uniforms for drivers. "They'll get better treatment at loading docks, offices, wherever they go.

"Especially for smaller fleets, a uniform is a way of immediately saying 'we're as good as the big guys.'"

Campbell's uniforms are colour coordinated to match the paintjobs on his fleet of tow trucks, and Pierson says that's indicative of how a fleet owner can make uniforms do double duty. "The right uniforms are advertisements for your company." ▲

How not to use chains

winter driving *You can't be a good Samaritan unless you stay out of the ditch yourself.*

A 5-point guide to smart chains usage. By G.D. Swain



Long haulers who work the mountains already know that tire chains are their best cold-weather friends. If they're used correctly, that is. If you have trucks headed for the hills this winter, arm them adequately. Standard issue is four triples sets of chains. Triples cover both tires on a dual assembly. And get your people to practise putting the chains on their

rigs before they head for the hills.

Remember: There are no shortcuts when working with chains. They must be mounted properly to function effectively, and if they break, the flailing links can do serious damage.

Here are some common mistakes made by drivers, mostly because they are just in too much of a hurry.

- ❶ Foregoing chains because you think you can make the hill without them. Driving past an open "Chains Required" sign in B.C. is a violation of section 125 of the Motor Vehicle Act that could result in a fine and two demerit points.
- ❷ Mounting only two triples rather than all four after you've spun out. You'll likely tear them to shreds trying to lift off.
- ❸ Lifting off too quickly on a steep grade. This can also tear four triples to shreds. The trick is to not spin your tires with the chains mounted. Try rolling back a bit into a jackknife before you lift off, starting out sideways across the road rather than straight up the hill.
- ❹ Driving too fast or too far. Snow chains are not designed for highway speed or to be run on dry pavement. If you can see space between the crosslinks and the tire tread because centrifugal force is flailing the chains away from your tires, you're going too fast. Remove the chains as soon as it is safe to do so.
- ❺ Not getting the chains tight enough or relying on bungee cords to make them look tight, rather than doing it right in the first place. This is definitely the most common mistake drivers make. ▲

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Think Like a Thief

safety dept. *Improve your screening processes and reduce load thefts.*

By Raymond Mercuri

Now more than ever, a good driver-screening process is critical to your business' anti-theft efforts. The prevailing driver shortage is making fleets more vulnerable to bad hires, and identify theft is skyrocketing across North America. What's not to understand?

According to the FBI, there were an estimated 2.5 million identity thefts in the US in 2003, up from an estimated 200,000 two years earlier. If we scale the numbers for Canada, we might have upwards of 250,000 in Canada.

US statistics showed that approximately 40 percent of load thefts happened during a new driver's first two weeks of employment. So, as part of your regular driver hiring practices, you have to ask yourself whether your next hire is a potential thief.

If you're not careful, your next hire could be heading out in your brand new Pete with a full load of consumer electronics, riding off into the sunset never to be heard from again.

If a qualified driver walks through your door looking for work, would it be possible to have that person behind the wheel in as little as 48 hours? I know many carriers that do put new hires in their trucks right off the bat—right at the time when employers should be most

critical about their background—all because of the prevailing driver shortage.

Granted, you would be hard pressed to turn away anyone with a well-documented résumé; an employment history noting a list of quality past employers; copies of written references from



past employers; a criminal background search; and a clean driver's abstract.

But if an applicant seems too good to be true, beware. That's when a good screening process will help you properly qualify new applicants.

How? Think like a thief. How could I concoct a life to impress a prospective employer.

First, I'd provide a list of the quality carriers that have

supposedly employed me.

You'd need to ask yourself if I really did work for this list of industry leaders for the past 20-plus years, some of which may have—conveniently—gone out of business.

Did I provide you with proper company names, phone numbers and specific people to contact directly? Or did I simply provide you with a name and phone number of a criminal colleague who will provide you with a concocted reference?

Without direct access to a company's HR or safety department, what can you do? For one thing, you can ask a driver to provide a written reference on company letterhead, or even copies of T-4 slips. This is your one reliable way to confirm the driver's past employment.

Also, did I provide you with a copy of an out-of-province driver's license? Never accept an out-of-province CDL without checking its validity.

Did I provide you with original copies of my driver abstract and criminal-record search documents? If you don't have an "originals only" policy, you should. You should also make it policy to pull the commercial-driver abstract

and request that I provide you with a letter from my private car insurer to review my driving history.

Immigrant applicants should provide an employer with an Interpol criminal-record search. A local police search is sufficient for a Canadian citizen but doesn't provide enough history for a landed immigrant.

Hire only applicants that your HR department can reference properly. Any driver that provides only the names and phone numbers of past O/O employers should be considered unacceptable. The driver must be known to the carrier who contracted the O/O.

Ask for explanations for any employment gaps. You never know if an employment gap reflects a driver suspension or even jail time.

Speaking of which, be sure to question any candidate who indicates a past license suspension or criminal conviction. I have seen many applications over the years pass a front-line supervisor who simply missed this type of detail. Anyone hiring a new driver should read every word of a candidate's application and résumé and request that missing details be justified or provided before moving any further in the hiring process. ▲

Raymond Mercuri writes about safety and training for *Today's Trucking*. He can be reached at raymondm@markel.ca.

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April in January

money matters A pre-tax checklist. By Steve Mulligan

The pressure—to sort through receipts, meet deadlines, make deductions that will pass muster with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and otherwise jump through hoops as big as your trucks—is on.

The thing is, tax time isn't April. It's now, while there's still time to make decisions that can save you serious money and reduce the chance of an audit.

Every year, we give our clients an extensive checklist to help them assemble the things we need to make tax filing simple, clear, quick, and as audit-proof as possible. Space doesn't permit publishing the full list, but here's an overview:

1 All receipts for last year, including bank statements, credit card statements and income statements.

Remember, you record income when it's earned and expenses when they're incurred. The accrual method is what you should be using, not the cash method. Not sure? Ask!

2 Your 2003 Assessments. Better still, sign up for CRA's "My Account," to view your personal income tax, Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), and GST/HST credit information online. Go to www.cra-arc.gc.ca/eservices/tax/individuals/myaccount/menu-e.html#1. You'll need information from last year's taxes to log in.

3 Details about any new truck, trailer, and other major capital purchases or disposals during the year. Provide copies of bills of sale; finance or lease agreements; and any re-writes to loans or leases and fees paid. If you



traded equipment, discuss the implications if you changed from a purchase agreement to a lease agreement.

4 Information about income fluctuations in the last quarter.

5 Information necessary to calculate your travel claim. Here's what you must be recording throughout the

year in order to support a reasonable claim for expenses incurred while on the road: number of days in the United States; number of days in the Maritimes; number of days in Canada; number of days less than 10 hours; number of days 12 hours or more but returned home; number of days 12 hours or more and stayed away overnight.

6 Information related to your home ownership, mortgage interest, taxes, insurance, etc.

7 Your "service vehicle log" detailing the use of a personal vehicle for business, with dates, miles, and destinations.

8 Any other income such as RRSP withdrawals. ▲

Steve Mulligan is vice-president of TFS Group, a Waterloo, Ont., company that provides accounting, permits, logbook compliance, and other business services for truckers. For information, call 519/886-8070 or visit www.tfsgroup.com.

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FIGHT SOOT. SAVE MONEY.



The economic-related aftershocks that followed Sept. 11 created a fork in the road for truckers. Carriers had a choice: They could either swallow and perhaps drown in the so-called perfect storm of insurance and fuel-price spikes; newly mandated emission controls; shrinking manpower pool; and a pile of overlapping, sometimes arbitrary, U.S. security regulations—or they could do something they haven't done in years. They could ask their customers to pay for it.

Just over a year ago, the CEO of one of Canada's

accepted 5 per cent margins with a nod and a smile. But it did. He told them that if customers didn't comply, the recourse was simple: Fire them.

It became clear that these carriers—from 15-truck flatbed fleets to 500-unit dryvan carriers—weren't applauding the sermon as a new awakening. They were already watching other carriers and owner-operators flip upside down—their fear of causing tremors with customers ironically pushing them out of business. They too were noticing hidden opportunity in an emerging capacity crunch not seen since deregulation. Some of those carriers in the room with

MAKING THE PIECES FIT

largest for-hire carriers stood up at the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) convention in front of colleagues, competitors, and perhaps even future employees, and told them all to raise their rates or risk being bought out by companies like his—maybe even squeezed out of the industry entirely.

"If you're not passing these increases on, then you're missing one of the best opportunities I've ever seen in my 37-year career," Stan Dunford, CEO of Woodstock, Ont.-based Contrans Income Fund, insisted evangelically that day.

What he said next wouldn't typically get a standing ovation from an industry that has historically

The time has come to
cash in on the current
capacity crunch.

BY MARCO BEGHETTO

more. It was their turn to make some money and they need not apologize for it.

Roll the calendar forward a year to another OTA executive briefing, with another panel of natural-born industry leaders. The issues haven't really changed—tight capacity, rates, drivers, and the opportunities that come with each are still trucking gospel—but this time there're more parishioners nodding their heads in the pews.

Dunford that day had already begun to leverage their new buying power—albeit slowly and quietly. What they were applauding instead was Dunford's message that they didn't need to tiptoe any-



Run S

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DUAL PERSONALITIES

The notion that capacity is mainly regarded as a truckload issue may slowly be changing. Not known to be in direct competition with the railways, LTL carriers have traditionally relied on intermodal transportation to boost their own capacity. But with the railways already operating beyond their own limits, and with services becoming more unreliable, the tracks are becoming a less viable alternative these days—putting capacity front and centre for LTL too.

Moreover, as the industry continues to mature and this swing in the free market begins to settle, freight trends between some major sectors are evolving, says Russell Gerdin, founder and president of Coralville, Iowa-based Heartland Express—one of the most consistently profitable truckload carriers in North America.

“Guess who’s now getting back in the truckload business?” Gerdin asks his Canadian brethren rhetorically. “LTL is. Why? Because there’s freight available for

them. It’s that simple.”

Like parent U.S. LTL giant Yellow Roadway, which recently reported its truckload business has jumped by over 20 percent, Winnipeg-based Reimer Express CEO Alan Robison admits LTL is picking up some excess freight that truckload operations don’t have the capacity to handle.

“Our truckload business has also increased, and that’s not freight we went looking for either,” he told Today’s Trucking in an interview. “We’ve found

that people who wouldn’t normally call us have been doing so this last year.”

Some of that freight shifting to other sectors is a result of truckload carriers who have begun shuffling their deck of customers, suggests Scott Johnston, president of the Yanke Group of Companies. “In our business we’ve tried to identify customers that are in synch with new HOS regulations, are committed not to have a detrimental effect on velocity, and [comply] with better accessorial



GOLDEN GAETZ
HOW NICE GUYS CAN STILL FINISH FIRST

“Yep,” Rick Gaetz was saying as he ramped onto the QEW near Toronto, “I can see a one of our trucks over on that far ramp.” If the driver only knew the boss was watching.

Gaetz is the CEO of Vitran Corp., and golden boy of Canadian trucking and he was talking to Today’s Trucking via cell-phone about his plans for 2005.

“We’re on record that we want to expand our American geography,” he said. The company that’s going to get the nod will be an LTL carrier operating somewhere in the American southeast, southwest, or along the west coast. It will have to be a profitable operation, Gaetz says, and if it meets the other criteria Vitran has set out, it can become part of his amazingly successful company. His top bidding price? Depends on the company’s results, but it could be somewhere in the \$40 million range, which is money raised last year through an equity offering.

Vitran’s key to success? “You have to perform financially.”

Gaetz says that once his company was trading successfully in the United States, which means once analysts started tracking the stock, Vitran could grow the way he wanted it to.

When the Nova Scotia-born father of five joined burgeoning Vitran a decade and a half ago as COO, the regional LTL outfit was doing about \$20 million a year. In 2003, a year after he was named CEO, revenues topped \$460 million, with the lion’s share coming from the U.S. Vitran has 15 terminals in Canada and about 55 in the U.S.

In November, Gaetz, who everyone agrees is first and foremost “a nice guy,” was named Canada’s top-performing CEO by National Post Business magazine, in its annual ranking of Canadian chief executive officers.

Brian Banks, who edits the magazine, says that Gaetz is a “classic reminder that

big-name CEO’s aren’t necessarily better.”

After measuring stock performance against compensation as well as corporate governance, Banks says “Gaetz came in as the most underpaid CEO of the 200 on our list. By our measure, he could increase his annual salary by eight-fold and still be full value for his pay.”

To determine whether a CEO was earning his or her keep, the editors took into account three factors: the person’s salary over the past three years (the average—\$3.7 million. Gaetz’s? \$533K); the company’s three-year average revenue; and the company’s three-year share-price return relative to its peers in the S&P/TSX sub-index. According to the magazine’s calculations, Rick Gaetz could have been earning upwards of \$6.5 million more and still deserving of every loonie. — Peter Carter

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Big pay hikes aren't just for the big boys. Jacques Dulude, owner of 18 truck AGD Verchères, has boosted driver salary to keep his best workers.

recapture,” Johnson says from Yanke’s Saskatoon head office. “As a result, we’ve had to move away from certain business, and that may be now going to LTL.”

Johnston is confident that the freight shift to LTL will not in any way erode the new rate standards that truckload carriers are now trying to build. “Given LTL carriers have a much different cost base platform to work from, the [business] flowing there is a positive because it would not be eroding our market rate structure but only be enhancing it,” he says.

Robinson accentuates the point, adding that Reimer, for one, is not actively trying to price traditional TL freight. “We handle it in the price structure we already have, which obviously means it’s going to be higher. But with the capacity constraints, customers at least at the moment, are agreeing to it.”

THE \$65,000 ANSWER

More than any other factor, drivers, or lack thereof, will continue to drive the questions surrounding capacity, and in fact

have redefined the term. It’s not availability of equipment or providers keeping a leash on transportation supply, but the pool of professional and stable manpower behind the wheel.

While steady demand and limited supply is undoubtedly driving up rates and making money for many carriers who have drivers at the moment, only a cynic would suggest that transport companies are perfectly comfortable maintaining the tight status quo for the long-term.

“Look, we’re going to have at least another good year of trucking because there’s no drivers,” Gerdin says. “But you better be out there getting your share of the rates and getting drivers for the future to ensure you’ll be here two years from now.”

Robison also warned against complacency, agreeing that carriers leveraging solely on capacity will pay a price down the road. “Those that take advantage of it and do nothing else are going to be in trouble,” he says. “Not looking for more drivers and increasing capacity every day is a dead end. That’s the business we’re in

and we better stay in that business.”

So the age-old question arises yet again: How does the industry get drivers? The only recourse, especially for truckload, is to show them the money, the panelists say.

But not only are carriers countering other competitive trades for reliable operators, they’re also rivaling other sectors within the industry. While team long-haul LTL fleets face many of the same recruitment hurdles as truckload, the flexible lifestyle and higher rates that are associated with a short to medium-haul regional LTL operation will continue to attract the handful of the most desirable drivers in the labour pool.

“[LTL] is saying it’s tough to get drivers, and look at what they’re paying,” warns Gerdin. “If that’s the case, can you imagine the mountain that we have to climb then? The guys that are going to even want to drive a truck are probably going to drive an LTL truck first, and they should.”

“In the past 10 months, we’ve raised rates 25 percent to truckload drivers, plus 7 cents a mile extra. Do you know how many drivers I’ve gained since Oct. 1?” Gerdin asks dryly. “Seventeen. You think I’m happy?”

If truckload wants its share of competent drivers, it needs to launch a new rate system that will eventually be more in line with regional-haul LTL, says Gerdin. He qualifies that by adding that in order to retain a decent workforce, the sector must boost pay close to US \$65,000—and “that’s just for the average guy.”

“You better not think of rates in terms of what you have to pay to attract drivers, but what you have to pay to keep them,” Gerdin says. “Then you have to go another step up to get new drivers. And when you do that, you’re going to run right into the wages of LTL, which is washing us all out. So now you have to go a third step.”

The industry has already begun seeing the initial stages of such a salary evolution, initiated by a wide variety of carriers.

Schneider National Inc., the largest truckload carrier in North America, has hiked pay for drivers and owner-operators by an average of US \$4,000 a year—making it the largest single increase in the company’s 70-year history. The new owner-operator contract increases line-haul rates to US \$.90 per mile plus a fuel surcharge.

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Hundreds of miles north of the border in Verchères, Que., Jacques Dulude, president of AGD Verchères, has aggressively launched his own competitive recruiting package. Twice the company increased driver pay last year, totalling 13 per cent—not a modest hike for a mixed TL and LTL carrier with only 18 trucks. “That was a risk that is paying back,” Dulude said. “The next step is to review the whole company’s benefits plan. Those [increases] have been a big help in competing in the market.”

Stan Dunford said at this year’s exec briefing that 2004 was the first time in his career in which he told the managers of Contrans’ subsidiary fleets to hike driver pay without preemptive consideration to customer rates.

“Our philosophy in each of the divisions was to tell the guys they can pay drivers and owner-operators anything they want.

Moreover, the fact that companies are finding it difficult to catch up to a host of new market costs will also keep the industry somewhat compacted. “Insurance, which shuns new or inexperienced companies, is perhaps the biggest factor,” says Gaetz, “but rising fuel costs, new technology, regulatory compliance, and the ever-changing engine, have also been prohibitive.”

So, what kinds of carriers are walking around with the bull’s eye on their back these days? Dulude insists it’s not companies like his. “For 52 years our structure has been simple,” he says. “We are a small carrier that operates good equipment, has low turnover, and stands out because we are flexible to adapt quickly to situations. That makes us a reliable carrier that customers specifically look for.”

[medium-sized] companies are vulnerable because it’s harder for them to attract those people. If they can’t get under the radar screen like smaller carriers, they may look to larger ones with those systems already in place and try to effect a hand-off.”

THE OR ROOM

While there seems to be a maturing in the trucker-shipper relationship, Dunford says much work still needs to be done in educating customers that the way the two industries make money is quite different. “How many times have customers said ‘look if I give you another 25 per cent in freight, how much lower can I expect the rate to be?’” Dunford asks. “Now that’s a guy who doesn’t understand how we make money in trucking or he wouldn’t say something like that.”

Those that have been able to reach customers, attain rate increases, and recoup accessorial charges, have generally seen their operating ratios come down from the traditional plateau of 95 per cent or so.


However, all the panelists at the executive briefing and carriers contacted by Today’s Trucking afterwards, stressed that this is no time to be sheepish about profit. “We shouldn’t be doing high-fives with 5 per cent margins and 95 OR,” says Johnston. “There’s no reason we shouldn’t have 10 per cent or more. That’s the message that needs to shake the very ground we as an industry walk on.”

The question about OR that every fleet owner operating in this new environment needs to ask himself is not how many trucks he has, but what he does with each and every one of them, says Gerdin, whose company achieved a remarkable operating ratio of 78 per cent last year.

“Common sense is that you don’t give that shipper another truck unless you get something for it,” he said to the group of Canadian truckers nodding in unison. “Operating ratio is about you, and totally you. If you let your sales force tell you how they have this great account and you need to go buy a new truck for it, well you got that thing in reverse.” He pauses.

“This isn’t very hard. It’s A to B and back, go collect, and hope you don’t have a wreck. That’s it.”

78 folks. Who’s going to argue? ▲



“In order to retain the guys we’ve got, we have to look at increases in advance of getting it from the customer.” — Stan Dunford

It doesn’t matter to me,” Dunford explained. “But here’s the catch: I’d say to them ‘you must go and get it from the customer first.’ Well I don’t need to go on about how that put the brakes on a lot of increases for a lot of years. Now for the first time, I changed that philosophy. In order to retain the guys we’ve got, we have to look at increases in advance of getting it from the customer.”

ARE YOU FOR SALE?

Consolidation, whatever forms it may take, will also continue to impact the future of capacity, says Rick Gaetz, CEO of Toronto LTL giant Vitran Corp.

Gaetz, who recently became the first trucking executive to crack the National Post Business Magazine’s list of top Canadian CEOs (see *Golden Gaetz*, page 34), suggests consolidation is in part being driven by the desire for carriers, especially in LTL, to spread costs across a broader landscape. As an example, he sighted the \$1 billion merger of LTL giants Yellow Corp. and Roadway, which created the world’s largest trucking powerhouse.

Gerdin agrees that there will always be a place in the truckload market for small, reliable carriers that are able to control their costs while servicing the heck out of their customers. That leaves then certain medium-sized carriers who can’t seem to find their place in the sandbox as targets for the largest growing fleets, he predicts.

“These [carriers] seem to have all the costs—safety, technology, and all the other departments that a large truckline has, but don’t quite have the revenue to [justify] it all,” Gerdin says. “Some companies are going to have to figure out how to retrench and get really good at it, or figure out how to get larger and spread their costs across the board.”

Attracting people with the skill-set to manage and understand all those layers can also make or break companies, adds Yank’s Scott Johnston.

“I think executive and senior leadership is going through a transition to more high-tech oriented people—experts in managing the risk scrutiny of insurance, fuel, and technology,” Johnston says. “Some



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Fuel- DUEL



Can natural gas and diesel get married and live happily ever after in the mid-range engines of your fleet?
Or are these hybrids even worth considering?

BY STEPHEN PETIT

California is often a bellwether for the rest of us. (Californians led on anti-smoking laws and automotive pollution-control devices, to cite two examples.) That's why it's in the interest of anyone who operates in the city—whether you're talking dumptrucks, refuse operations, construction or delivery vehicles—to pay close attention to what's going on out there in Arnold Schwarzeneggerland.

If nothing else, you might find out that it's time to consider the switch to alternative-fuel hybrid engines. Some left-coast fleets have been through the hybrid maze already and you can learn from their efforts.

A bit of background: Transport Canada and Environment Canada, the two agencies that regulate engine emissions in this country, walk in virtual lockstep with their American counterpart,

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. But the EPA has 900-pound gorillas of its own to deal with. One is the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD). The AQMD monitors pollution for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties, where smog and politics are equally thick.

In 2000 and 2001, the AQMD adopted so-called "clean fleet" rules, including seven measures requiring operators of transit buses, school buses, garbage trucks, airport shuttles and taxis, street sweepers, and heavy-duty utility trucks, to buy "clean-fueled" models when they replace vehicles or add to their fleets of 15 or more vehicles.

Almost 6,000 alt-fueled trucks were added to the region's fleets from 2002 to early 2004. Most of these are fueled by liquefied (LNG) or compressed natural gas (CNG).

The urgency has eased off, a bit. Last April, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the AQMD is not a state agency and has no authority to regulate privately held truck companies. So private California truckers are off the hook, for now.

But still, the time has come for fleet managers—and their

The Accelerating Power of Brakes

HINO BRINGS HYBRID MID-RANGE TO MARKET

Last Fall, the Japanese bus and truck manufacturer Hino Motors got out of the gate early and introduced a mid-range hybrid truck in the form of the 165 Hybrid 16,000 GVW conventional, powered by Hino's proprietary four-cyl, five-litre diesel.

Its hybrid character has nothing to do with alternative fuels but rather transferring braking power into electrical power and then using that to bolster the diesel during start ups.

According to statistics provided by the company, the system improved fuel economy between 14 and 27 percent, and the gains will be noticed if the truck were used in urban pick-up and delivery operations, which is Hino's most popular usage.

Even though Hino is the company that transferred the assembly of its North American production trucks to California from Japan last year and redesigned its popular cabover into a more North-American-friendly conventional model, Canadians and Americans won't be seeing the hybrid on our highways or side streets for a while yet.

The technology adds about \$11,000 to the price of the vehicle, so Hino officials say that until there are government subsidies in place to help North Americans purchase the vehicle, it will remain an Asian-market-only phenomenon.

In Japan, where local conditions dictate strict environmental standards, about 75 per cent of the \$11 K is covered by government subsidy.

Hino offers a complete line of medium duty trucks, supplying operators with class 4, 5, 6, and 7 mid-range (15,000 to 33,000 lbs. GVW) diesel trucks.

According to a report released by the market-trend analysts ABI Research, Hino's production model hybrid is unusual in that it's not retrofitting hybrid technology on to an existing platform but rather is producing a dedicated hybrid commercial design.

The ABI reports also states "hybrid trucks won't sell so much on the increased fuel economy appeal as they will on a discernable improvement in the total cost of ownership." — Peter Carter



comptrollers, purchasers, and maintenance guys—to decide whether alternative fuel vehicles are worth it.

Jeff Campbell is director, product marketing for Cummins Westport. The Vancouver-based company is a joint venture between Cummins, the diesel engine people, and Westport Innovations, a developer of technologies that allow diesel engines to operate on natural gas, propane, and hydrogen. It sells engines specially designed for alternative fuels manufactured by Cummins. "In order to succeed, natural-gas fueled engines have to stand on their own, without big incentives or laws that require them," says Campbell.

"What we are seeing is that in instances where there is heavy fuel use—we're talking refuse and transit markets—there will be an economic parity argument in 2007 and an economic advantage argument in 2010. And we include the cost of fueling infrastructure in that."

Natural gas engines are well beyond the demonstration phase, though the early stages did teach manufacturers a few important lessons.

"We had some real early adopters who, frankly, had a hard

Mid-range

time with their natural gas engines," Campbell says.

"The Toronto Transit Authority—a huge fleet and an ideal candidate for these engines—jumped in early but were using first-generation, mechanically controlled engines and had trouble. The word got out that the engines were unreliable. All our engines now are full-authority electronic. There's a huge improvement in performance, reliability, and operating cost." (To learn how these engines work, see Hybrid 101, below.)

United States. In many cases, the truck fleet supplies its own, meaning that natural gas is practical only for local operations.

However, the environmental benefits can't be ignored, especially when running a "green" fleet is seen as good business. Paul Gagnon, director of fleet operations for Waste Management, says each engine produces 50 per cent less NOx, 80 per cent less particulate matter, and 11 per cent less greenhouse gases. Furthermore, the California landfills where his trucks operate are capable of producing 800,000 gal-

350 parts per million (ppm) to 15 ppm. As a result, diesel engines will burn exceptionally clean, at levels that match natural gas.

However, truck makers estimate the new diesel engines will cost at least \$10,000 US more than they do today, with a loss of fuel economy. That's going to hurt, because reducing the sulphur content is expected to add anywhere from 5 to 25 cents per gallon to the price of diesel.

Campbell and others in the business believe the rising acquisition and operating costs of diesel engines combined with

HYBRID 101

HOW THE ALT-FUEL SYSTEM WORKS

The primary ingredient of natural gas is methane, which is not a "natural" diesel fuel due to its high octane and low cetane number. So in order to run on either liquefied natural gas (LNG) or compressed natural gas (CNG), diesel engines have to be adapted.

One option is to convert the engine from compression ignition to spark ignition using either a lean-burn or stoichiometric type of combustion. Spark-fired engines emit fewer particulates compared to diesels without particulate traps, especially stoichiometric types, which can use a three-way catalyst. The oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions are generally lower (lean-burn) or significantly lower than conventional diesel engines.

Direct-injection natural gas and dual-fuel natural gas engine use late-cycle direct injection,

with a small amount of diesel fuel or a glow plug as ignition sources. In a dual-fuel engine, natural gas is mixed with intake air before it's sent to the cylinder, and diesel fuel is used as ignition source. Because conventional diesel injection is used in this case, the engine has dual-fuel properties: diesel provides some of the power, and the engine has the same torque and efficiency as a standard diesel.

Other dual-fuel benefits include use of exhaust and compression brakes, similar to diesels, and conversion back to straight diesel for improved resale value. If a failure occurs in the natural gas system, the electronic controls instantly revert the engine to its traditional diesel operation, allowing drivers a back-up power source until a natural gas service facility can be located.

A fourth type of system combines the pilot injection of diesel fuel and

premixing of natural gas. The diesel fuel injection is typically optimized for low fuel flows to improve emissions with CNG. Unlike a dual-fuel engine, it can't run in a diesel-fuel-only mode.

Natural gas also requires special on-board storage tanks. LNG occupies 1/600th the volume of natural gas at atmospheric temperature and pressure, but it needs to be kept cold—no more than -160 Celsius. The tanks are typically double-walled and vacuum-insulated. CNG tanks are three times larger than LNG tanks for essentially the same basic fuel capacity. Either fuel delivers the same engine performance.



However, the cost to convert is high.

Waste Management Inc. operates the largest fleet of natural-gas-powered waste trucks in North America—more than 415 LNG and CNG vehicles. To ramp up the use of 125 LNG vehicles in San Diego, the company spent between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per vehicle. The big-ticket items are the company's on-site fueling stations and dedicated maintenance bays: Waste Management spent between \$600,000 and \$900,000 US each, adding tanks, pumps, ventilation systems, piping, dispensers, and control systems.

The fueling infrastructure—the lack thereof—is a huge issue. There are currently few CNG or LNG fueling stations, and most are in urban areas in the western

lions of LNG a day using methane captured at the site. That's sufficient to fuel 15,000 vehicles.

Ironically, the emission-reduction strategies of diesel engine manufacturers represent both an opportunity and a threat to natural gas power. While the new engines will be running cleaner, the price of clean diesel will go up.

Between 2007 and 2010, the EPA is requiring particulate matter emissions levels to fall to 0.01 grams per brake horsepower hour (g/bhp-hr); NOx to drop to 0.2 g/bhp-hr; and non-methane hydrocarbon (NMHC) levels to not exceed 0.14 g/bhp-hr. Reaching these targets will require changes to diesel fuel: starting in June 2006, the sulphur content will drop from

improved performance and availability of natural gas power will generate interest that is genuinely market-driven. Engine suppliers are also finding success overseas, in markets like China and India.

"In North America, we're going to get to a point where we have to recognize that these engines can compete with straight diesels in high-fuel-use service," Campbell says. "In order to get cleaner, diesels will get more expensive. We're already there on emissions, and our costs are going to come down."

For some specialized fleets, down the road it may be incentive enough to switch. ▲

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“Geez,” the long-distance operator remarked when I asked for Paul Brandt’s number, “I didn’t know he was into trucks, too.”

I was searching for Paul Brandt Trucking, in Winnipeg. The 411-operator thought I was asking about Paul Brandt the country singer. Last year, the 32-year old dusted off and made a hit out of that old trucking song “Convoy.” You know the one—when it came out 20 years ago, it threw the CB radio market into skyrocket mode because all kinds of non-truckers were lured into the language of the airwaves. Brandt, who says he grew up hearing his dad and uncles in Alberta singing the song, was encouraged by his wife Liz to record the song last year after they heard it on the radio in Nashville. It’s been on the Canadian airwaves since.

However, I wasn’t looking for *that* Paul Brandt. I was searching for the trucker. In the video for the hit, Brandt the singer uses a 2004 Pete belonging to Paul Brandt Trucking. I wanted to find out what that kind of exposure means to the fleet’s bottom line.

Turns out there’s more than one lesson to be learned about trucking as she is done by the Brandts of the world.

Paul Brandt Trucking has been around since before Paul Brandt the country singer was born, but in the early 90’s, the Alberta-born songwriter was performing

How a Winnipeg fleet owner publicized his brand on TV sets across the country. FOR FREE



Convoy!

BY PETER CARTER

at the Morris, Mb., rodeo, and Paul Brandt the fleet owner showed up and introduced himself. His idea? He would deliver the trucker to the stage in one of his Western Stars. That was the first time Paul Brandt the singer rode in a Paul Brandt truck.

The Brandts (they’re unrelated) exchanged addresses, then after Brandt recorded “Convoy,” his record company contacted the boys at Brandt Trucking—

it’s now run by Paul’s sons Kerry, Bill, and Tracey—and asked if they could use one of the rigs in a dramatic re-enactment of the somewhat famous “Convoy” story.

In the summer of 2004, Kerry Brandt, his wife Barbara and their three kids hopped into a long-nose 2004 Peterbilt with a 63-in. high-rise sleeper, a 500-hp Detroit under the hood and the best paint job Brandt could muster, and headed up to Wainwright,

Alberta. Brandt was making his video at the Canadian Forces Base up there.

Kerry reports that his time up there proved that video making was a lot like trucking. “I couldn’t believe how much waiting around there was,” he laughs. “We shot for four days and it was 12 to 14 hours a day.”

The best part? When Brandt the singer sings “we hit the gate doin’ 98,” it was Kerry Brandt behind the wheel. “It was me drivin’ all right, even though you can’t see me in the video.” Kerry also took the truck on the Paul Brandt tour last summer and when Brandt hosted the Country Music Awards, not only did the Pete attend, but so did 60 of the trucking company’s employees, courtesy of Brandt bros.

Like the singer, who is one of Canada’s most decorated country artists, Paul



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Convoy

Brandt Trucking has grown into star status since the founder (Kerry's dad Paul) started hauling logs around Northwestern Ontario. These days, they have 45 trucks and 70 trailers, hauling grain, feed, and general freight throughout Western Canada and into the U.S.A.

So, did the video do anything for the trucker's bottom line? Kerry says there's little doubt it was good for business.

"We can't say we've had more revenue because of it, but it sure makes you feel proud. There was lots of media coverage and any coverage is good for business."

Singer Brandt and his wife also autographed the cab and its interior, so when the driver now makes one of his regular trips into Oklahoma or Texas, he always attracts attention. "That's another thing," Kerry says. "I think when drivers are proud of their trucks, they'll like their jobs more. It's good for morale."

Finally, Paul the singer has a reputation for being a good guy. He's involved with his church, and with good causes locally and abroad. "You gotta like having somebody with that kind of reputation spreading your name around," Kerry comments.

What about the other way around? Did having that beautiful Peterbilt help the song earn hit status?

"No question it was a catalyst," The singer says with a laugh during an interview from his home in

Calgary (he also has one in Nashville). "Convoy" was a serious career boost.

"Because of that song, I had all kinds of new faces at concerts," Brandt says. "I was used to seeing the typical young country crowd and suddenly I was seeing mechanics and truck drivers and guys my dad's age out there."

The album with "Convoy" is called *This Time Around*, and it's available across Canada. The video's in medium rotation on CMT network, and Paul the singer says the song is receiving an increasing amount of airplay in the States. You can find out more by checking www.paulbrandt.com.

Another side effect? Just before Christmas, Paul and Liz, who devote a lot of time to charitable causes, visited children in Cambodia to bring them Christmas presents, as part of an organization called Samaritans First.

Joining the team of philanthropists? Barbara Brandt, of Paul Brandt Trucking, from Winnipeg. Sounds to us like a convoy. ▲



Mark Kulak

ANOTHER BRANDT NAME PRODUCT

THERE'S MORE TO KEEPING DRIVERS THAN FANCY IRON. MARK HIS WORDS.

Kerry, Bill, Tracy, and Paul Brandt aren't the only Manitoba truckers with showy iron. Cousin Mark, whose dad is company founder Paul's brother, is a familiar name at local show-and-shines. And Mark, based in Arborg, Mb., insists his award-winning Petes and Kenworths are worth every coat of paint. For one thing, he says, the carefully tended trucks keep drivers happier.

He has a fleet of 15 grain-haulers that keep busy around the Western provinces, and he says he's not having driver-retention problems. "You give drivers the trucks

they want, and they'll stay around longer."

Not only that, but he acknowledges that keeping them north of the border and away from the problems associated with customs clearance helps too. "I only go into the States a bit," he says.

"I guarantee my guys will be home every weekend, and very often they get home at least once mid-week, too," he says.

But driver retention's only part of the reason he gives so much attention to his rigs. "I grew up in this business. Good looking trucks are in my genes." — P. C.

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1 HOW MANY VEHICLES ARE BASED AT (OR CONTROLLED FROM) THIS LOCATION? PLEASE INDICATE QUANTITIES BY TYPE

TRUCKS _____ TRUCK TRACTORS _____

TRAILERS _____ BUSES _____

OFF ROAD VEHICLES _____

2 ARE ANY OF THESE VEHICLES ...

A. In any of the following Gross Vehicle Weight Classes?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Class 8: 33,001 lbs. GVW & Over | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Class 7: 26,001 to 33,000 GVW | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Class 6: 19,501 to 26,000 GVW | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Class 3,4, or 5: 10,001 to 19,500 GVW | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Class 1 or 2: Under 10,000 lbs. GVW | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

B. Refrigerated

- Yes No
 Yes No
 Yes No
 Yes No
 Yes No

3 DO YOU HAVE MAINTENANCE SHOP FACILITIES AT THIS LOCATION? YES NO
 How many mechanics here? _____

4 INDICATE YOUR PRIMARY TYPE OF BUSINESS: Check ONE category only:

- (A) For-hire (Common & Contract Trucking)
 (B) Lease-Rental
 (C) Food & Beverage Production/Distribution
 (D) Farming
 (E) Government (Fed., Prov., Local)
 (F) Public Utility (electric, gas, telephone)
 (G) Construction/Mining/Sand & Gravel
 (H) Petroleum/Dry Bulk/Chemicals/Tank
 (I) Manufacturing/Processing
 (J) Retail/Wholesale/Delivery
 (K) Logging/Lumber
 (L) Bus Transportation
 (M) Moving & Storage
 (N) Waste Management
 (O) Other

5 DO YOU SPECIFY, SELECT OR APPROVE THE PURCHASE FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING? Check ALL that apply:

A. New vehicles & components

- 01 Trucks, Tractors
 02 Trailers
 03 Powertrain components (engines, transmissions, axles)
 04 Vehicle systems (brakes, lighting, suspensions, cooling, electrical)
 05 Tires, Wheels (new or replacement)
 06 Vehicle appearance (paints, markings - new or replacement)

B. Replacement Components, Parts & Supplies

- 07 Replacement parts (filters, electrical, engine parts, brakes, suspensions, exhaust)
 08 Major replacement components (engine, transmissions, exhaust)
 09 Oils, Additives & Lubricants
 10 Shop equipment and tools

C. Fleet Products & Services

- 11 Equipment Leasing
 12 Computers, Software
 13 Financial services, Insurance
 14 Fleet management services (fuel reporting, permits, taxes)

D. 15 None of the above

*** IF YOU ARE A TRUCK OPERATOR, PLEASE BE SURE TO COMPLETELY ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS IN FULL**

*** NON-TRUCK OPERATORS USE BOX BELOW ONLY**

TO BE COMPLETED BY NON-TRUCK OPERATORS ONLY!!!

What best describes your basic business as it relates to truck/bus fleets? (Check Only ONE)

- MANUFACTURER (including factory branches) of trucks, buses, trailers, bodies, components, parts, supplies or equipment.
 NEW VEHICLE DEALER/trucks, tractors, trailers.
 HEAVY DUTY WHOLESALER/ components, parts, supplies or equipment.
 INDEPENDENT FLEET SERVICE/REPAIR SPECIALIST
 OTHER (Specify) _____

In Gear

INSIDE:

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EQUIPMENT NEWS, REVIEWS, AND MAINTENANCE TIPS



Rusted Flat

trailers *Keep your trailer metal in top shape. By Stephen Petit*

Rust is a red flag in every sense of the phrase. It can contribute to structural weakness, it's a hazard and it just plain looks bad. To a customer or a safety inspector, a cavity in the metal is a tell-tale sign that you're not taking care of your equipment. The problem is in a state of flux, says Roy MacLean, sales supervisor for the Winkler-Mb., based trailer manufacturer Lode-King Industries. "It's going to get worse before it gets better because of all those new chemicals that the highway guys are using to melt ice."

It's not fair. Corrosion is an electrochemical reaction that requires little more than two pieces of metal, air, and water. If

you haul freight in Canada, rust belongs on your list of life's inevitabilities.

You can't see or feel it, but a piece of metal has an electrical charge to it, and not all metals have the same amount. When metal with a negative charge (like steel or aluminum) is placed near metal with a relatively more positive charge (stainless steel, copper, or brass), and you wet down the area, electrons from the negative side flow through the water to the positive as fast as they can, taking bits of oxidized metal along with them.

The loss of electrons kicks off a process that creates a ferric hydroxide, or rust.

Chemicals found in acid rain and salty road spray only aggravate the problem.

They help the electrons move from one metal to another even better than pure water. It's not unheard of to find evidence of salt-heavy road grime conducting electricity between metals that are an inch or more apart.

It's hard to stop corrosion, but folks try. At the foundry, a variety of metals can be alloyed with steel to make a more rust-resistant product (for example, adding chromium creates stainless steel, which is very resistant to rust). Equipment manufacturers will use paint, chrome plating, or galvanizing (a low-voltage zinc coating) to cover up the metal, or in some cases sacrificial anodes to draw current away from metal they want to protect.

As the guy who specs trailers or directs repairs, preventive maintenance is the key. Keep an eye on areas that are prone to nicks, scrapes, and chips and keep them clean and dry. Recoat bare metal ASAP, and apply a liberal coating of rust-control

In Gear

spray to crevices and connectors where moisture can creep in.

Good ideas all. But the first step should be to work with your trailer manufacturer or sales rep to spec components and features that are rust resistant.

► **Dissimilar metals and stress points:** Consider the proximity of dissimilar metals—those with different charges—on your equipment. If a piece of negatively charged metal such as steel (at minus 0.58 volts), or aluminum, (at minus 0.7 volts), is next to one with a more positive

“You can reduce problems if the more positive stainless area is small and the negative aluminum area is large.”

voltage, such as stainless, (which can be minus 0.1 volts), the current will flow. The negative metal will be eaten away, starting as a pit in the surface and gradually growing from there.

You can reduce problems if the more positive stainless area is small and the negative aluminum area is large. A square

foot of aluminum and a small steel rivet, for example, should be of no consequence. But if rust works its way under a rivet or beneath the paint, the low oxygen levels can actually increase the negative charge in the metal.

One option is to replace the stainless with galvanized steel. Zinc’s charge is minus 1.0 volts, much more negative than aluminum or steel.

“The zinc is sacrificed, not the metal underneath it,” says Ray Camball, director of fleet sales for Trailmobile in Mississauga, Ont.

“Compare trailers after seven years,” Camball says. “The ones with galvanized doorframes still look good. With the conventional painted steel frames, once the threshold plate has been scuffed up a little, oxidation begins and you get perforation through the vertical rear end of the threshold plate.”

If the zinc starts to wear out (look for brown discoloration), touch it up with zinc primer.

► **Electrical connections:** Corrosion increases electrical resistance, which in turn boosts the load on the entire system. Spec sealed connectors where the harness attaches to the light fixtures—typically a boot-like rubber or plastic. And because corrosion can creep up inside insulated wires, especially if there’s an unprotected splice or connection, consider wiring with translucent insulation.

► **Brakes:** Harsh de-icing chemicals have been linked to oxidation on brake shoes, a condition called rust jacking. Corrosion can force the lining off the shoe table and fracture it, sending tiny cracks scurrying away from the lining’s edge. Some brake suppliers are reformulating lining materials and working with new coatings designed to inhibit corrosion on new and relined shoes.

► **Structural corrosion:** An upper coupler replacement on an eight-year-old trailer is a work order you don’t want to have to fill out. If you can afford a little more tare weight, spec a thicker-than-standard coupler plate. ▲

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Quick-change Artists

cool kits *How to make a mid-range fleet even more versatile.*

By Howard Elmer

On-Trux Roll-Off Systems, in Ayr, Ont., just west of Kitchener, has been putting just about everything on to a roll-off truck, including washrooms fit for a garden party.

“The washrooms have been a hit—frankly, it surprised us,” says On-Trux President Craig Oliver.

The rolling bathrooms are just one of the minor quirks of Oliver’s clever operation.

On-Trux has created 45 separate bodies that all fit the same standardized decks and rail system. So, in addition to washrooms there are flatbeds, stake and dump bodies, mobile offices, sander/salters, welding decks, and even ice fishing huts. In fact, what goes on the truck is limited only by your imagination.

In the early '90s, Oliver was working with a welding truck on pipelines in Western Canada. One day when he and his father needed to borrow a truck to deliver firewood, the elder Oliver remarked that his truck would be a lot more useful if they could easily take the welding deck off and replace it with a standard box. Soon after, they built their first roll-off system for their own use. But, like many good ideas, as soon as someone

saw how it worked he wanted one.

In the beginning the biggest problem was the lack of suitable medium-duty trucks. But in the past few years, GM has rejoined the market, Freightliner, Hino and even Peterbilt started building more medium-duty trucks. These trucks lend themselves to easy conversion because of their clean back-of-cab frame rails and reliable easy-to-operate transmissions and controls.

The heart of the On-Trux system is a twin-hoist hydraulic cylinder configuration. A winch at the head of the frame draws the body on/off and holds it in place. In addition to powering the roll-off system frame the hydraulics can achieve a raised angle of up to 52 degrees for work with dumps. A retractable pair of stringers (for adjusting bed length) also acts as the lead frame edge for switching bodies off and on. A dual set of controls (one outside and one inside) provides flexibility, safety and protection from the weather.

On-Trux fabricates the system to a single standard and will do installation at their shop; recently they have also begun to sell the whole setup as a kit to customers who prefer to do their own installation. ▲

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VICTORIA	82.9		56.0
PRINCE GEORGE	81.9		57.5
KAMLOOPS	80.2		56.0
KELOWNA	82.9	-0.5	58.5
YELLOWKNIFE	83.9	-2.5	65.3
CALGARY *	73.9	0.2	56.1
RED DEER	73.9		56.1
EDMONTON	73.5		55.7
LETHBRIDGE	N/A		
REGINA *	80.1	-0.3	55.8
SASKATOON	78.8	-1.1	54.7
PRINCE ALBERT	81.3	-0.2	57.0
WINNIPEG *	77.6	-0.1	57.6
BRANDON	79.9	-0.3	59.8
TORONTO *	78.2	-0.3	54.8
OTTAWA	80.2	-0.5	56.6
WINDSOR	74.9	-0.7	51.7
LONDON	76.6	-1.4	53.2
SUDBURY	N/A	-2.5	56.8
SAULT STE MARIE	81.9		58.2
THUNDER BAY	81.5	-0.2	57.9
NORTH BAY	77.8	-3.5	54.4
TIMMINS	79.9	-2.7	56.4
HAMILTON	76.2	-0.3	52.9
ST. CATHARINES	N/A		54.4
MONTRÉAL *	87.7	-0.8	56.0
QUÉBEC	86.6	-2.0	55.1
SHERBROOKE	85.9	-1.0	54.5
GASPÉ	85.9	-0.8	54.5
CHICOUTIMI	84.0	-1.3	52.8
SAINT JOHN *	92.4	0.3	59.4
FREDERICTON	93.6		60.5
MONCTON	88.4	-1.2	56.0
BATHURST	87.4	-1.5	55.1
HALIFAX *	83.2	-0.7	52.9
SYDNEY	88.5	0.5	57.5
YARMOUTH	88.6		57.6
TRURO	83.9		53.6
CHARLOTTETOWN *	83.8		60.8
ST JOHNS *	93.4		60.7
GANDER	95.1		62.2
CORNER BROOK	93.4		60.7
CANADA AVERAGE (V)	81.2	-0.2	55.8

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The lightest suspension in class, weighing in at just 570 pounds including axle brackets, Hendrickson HTB suspension saves up to 257 lb over industry-standard 40,000-lb suspensions. By comparison, HTB is 250 lb lighter than the company's HAS 400 model. The weight saving is attributed to HTB's optimized parallelogram design that eliminates leaf springs and reduces components.

The parallelogram geometry eliminates frame rise that is characteristic of trailing-arm suspensions, aiding in the maintenance of driveline angles throughout axle travel, minimizing suspension induced driveline vibration and wear on driveline components like the transmission, differential and U-joints.

Large, direct-acting air springs carry 100 per cent of the vertical load compared to trailing-arm suspensions where vertical load is shared between air springs and leaf springs. This key difference provides up to a 34-per cent ride improvement and reduces vibration and harshness, compared to industry-standard suspensions, says Hendrickson.

www.hendrickson-intl.com

RED LIGHT GO!

COLE HERSEE'S FOOLPROOF TOGGLE
Cole Hersee Company, a Boston-based manufacturer of heavy-duty electrical, electronic, and digital products for the vehicle industry, has introduced its Illuminated-Tip Toggle Switch for trucking applications. This unique toggle switch's tip lights red in the "on" position and white in the "off" position, allowing the operator to easily identify if the switch is on or off at a glance. The black plastic switch is available either as On-Off or On-Off-On. Cole Hersee's Illuminated-Tip Toggle Switch contains silver contacts to provide switching at 25A and 12 V DC. The switch comes with blade terminals, nickel-plated brass mounting hardware, and the standard 15/32 in 32-thread mounting stem.

www.colehersee.com

WATCHDAWG

TMW UNLEASHES BUSINESS MONITORING SOFTWARE
Never a vice pres around when you need one? The Software folks at **TMW Systems Inc.**, Beachwood, Ohio, have introduced a business-performance application called The Dawg that monitors your activity, scanning every transaction and automatically flagging exceptions so you can take immediate corrective action.

The Dawg works with TMW's web-based performance-monitoring application that reports a carrier's performance against key performance indicators. For example, The Dawg can send a real-time alert if accumulated empty miles for a dispatched vehicle will exceed 400 miles. This affords time to question the decision and the opportunity to revise

the load plan if necessary.

"The Dawg acts as a safety net that catches human errors before they lead to unnecessary expenses," said Tom Weisz, president and CEO of TMW Systems.

The Dawg is equipped with alerts for more than 25 performance criteria and can be customized to track other metrics.

www.tmwsystems.com

AIR DOGS

MACK AND RAYDAN MEET ON MIXER
Raydan Manufacturing Inc. has joined with Mack Canada to produce the first-ever all air-ride-equipped mixer truck Raydan's air-ride suspension on both front and rear tandem axles. The mixer is mounted on a Mack CV713, which came with a Mack factory-installed rear Air

Link AL460 air ride walking beam suspension, and Raydan was asked to tandemize the front and install their matching FTAL-40-66 Air Link air ride walking beam suspension for tandem steer.

www.raydanmfg.com

AND AXLE MAKES THREE

MANAC'S NEW TRI-AXLE HALF-BARREL DUMP TRAILER

Following on the heels of the tandem half-round end-dump trailer launched last year, **Manac** has just introduced a tridem version to the excavation and bulk-hauling markets. Touting a payload capacity of 34.5 cubic meters or 49,500 kg, Manac says the new tridem design adds up to 8,000 kg of payload capacity compared to the tandem version. The trailer is 37 ft (11.3 m) long, and boasts a more robust lifting mechanism and reinforced beams. It sits on a tridem axle configuration with 1.8 metre centers (72-in spread), and is said to be as well suited to hauling

sand and aggregate as it is to hauling heavier or bulkier materials such as tree stumps, concrete debris, and coarse rock.

www.manactrailers.com

AUTO PILOTING

KENWORTH OFFERS AUTOMATIC TRANNY IN T300

The folks at **Kenworth** have deemed the Allison 3000 HS Highway Series vocational model transmission a-okay for linehaul and local P&D applications. This transmission, with no PTO provision, is available in a 5- or 6-speed setup and can handle up to 1,100 lb-ft of torque for 80,000-lb GVW combos. It features increased horsepower and torque capacity and includes a standard oil level sensor.

The T300 is available as a straight truck or tractor in a variety of wheelbases, with single or tandem axles, air or hydraulic brakes, in GVWs from 19,500 to 54,600 lb.

www.kenworth.com

GOODYEAR STEER HERE

NEW STEER TIRE BUILT FOR HIGH MILEAGE

Featuring a wear-resistant tread compound and reinforced belt package fortified with supertensile steel belts, **Kelly Tire** has introduced its latest premium linehaul steer tire, the Kelly Armorsteel KLHA. Designed to replace the KLHS steer tire, the KLHA is said to offer excellent miles-to-removal, improved handling, and enhanced durability and retreadability. Lateral tread grooves improve traction, and the shoulder rib design includes a pressure distribution groove that is said to improve shoulder wear.

The KLHA was designed with long casing life in mind so the belt package protects against punctures and tears, increasing the tire's retreadability, the



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company says, while the bead area and the tire shape have been engineered to equalize contact pressure for improved wear to removal. The Armorsteel KLHA steer tire is available in standard and low-profile sizes from Kelly Tires, a signature brand for The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company.

www.kelly-springfield.com/commercial.com

POWER STEERING

MACK GRANITE COMES IN AXLE-BACK VERSION

The optional axle-back version of **Mack's** popular Granite is designed to "enhance maneuverability around job sites and maximize legal payload," the folks behind the bulldog announce. The truck offers the best of the axle-forward Granite—a large, strong,

comfortable cab; best-in-class visibility; an ergonomically-designed electronic dash; and advanced electronics—with a new exterior featuring flexible fender extensions, sleek halogen headlamps, and stylized mirrors. It also features the new Mack Cornerstone vocational chassis available with a wide range of frame rail thicknesses and crossmembers that make it ideal for work as a tractor, mixer, dump, roll-off, or rear loader. www.Macktrucks.com

STRAPS CAUSING FLAPS?

CARGOARMOR PROTECTS LOADS

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www.swapinc.com

CONNECTIONS IN DRY PLACES

PHILLIPS TRAILER CONNECTOR ELIMINATES CORROSION PROBLEMS

Phillips Industries has developed a new molded 7-way connector for trailer electrical hook ups. The STA-DRY Slim-7, like all Phillips trailer harness systems, has molded connectors between modules with specially designed ribs and O-rings to keep moisture and contaminants from penetrating the electrical system, but the folks at Phillips add that the improved design creates an even more secure connection that further reduces corrosion problems. The integral design of the STA-DRY Slim-7 needs no additional clamps, yet boasts the maximum pull-out force of any trailer harness system in the industry, the company claims. The STA-DRY Slim-7 connector's small profile is ideal for installation in areas where space is at a premium.

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Phillips Industries has improved the molded collar design of the QCS2 electrical harness system. The tight fitting collar not only protects against accidental disconnection, it weatherproofs the entire electrical system by creating a watertight seal around the pigtail plug. The secure seal helps reduce corrosion by preventing moisture from traveling through the harness. The modular design of the new socket is said to cut replacement time by over 75 per cent. The QCS2 electrical harness system is part of Phillips Industries complete line of STA-DRY products being developed and introduced by the company to address the negative effects of corrosion on electrical components.

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www.wwtgroup.com

FOR PETE'S SAKE

100 NEW ITEMS ADDED TO CATALOG

Peterbilt has added more than 100 items to its catalog of established favorites making up its 2005 merchandise collection. Among the new items: a scale model replica of the popular Model 379X, Callaway golf clubs, a stainless steel barbecue set, and many new styles of hats and shirts. The full collection can be browsed in the Merchandise section of the Peterbilt website or at participating dealers—international orders are accepted.

www.peterbilt.com

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powered and does not rely on wind or airflow. Power for the Hornet is supplied via a 14-ft harness with an in-line fuse and weather-tight connectors, and it can be mounted on non-metallic surfaces because the power supply and ground circuit are the same. This enables the power lead to be routed around a doorjamb without the risk of a short circuit caused by a pinched wire, the manufacturer says.

www.xp3hornet.com

A NEW LEAF

HENDRICKSON DEBUTS HD SINGLE-LEAF FRONT SUSPENSION

Hendrickson continues the weight-saving evolution of the front truck suspension spring with the introduction of the SSR MONOLEAF, offering a weight savings of some 40 lb compared to a traditional two-leaf spring in 12,000-lb capacity systems. Offered in axle-ratings of 8,000, 10,000 and 12,000 lb, the SSR MONOLEAF, when paired with Hendrickson's STEERTEK fabricated

steer axle, can trim 70 lb off a traditional two-leaf spring on a forged I-beam axle.

According to the Hendrickson people, the SSR MONOLEAF's parabolic design also delivers an optimal balance of spring rate, stress, and weight for an outstanding ride by eliminating interleaf friction. The STEERTEK axle helps improve tire life with a box-design axle that provides stiffer axle resistance to vertical and longitudinal loads, Hendrickson claims.

www.hendrickson-intl.com

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Utility's 4000D-X series dry vans feature a patented steel-lined "sandwich" wall design that offers a full 101-1/4-in width, accommodating a large variety of load



**Hendrickson
Single-Leaf**

types, while providing load securement with A-slot posts every 24 in. along the length of the trailer. The 4000D-X also features a galvanized 80,000-psi high-tensile steel low-profile wearband, and it can be spec'd with Utility's recently introduced Wide Track System undercarriage. This suspension mounting option allows for the use of Michelin's new generation wide single tire, the X-One. Utility's wide track suspension system also includes a Hendrickson air ride slider with six in. wider suspension centers and six in. longer axles. This system can be used with either zero-offset aluminum wheels,

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Formerly available only on CD-ROM, the on-line version makes access to this valuable resource infinitely more convenient. Web ECAT cross-references a truck's original chassis record with the PACCAR parts catalog enabling users to search and identify parts by keyword, part number, and interactive visual diagrams that show exploded views of assemblies in detail right down to individual parts and components.

Additionally, wiring and air piping diagrams are included, as are alternate part selections if a part the vehicle was originally spec'd with is no longer produced. The system has information for all Peterbilt trucks built since 1978. Annual subscriptions to Web ECAT are available through Peterbilt dealerships. Use of Web ECAT is customer based, not chassis based, so a single subscription provides unlimited users within a single company access to data for all of the Peterbilt units that company owns, simplifying the ordering of correct parts.
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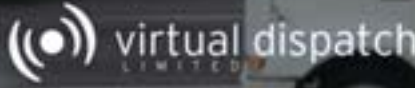
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NEW STRAP SAVER

EAST REDESIGNS DOUBLE-L WINCH CLIP FOR FLATBED TRAILERS

East Manufacturing has redesigned its patented and proven winch clip to add an extra margin of safety and to aid compliance with the new North American cargo securement rules. When used with the Double-L winch track design, East's new Double-L winch clip allows the tie-down strap to fit inside the rub rail, not over the outside—a practice now officially



frowned on by the new rules. This protects the strap from chafing against the rub rail and from shearing or cutting should the trailer be involved in a mishap, and it increases strap life, East says.

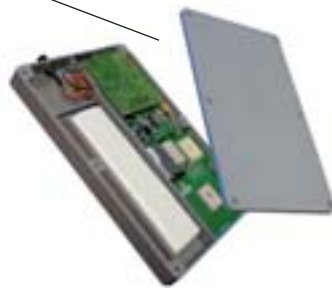
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By Peter Carter

Vigilance Never Sleeps

Keeping eyes on the road and on the market.

My friend James and I were strolling through the crowded Tokyo marketplace when two young girls approached us from behind. They were dressed in matching school uniforms, and we were the only two Caucasian men within a stone's throw. The youngsters started talking. They asked where we were from, what we were doing in Tokyo, and how long we planned on staying. Turns out they were studying English and their teacher had encouraged them to get as much practice as possible. So they were practising on us.

I have twin 13-year-old daughters. We live in Toronto. I'm pretty sure that no matter how badly they want to learn a second language, I'd discourage them from heading downtown to talk to strange middle-aged foreign guys. Of course I think one can never be too safe.

I've just returned from Tokyo. And those young girls' assertiveness wasn't the only surprise. I was there as a guest of the bus and truck manufacturer Hino Motors

Ltd. The company invited a group of journalists to see their extensive testing facilities, their test tracks, their hybrid trucks, and finally, their manufacturing plants. But more important than all those things, the folks at Hino wanted us to hear their plans for expansion.

Hino execs say they've reached the market-saturation point back home. Hence, according to their annual report, "The Company aims to sharply boost North American sales from 2,000 trucks annually to 10,000 units in 2006 and 30,000 units in 2010."

Hino's currently third among class-5 truck dealers here in Canada; and fourth, behind International, Freightliner and GM, for class-6. The company's particularly strong in Quebec. And Indy racing fans are already hip to Hino's plans, because the truck company (which is owned by Toyota) has teamed with Roger Penske the racecar driver/ truck-leasing guy. And if Hino is anything like those young girls in the marketplace, rest assured they won't be easily deterred in meeting their goals.

As for Japan, the first impressions were vivid. I didn't ride but I watched in awe as the silent-but-deadly-accurate bullet train accelerated from a dead stop to almost 500 clicks as it sped away

from the city. Another detail that proved that the Japanese culture is light years away from ours? Corporate execs rode the public-transit system to and from the office. Even when the ride was more than an hour long. Imagine the CEO of, say, TD Canada Trust hopping the subway home.

As well, I and my colleagues drew collective breaths the first time we were stuck in Tokyo traffic and a few motorbike couriers zipped between the lanes. But drivers simply don't seem to change lanes with abandon the way they do here. So the screaming mid-lane bikes are commonplace.

As is building to make sure your structures are earthquake proof. Right in downtown Tokyo, there sits a monstrous ferris wheel, and apparently, if you're up on top, and an earthquake hits, you'll be okay.

Their trucks, too, are being manufactured with an eye on eventuality. At one of Hino's largest customers—the 10,000-vehicle-strong courier company called Seino Transportation Co. Ltd.,—we were shown what



has to be the safest little truck I've ever laid eyes on. Chief among this Hino's attributes was an airbag, situated right below the front bumper. So even if you get hit by the thing, you get an airbag.

The truck also had little gates behind each front wheel that descended when it made left and right turns, so bicyclists or pedestrians couldn't slip under. And cleverly mounted video cameras allowed drivers to have virtually zero blind spots.

Is there such a thing as safety overkill? Some days, I'd say yeah, but just last week, when I told a guy I hadn't seen in a long time that I was now the proud editor of Canada's leading truck magazine, he responded with something sarcastic like, "do you write about wheels flying off those things or do you pretend it doesn't happen?". It was typically misguided, but proved yet again that anything we can do to protect our image is worth pursuing. Bring on the under-the-bumper airbags. And no matter what, I'm not encouraging my daughters to go talk to strange guys downtown. ▲

Peter Carter is the editor of *Today's Trucking*. You can reach him at 416/614-5828 or peter@todaystrucking.com.



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