

AUTO-IMMUNE TRUCKING:
Can hauling car parts be harmful to your business health?, PG.52



Measuring the fallout from the Big-3's shutdown.

March 2006
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Today's Trucking

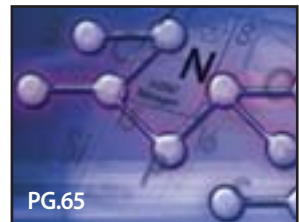
The Business of Canada's Trucking Industry

Meet Ric Peterson, the guy determined to take oilpatch trucking to a whole new level.



PG. 10

Americans join speed-limiter war



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Why it pays to put nitrogen in your tires



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Trucks that lube themselves

Top 100

SPECIAL ISSUE: Our exclusive snapshot of Canada's biggest fleets

PLUS: How entrepreneur Ric Peterson and trucking veteran Murray Mullen are leading the way for the industry

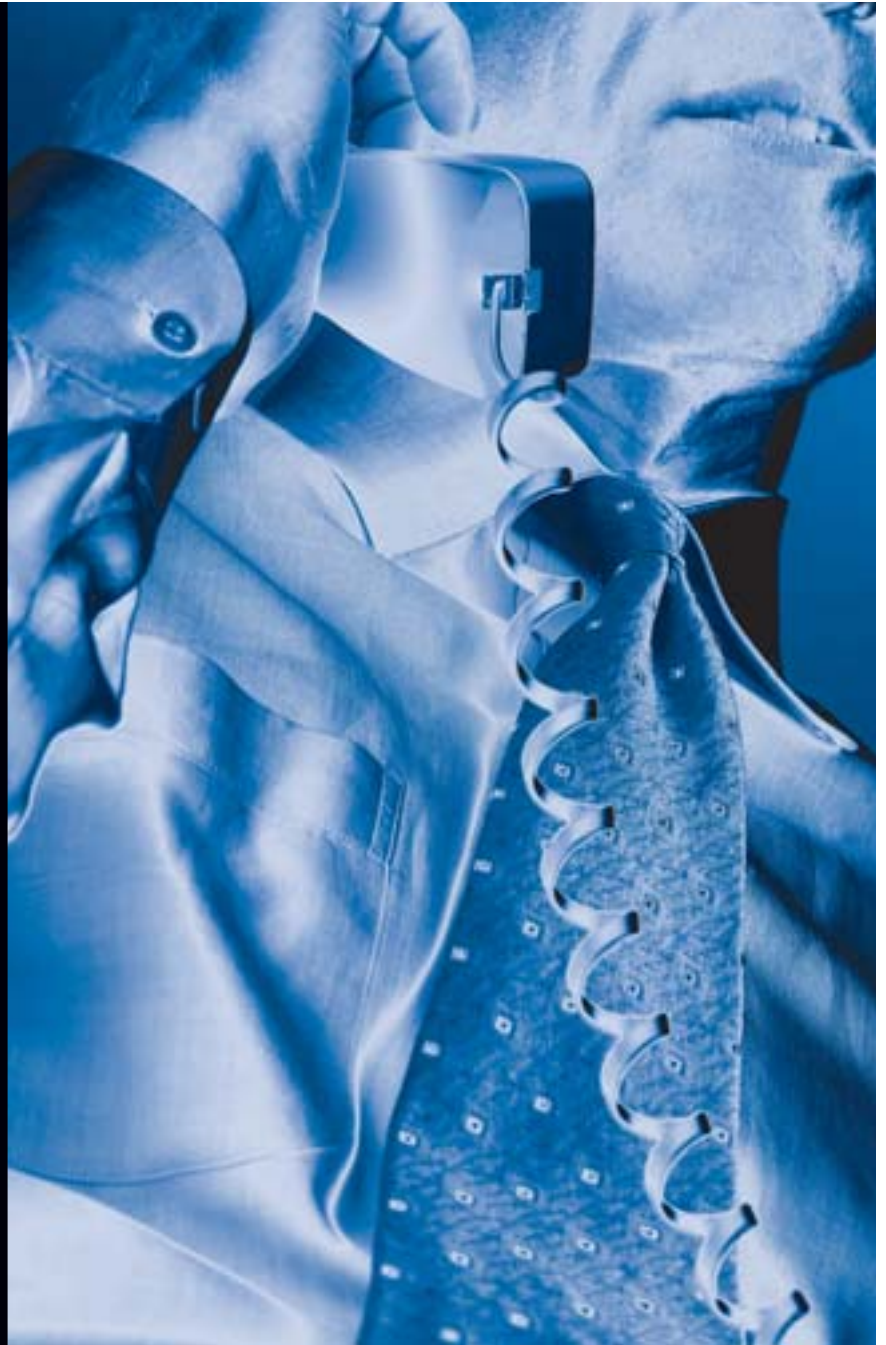




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Today's Trucking

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PUBLISHER & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Rolf Lockwood, MCILT (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, Duff McCutcheon, Stephen Petit, Allan Janssen, Steve Bouchard, Raymond Mercuri, Steve Mulligan, David Kosub, Steve Sturgess**

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Director **Tim Norton** (production@)
416/614-5810

Associate Art Director **Frank Scatozza**

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

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

SENIOR SALES MANAGER

Jack Meli (jack@) • 416/614-5827

REGIONAL SALES MANAGER

Joe Glionna (joe@) • 416/614-5824

Marketplace Advertising

Joe Glionna (joe@) • 416/614-5824

NEWCOM BUSINESS MEDIA GROUP

President **Jim Glionna**

Controller **Anthony Evangelista**

Production Manager **Liliana Kantor**

(lkantor@newcom.ca) • 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

416/614-2200 • 416/614-8861 (fax)

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Canadian Business Press

Seeing Europe at 86 km/h

Before I moved to Canada, I owned a trucking company in Holland and had 13 trucks hauling all over Europe and into Asia and the Middle East. After they introduced speed limiters for trucks on the continent, none of my drivers enjoyed their jobs as much as they had before.

Cars took chances and tried to pass trucks that were just going one or two clicks slower. I could never figure out why that was, but it certainly seemed dangerous.

I saw a lot more head-to-tail accidents and cars trying to sneak into the long lines of trucks just before exit ramps.

One of the reasons I moved to Canada was that people respect each other here in public and on the roads. I hope that never changes.

I think the guys who thought this up should buy a ticket and go drive truck in Europe for a year to see how they like it.

Jan Steijns,
Kamloops, B.C.

A member dissents

Our company is a member of the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) but when it comes to speed limiters, we are in full disagreement with the organization.

We do heavy-specialized hauling, which means over-sized loads.

We told the OTA that our business is not the same as standard freight haulers; i.e., we need multiple lanes on highways, due to over-height, width, or weight restrictions.

We also encounter everyday problems with permits, routing, bridge clearances, and curfews. Sometimes we are on such tight schedules that we can't follow slower trucks, which can't maintain traffic speeds.

When this happens we are penalized with curfews that cost us money, because of overnight stays or late deliveries, or permit and/or escort problems.

With our weights and dimensions we sometimes must take runs at long grades



or we would be even more of a burden on traffic; i.e. having our vehicle rear-ended or our escort vehicle hit.

Slowing down trucks is fine, but how about using law enforcement to curb the problem? Look into stiffer fines and CVOR points assessed to companies and drivers.

We also disagree with the idea that speed limiters will reduce stress on drivers. Our drivers have enough to worry about—traffic problems (causing or dealing with), bridge clearances, daylight hours, permits, inspections, the list goes on—without having to worry about maintaining 105 km/h.

Owners have enough to fret about: new emission laws, new weight and axle regulations, new safety regs, fuel costs, insurance, you name it. Do we really need another law? Our company has always stood behind the OTA on major decisions or changes, but this time they have bit off a little more than they can chew.

Name withheld upon request

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.



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By Rolf Lockwood



So Where Are We?

Truck sales are jumping, but does that really signify a healthy industry?

Cyclical. It's a word commonly used to describe our industry. And as descriptors go, it's about as accurate as you'll get. We know valleys. We know peaks.

Truck makers understand these ups and downs only too well, and right about now there's much buzz amongst them and major component suppliers as to how many trucks will be sold this year. The bigger mystery, of course, is 2007, when another round of emissions standards kicks in that will raise the price of a truck by quite a few thousand bucks. Volvo has just pegged it at US\$7,500, calling it a "surcharge." Others have gone higher than that.

No matter the source, estimates for class-8 truck sales for '06 are all above 300,000 units for Canada, the United States, and Mexico combined. People are smiling, records are being set. The grin soon changes to a look of mild confusion at best when they consider next year, however. Estimates seem to be all over the map, but in the context of recent history, it doesn't look like a horrible year at all. I can remember a time when we dropped below 100,000, but we may not even fall much below 200,000 in 2007. The Cummins number, for example, is about 190,000, according to Jim Kelly, president of the company's engine business. He says it's likely to be "...a moderately decent year."

There was a time when increases in demand like we've seen in the last year or so would have led truck makers to expand, at least by adding a shift or two if not by adding bricks and mortar. Nobody's done that this time out. Lessons were learned, so this peak and next year's valley are being managed pretty well, it seems to me.

That said, this particular stretch in the industry's longer-term cycling is entirely artificial. It doesn't reflect economic activity of a sort that puts more freight—or less—on a trailer. It reflects no more than the impact of environmental legislation as carriers buy trucks in advance of the '07 price hike. Which means, in turn, that we're getting no clues about the longer term from what's happening today.

Predicting is a mug's game nowadays anyhow, no matter the industry. Wars and terrorism and natural catastrophes and who knows what else can wreak havoc and change tomorrow in an instant. I can't find anybody, honestly, who's brave enough to paint a 10-year picture for me on the record. Nor a five-year picture. Hell, going beyond the first half of next year is too big a challenge.

Still, this being our annual Top 100 issue, I feel the urge to

assess things and look at least a little ahead. As you'll read elsewhere in these pages, the for-hire picture has changed. The fleets hovering around the number 100 mark are smaller than they used to be, reflecting consolidations at the top of the heap.

Does it mean fewer fleets in fact? No, apparently not. The latest Statistics Canada report covering the third quarter of last year says we had some 3,376 for-hire outfits with annual revenues of \$1 million or more, which was—surprisingly, I think—an 8.4-per-



I can't find anybody, honestly, who's brave enough to paint a 10-year picture for me on the record. Nor a five-year picture.

cent rise from 3Q 2004. The good news in there is that revenues for the quarter were up by 9.5 percent while expenses rose by only 7.6 percent.

So the question is, can we sustain it? And do such figures really represent what's happening?

On the first question... beats me, I have to say. It seems clear that problems on the automotive front, amongst the so-called Big Three at least, point to difficulty in the short term. That's especially true for carriers in central Canada, of course. Rather severe challenges in the pulp-and-paper world appear likely to be more lasting, maybe permanent, and downright devastating for some carriers in Quebec and Atlantic Canada. Try getting an outbound load from New Brunswick these days.

And, by extension, try paying for an '07 engine.

So if industry-wide numbers improve, to a large extent it will be on the increasingly broad shoulders of western truckers who work around the oil patch, though not necessarily directly involved in it. As you'll read elsewhere in this issue, 'gangbusters' is the word to apply there. With no valley in sight, they're enjoying life at the top of the cycle.

And with an Albertan Prime Minister to boot. Can't get much better. ▲

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

Dispatch

BY MARCO BEGHETTO

The Battle Lines Have Been Drawn

American truckers follow suit and draft their own speed limiter policy.

As *Today's Trucking* went to press in mid-February, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) had just briefed the Minister and was on the verge of informing the province's major trucking association what the government thought of its controversial plan to cap speeds on all trucks at 105 km/h. While rumors swirled as to what regulators were about to announce, both proponents and skeptics were busy in the last few days luring support for their respective causes.

The Ontario Trucking Association (OTA), which first made the proposal last summer to mandate speed limiters through the ECM of every truck engine in Ontario (and eventually all of

Canada and the U.S.), already boasted the backing of all but one other provincial trucking association—as well as such groups as Pollution Probe, CAA Ontario, the Canada Safety Council, Traffic Injury Research Foundation, and several insurance companies. But no group made as big of a splash in the pro-limiter pool as the American Trucking Associations, who followed the lead of their Canadian brethren and endorsed a move to limit the maximum speed of large trucks, at the time of manufacture, to no more than 68 mph on U.S. highways. The ATA consensus is slight faster than the OTA standard, which converts to about 65 mph. The OTA was also joined by the Canadian



FLANKED: Opponents of speed limiters claim the rule would tempt car drivers to dart in between slower trucks.

shes



Transportation Equipment Association, (CTEA) which represents mainly truck component manufacturers. The equipment group made note of the safety benefits based on the OTA's kinetic energy analysis. It compared the percentage increase in energy of a loaded tractor-trailer traveling at 105 km/h versus the same unit traveling at 120 km/h, and found that 30 percent more energy must be managed—slowed, stopped, etc.—at the higher speed due to kinetic energy varying with the square of the speed.

“If we then compare the kinetic energy of an automobile travelling at the same speed as having less than four percent the kinetic energy of the tractor-trailer the huge mismatch in a crash becomes painfully obvious,” new CTEA Executive Director Donald E. Moore wrote in a letter to MTO. (Moore recently replaced Al Tucker who will remain with the group until his retirement sometime in 2007.)

While OTA hasn't denied critics' claims that the proposal would result in more rear-end crashes, it insists it would reduce severe car-truck accidents because of lower speed during impact.

ROLLAWAY MISSILES: A tractor-trailer hauling two Department of National Defence armoured personnel carriers loaded with anti-tank missile launchers was tailed for 20 km on Hwy. 401 by Ontario Provincial Police after the vehicle was reported stolen.

According to Canadian Press, the truck driver's confusion is to blame for the bizarre incident, which led to the truck being pulled over by police on the shoulder of Canada's busiest highway in December.

The shipment of army vehicles was scheduled to arrive in Montreal. But apparently, the driver got pre-occupied with personal issues and got confused about the shipment date and location. “That's where everything began to spiral out of control,” Peel Regional Police Const. Dameon Okposio told CP.

After the truck failed to show up in Montreal, the carrier company contracted to the military reported the shipment stolen. OPP and Peel Police didn't have much trouble spotting the load shortly after as it rolled in the opposite direction, westbound toward Toronto.

Curious onlookers could be forgiven for thinking the worst, as police seized the M113 armoured personnel carriers spec'd with ground-to-ground missile launchers used mainly for piercing tanks.



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However, opponents aren't supporting faster trucks. They adamantly oppose the idea because they say it uses the government to regulate a more competitive playing field on behalf of OTA members currently using speed limiters, but who may be losing drivers to non-governed fleets.

The charge against the proposal is being led by the Owner-Operator's Business Association of Canada

(OBAC), which is being flanked by the 130,000 trucker-strong American group, Owner-Operator and Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA). In their final submissions to the MTO, both groups referenced several studies by Transport Canada, the University of Arkansas, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), that showed that

Dispatches

differential vehicle speeds on highways would increase the risk of incidents while offering no significant reduction in the overall severity of highway accidents between cars and trucks.

The owner-op groups insist that maintaining a high level of speed enforcement on roads and highways; stepped-up public education on how to share the road with trucks; and mandatory retesting of all drivers with questionable driving records, would keep speeding trucks in check.

OOIDA and OBAC found an unlikely ally a few weeks before the MTO decision. The Private Motor Truck Council of Canada (PMTCC) also weighed in on the speed limiter debate. Its recommendation to MTO? No thanks.

"What we believe is lacking in the proposal, is any definitive proof that truck

speeding is a major issue in Ontario," PMTCC president Bruce Richards wrote. "In fact, in the OTA's own words 'trucks are the least likely vehicles to be speeding on Ontario's highways.'

"We are not cavalier about speeding trucks," Richards continued. "Of course they represent a danger. But responsible carriers have established speed policies for their fleets. So if it is the few 'bad apples' scenario, perhaps increased enforcement and penalties could resolve the issue."

Judging by the loads of email and phone messages sent to editors of *Today's Trucking* over the last six months, it's safe to suggest most owner-operators and small fleets feel pretty much the same way.

One owner of a small heavy-haul and crane company near Barrie, Ont. told

Today's Trucking that as a member of the OTA, he wrote the association to express his concerns over their proposal. Wishing to remain anonymous, he said slower trucks and faster cars could spell disaster in urban areas—especially in incidents involving heavy vehicles like

his. "You'll get a wall of trucks, with cars trying to duck in between," he says. "Cars have no idea that our truck, even with flags and D signs, is pulling 90,000 pounds gross. When a [driver] pulls in a couple car lengths in front of that tractor-trailer and slams on his brakes, what are the consequences going to be?"

The small fleet operator also points out another potential problem that's not been widely discussed. "Say

you're climbing a hill in Newmarket, and you're a heavy truck going 90 or 100 km/h, and a truck with a lighter load or geared differ-

You'll get a wall of trucks, with cars ducking in between.

ently is going to pass because he thinks he has that extra five or 10 clicks," he explains. "Well because he's going to get stuck at 105, it's going to take the whole hill to pass. You used to have that acceleration to pass and now you don't. Now there's a lineup of cars behind both trucks."

Ed Murdoch, owner of C&E Driver Service in Enderby, B.C., and former safety and compliance officer for West Line Trucking Ltd. of Salmon Arm, scoffs at the idea of speed limiters, saying the few trucks that routinely speed should be put out of business with



LOG BOOK

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April 20-22



Truck World 2006: Canada's National Truck Show, International Centre, Toronto. Presented by *Today's Trucking* Magazine's publisher Newcom Business Media, this is the signature trucking show event in Canada for fleets, truckmakers, and suppliers. Contact: Call Elizabeth at 416/614-5817, Toll Free at 1-877-682-7469 or point that mouse to www.truckworld.ca

April 21-23

Alberta Motor Transport Association 2006 Annual Conference, Rimrock Hotel, Banff, Alta. Meetings and truck transportation seminars for Alberta association member fleets. Contact: 1-800/267-1003 or go to www.amta.ca

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laws on the books. "Excuse me for pointing out the obvious—it's not fast trucks or cars that cause the problems, it is fast drivers. Personally, I prefer fast trucks and slow drivers. Then it is possible to coax some real fuel conservation out of your conveyance without pinning it all the time," he says. "The only viable speed limiter in a truck ought to be the one in the driver's seat."

And who's going to pay to enforce the new enforcement, Murdoch wonders? "Are we going to have another gun registry-like fiasco where all owner-operators and small companies will 'willingly' surrender their vehicles for computer surgery," he asks. "Will it become mandatory that every time a truck enters a repair facility its speed [limiter] will be checked by a certified technician? And, again, at the risk of repeating myself, who is going to pay for all this?"

— *Be sure to monitor Today'sTrucking.com for the latest on the speed limiter decision.*

Congestion Bright Lights, Big Truck-Free City

It's no secret that transport trucks aren't exactly the most loved vehicles in bike-path-type urban centres. So much so, that two major Canadian cities are dreaming up ways of ridding their downtown cores of trucks.

In Hogtown, Toronto City Council has referred a motion to ban all truck deliveries in parts of the city's downtown core to the



HE BE BACK

FORMER FREIGHTLINER HONCHO LANDS IN CANADA

Former Freightliner LLC boss James Hebe has landed back in the commercial trucking industry after a five-year hiatus.

In an exclusive interview with *Today'sTrucking.com* in February, Hebe confirmed he and a handful of investors have acquired Co-Van International Trucks Inc., a full-line International Truck and Engine dealer in the Vancouver area.

"I've always had a desire to stay in trucks and be involved with the commercial truck side of the industry," Hebe says. "We concluded that being on the entrepreneurial side, being involved in the daily delivery side of the industry, is where we wanted to spend the rest of our careers."

Hebe's career now seems to have come full circle, as he got his start with International Harvester in 1972. But it was in the 1990s, as president of Freightliner, when the outspoken and charismatic Hebe made a name for himself. Under his watch, Freightliner rose from a relatively minor player to become the leader in class-8 North American market share. Major gains were made through the acquisitions of Ford Motor Co.'s heavy-truck division, renamed Sterling, and formerly Kelowna, B.C.-based Western Star Trucks.

Mired in the most dramatic heavy-truck sales slump in years, Hebe resigned in May, 2001. Two years later, he and a group of investors bought firetruck maker Seagrave Fire Apparatus, from which Hebe later resigned as well.

While it may be surprising to some observers that Hebe chose to move across the 49th paral-

lel, it's no coincidence, he says, that he finds himself back in the Pacific Northwest. "We're in love with the West Coast," he says. "There was a desire to get back in the business on the retail side. So, when Vancouver popped up, it looked like the right thing to do."

Although he has a history at International, the company was also his chief rival for most of his years at Freightliner. "Well, no one's taken any shots at me yet," Hebe jokes.

Hebe sees limitless growth for International in Canada's western-most province, where the

company has a strong presence in urban medium-duty applications as well as vocational and utility sectors. "International is a company with one of the best well-kept secrets I've ever seen," Hebe says. "With what's been done on the vocational side, and with the introduction of the new heavy-duty highway product (later this year), it's all just growing tremendously with the product that's available."

It's unlikely Vancouver will be Hebe's final stop, either. "One of our top priorities is to look at the entire southwest B.C. market and determine what it's going to take in terms of facilities, locations and

relationships, to expand our business," says Hebe, who wouldn't rule out possibilities in Central Canada.

Co-Van International Trucks Inc. has been in business since 1973 as an International new and pre-owned truck dealer servicing the Greater Vancouver market and Vancouver Island. It employs about 50 people at its Coquitlam, B.C. headquarters.

"We're in love with the West Coast."



James Hebe



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Works Committee for public input and depositions.

The motion, presented to City Council by Councillor Michael Walker, proposes to ban all truck deliveries in the city's downtown core for six hours a day, during morning and evening rush hour. The plan would restrict picking up or dropping off goods between the hours of 7:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Truckers wouldn't mind at all avoiding the most congested areas of the Big Smoke, says Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) President David Bradley. But delivery times aren't his members' problem.

"Schedules are not established by the trucking industry. Our customers—in this case the businesses located in the downtown core—dictate when and where our trucks pick-up and deliver goods," Bradley wrote in a letter to Toronto Mayor David Miller. "The problem is, and has always been, that few businesses are 24/7 enterprises and have staff available to receive or load goods during off-peak times. By forcing all trucks to make deliveries during a limited narrow delivery window, the result may also be increased truck traffic during 10 a.m. to 3 p.m."

Things are much less batty on the Atlantic Coast, where Nova Scotia's major city simply wants to divert truck traffic away from city centres.

A soon-to-be released report commissioned by the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the Halifax Port Authority (HPA) says a truck-free

on the Docket

NTSB CONDEMNS AUTO-SLACK ADJUSTMENT PRACTICE

IMPROPER ADJUSTMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF AUTOMATIC SLACK ADJUSTERS LEAD TO FATAL COLLISION

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) says improper manual adjustment of a truck's automatic slack adjusters was a direct contributing factor in a collision that claimed two lives in Glen Rock, Pa. on April 11, 2003. In its report, NTSB also cited the lack of information on the hazards of manually adjusting automatic slack adjusters in CDL training manuals, and, the generally poor knowledge and understanding of brake diagnostic practices and knowledge of the proper use of auto-slacks by mechanics.

The carrier, Blossom Valley Farms, Inc., was also cited by NTSB for "lack of oversight" in the operation of its truck fleet for employing a driver with no experience with air-braked vehicles, permitting him to operate an improperly maintained truck with out-of-adjustment brakes.

The driver was unable to slow the truck on a steep narrow downgrade. Near the bottom of the hill, the driver struck four cars before careening through a gas station parking lot and coming to rest several hundred feet from the site of the first collision.

Complicating the issue was the fact that the untrained 21-year-old driver claimed he "pumped the brakes" on the way down the hill—a technique applicable to hydraulic brake systems—depleting the air supply and further reducing the force applied by the pushrods.

STEPS TO DISASTER:

The NTSB report highlights the lack of understanding of the proper function of auto-slacks by both drivers and mechanics. Interviews conducted during the investigation revealed that the truck had been taken out of service a year before the accident for out-of-adjustment brakes in a CVSA Level 1 inspection.

The driver, at that time, manually adjusted the brakes to restore the proper pushrod stroke, and did so on several occasions prior to the fatal accident. The last manual re-adjustment occurred three months before the accident; again, done by a mechanic.

The NTSB was critical of the mechanic(s) and the company for simply readjusting the auto-slacks rather than determining and remedying the cause of the out-of-adjustment condition. Interestingly, in a random survey of mechanics, NTSB found a majority of them would simply re-adjust an auto-slack found in an over-stroke condition.

In another investigation mentioned by NTSB, a dump truck driver in El Cerrito, Calif. took out seven cars, injured seven people, and burned a million-dollar house to the ground when he failed to negotiate a steep down grade in August 2003. He says he manually

adjusted his own auto-slacks at least twice a week.

At the time of the accident, the automatic slack adjusters for all four of the accident truck's brakes were capable of working properly; however, the quick-connect clevises and clevis pins for both rear brakes were worn to the extent that they prevented the auto-slacks from properly adjusting the brakes.

According to brake system diagnostic expert Dale Holman of TruckWatch Services in Georgetown, Ont., an auto-slack with working



parts can "unadjust" itself in as few as two or three brake applications.

"I've seen it happen on my own trucks, and I've seen it in the field, too," says Holman. "What's more frightening, I've seen trucks go through the shop where the mechanics routinely 'setup' auto-slacks. They've got to learn to leave them alone unless there's an obvious problem."

Read more of this story at TodaysTrucking.com.

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Dispatches

downtown makes good business sense. The Halifax Trucking Options Study, prepared by N.S.-based marine consulting firm Marinova Consulting, recommends the city build an inland terminal, in the neighbouring suburb of Bedford. Goods entering Halifax by ship would be loaded directly onto rail cars and transported to the inland terminal, where they would then be picked up by truck.

Each year, approximately 14 million metric tonnes of cargo dock at one of Halifax's two container terminals, resulting in hundreds of trucks passing through the small downtown each day.

Proponents say the move would help address long-standing complaints about the noise, pollution, and traffic congestion attributed to the city's heavy truck traffic.

In a report to Halifax council last week, Mike Labrecque, director of Transportation and Public Works, wrote "the additional cost of transferring a container from rail to truck is approximately offset by savings in truck travel time not having to contend with city traffic reaching the port."

Brian Conrad, owner of Conrad Transport, a container haulage company, agrees that an inland terminal would likely reduce congestion downtown and save his drivers the headache of battling city traffic. But he says the biggest savings would come as a result of not having to cross the

Halifax-Dartmouth toll bridge—a major access route to the city. He pegs the annual savings in toll fees at roughly \$100,000 per year. However, while he'd love another option outside the port terminals, Conrad won't hold his breath. "We've talked about this for 20 years," he says.

— with files from
Eleanor Beaton

Intermodal Railroads in a Renaissance?

The railroad industry has passed through an inflection point and may now be in the early stages of a comeback, some freight experts are predicting.

In a presentation to the Associations of American Railroads' Treasury-Finance division, John Larkin, managing director of U.S.-based Transportation Group-Equity Research, Stifel, Nicolaus & Co., said the railroads have done a good job of downsizing over the years and have made massive improvements in productivity. Many have encountered financial difficulty and even now aren't earning their cost of capital but "we think the railroads are right on the verge of changing this decade-old story," he said.

Rail business, he says, should get a boost from three key shipping sources: imports, coal, and grain. Over the next 10 years, the number of imported containers coming into North America is expected to double and rail moves much of that container freight.

Higher prices for natural gas and other energy sources likely will make coal the energy of choice for U.S. electric power generators—and railroads have recaptured an increasing percentage of coal shipments over the years. China and other developing countries are also importing more grain, and moving grain to North American Pacific ports is another railroad forte, Larkin says.

As if on cue, CN Rail flexed some muscle in a series of expansion moves on both sides of the border. CN and BNSF announced an agreement on improving rail network fluidity and

ON TRACK: Is rail finally getting its act together?



infrastructure capacity principally in Vancouver-Chicago markets. The agreement includes track and rail infrastructure exchanges between the railroads, and

CN's grant of trackage, haulage, and other access rights to BNSF. CN also purchased the Alberta short-line railways owned by RailAmerica, Inc. CN says

these feeder lines to the oil sands strengthen the railway's merchandise and bulk commodity businesses at a time of major energy development in northern Alberta.

But it is at the coastal ports where the railways' renaissance is being mounted. Container traffic at the Port of Vancouver reached a new record of 1.77 million TEUs (twenty foot equivalent units) in 2005.

However, congestion, outdated infrastructure and a series of labor disruptions in recent years have impeded VanPort from keeping pace with other Pacific ports in the U.S.



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Dispatches

That's not the case on Canada's opposite coast where investments are being made to lure Asian container traffic away from Vancouver to Halifax. David Fung, vice-chairman of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, says that Lower Mainland ports don't have the capacity to cope with all the skyrocketing Chinese trade. "It is time for the East Coast to take over," he told a business gathering last month.

Apparently, more than a couple of transportation and logistics firms agree Halifax could position itself as a leading gateway to North American markets. Consolidated Fastfrate of Woodbridge, Ont. recently announced plans to build a state-of-the-art transload, distribution centre in Dartmouth, N.S., that will act as a staging ground for freight from Asia that arrives in Halifax via the Suez Canal. When complete, the facility will unload and sort cargo for transportation across North America, says Fastfrate President Ron Tepper. "Currently, we transload approximately 20,000 containers a year in Vancouver and we expect to replicate that service in Halifax, making Fastfrate the only company working the East and West Coasts," he says.

Windsor-Detroit

Moroun Speaks: Private is Best

Matty Moroun says he will sell the Ambassador Bridge if the price is right and, contrary to published reports, has no interest in

taking full control of the Windsor-Detroit tunnel.

Those were among the revelations the secretive billionaire Ambassador Bridge owner shared during an exclusive four-hour interview with *The Windsor Star* recently.

Asked if aggravation or frustration in the border traffic battle became too great, would he sell if the offer was right, Moroun quipped: "I think the second part is right. If the offer is right we would consider it. We would be foolish if we didn't. It's a business deal.

"What aggravation? You've never seen aggravation until you are in the trucking business," continued Moroun, who rarely, if ever, speaks to the media. "Never seen aggravation until you deal with these auto companies. I don't even know how they think sometimes."

Moroun, son Matthew, and other bridge company executives said they were frustrated over what they described as the recent meddling of government bureaucrats and politicians into a business arena where the bridge company has unparalleled expertise.

The binational Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC)—assigned to select the next river crossing location—was blasted by both Morouns as a waste of money. The bridge owner wondered aloud if government should be trusted with moving traffic better than him.

Moroun doesn't think so. That's why in 1979 he bought the bridge in the first place, he says. Not so

much for the financial bonanza it has proven to be, but to guarantee his own trucks could traverse the border in a timely fashion. He wanted the ability to build infrastructure when needed, not relying on the glacial pace of governments.

“We have helped the border grow, we helped Windsor grow. We helped the county and province grow. So what’s bad about an ownership that is private, that takes things to heart and has their hands in it for immediate action to everyone’s benefit?”

Bridge company executives say they believe that even after DRIC decides on plaza and crossing locations for a new bridge, the Canadian and U.S. governments will not spend the minimum \$1 billion required from each side to fix what is essentially a Windsor feeder-road problem.

A bridge company offer to gain control of the lease for the U.S. side of the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel has been tabled, until a parallel proposal comes from the city of Windsor, which owns the Canadian side, Moroun said.

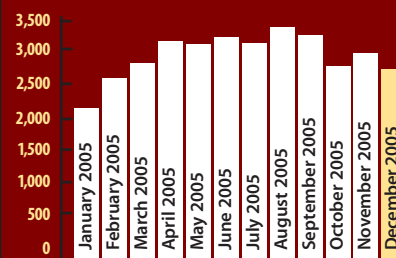
“We don’t plan on owning it, setting tolls, or having the last word on anything,” he explains. “We only want the rights to suggest, then they have to approve it like any board of directors. I don’t think anybody wants to allow us to dictate to the tunnel. We don’t plan on doing that.”

— Reprinted with permission from the Windsor Star. ▲

truck sales index

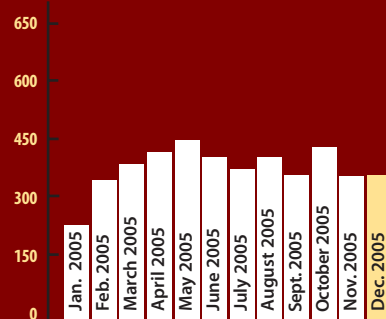
December 2005

CLASS 8	This Month	YTD '05	YTD '04	Share
Freightliner	506	7943	6841	22.7%
International	442	7644	6286	21.8%
Kenworth	514	5177	4456	14.8%
Peterbilt	280	3479	3404	9.9%
Volvo	332	3319	3373	9.5%
Sterling	245	2628	2140	7.5%
Western Star	229	2566	2051	7.3%
Mack	231	2253	1767	6.4%
TOTAL	2779	35,009	30,318	100.0%



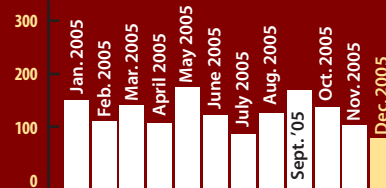
12-month Class-8 Sales

CLASS 7	This Month	YTD '05	YTD '04	Share
International	95	1319	1300	28.2%
General Motors	110	702	734	15.0%
Freightliner	33	656	658	14.0%
Kenworth	47	545	470	11.7%
Peterbilt	34	508	518	10.9%
Sterling	39	436	457	9.3%
Hino Canada	23	282	270	6.0%
Ford	6	226	39	4.8%
Western Star	0	0	3	0.0%
Mack	0	0	2	0.0%
TOTAL	387	4674	4451	100.0%



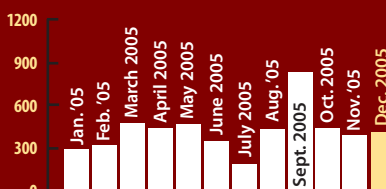
12-month Class-7 Sales

CLASS 6	This Month	YTD '05	YTD '04	Share
International	10	552	589	37.7%
General Motors	22	267	172	18.2%
Hino Canada	19	211	111	14.4%
Freightliner	12	198	217	13.5%
Sterling	8	122	89	8.3%
Ford	8	116	10	7.9%
TOTAL	79	1466	1188	100.0%



12-month Class-6 Sales

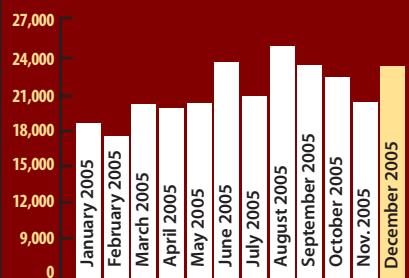
CLASS 5	This Month	YTD '05	YTD '04	Share
Ford	163	2231	2324	43.8%
General Motors	166	1482	973	29.1%
Hino Canada	56	680	837	13.3%
International	47	637	173	12.5%
Freightliner	3	69	582	1.4%
Sterling	0	0	1	0.0%
TOTAL	435	5099	4890	100.0%



12-month Class-5 Sales

U.S. RETAIL TRUCK SALES

CLASS 8	This Month	YTD '05	YTD '04	Share
Freightliner	6026	79453	59573	31.0%
International	3440	46093	38241	18.0%
Peterbilt	3140	30211	26143	11.8%
Mack	3228	27303	20670	10.7%
Kenworth	2850	27153	23294	10.6%
Volvo	2582	26446	20323	10.3%
Sterling	1666	15733	11950	6.1%
Western Star	273	2924	2208	1.1%
Other	60	623	778	0.2%
TOTAL	23,265	255,939	203,180	100.0%



12-month Class-8 Sales, United States



Online Resources: For more truck sales stats, go to todaystrucking.com
Sources: Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association and Ward's Communication.



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To Know Then What's Known Now

driver's side *Playing the odds when your job hangs in the balance is a risky strategy.* By Jim Park

A commuter plane crashed in a mountainous area of Vancouver Island late last month, killing three people including the pilot. Normally, such a story wouldn't warrant more than a curious read, just to see what happened. I'm an aviation enthusiast, and therefore interested in why airplanes sometimes come to ignominious ends. A CBC reporter's interview with the pilot's father is what spawned this column.

The father claims the young pilot (age 25) was concerned about flying that particular airplane, and that he wanted to leave the airline over undisclosed safety issues. That type of aircraft had known icing issues in certain weather conditions, though investigators don't suspect icing was an issue in this case. I'm sure the pilot knew what was wrong, but having already ventured too far down the proverbial path of no return, he would have found his options unforgivingly limited.

That's a position many of us have been in at one time or another, I'd guess.

I'd bet there are few among us who can say they've never placed productivity or employability ahead of safety. I've let myself be pushed into situations that I should have refused. Sometimes mechanical, sometimes performance related, but situations where the outcome could have been worse. There may be people out there somewhere who got

dangerously close to me at the wrong time, but by some good grace, remain oblivious to the danger I put them in.

Thinking back, I can say I should have refused—but there were pressures. Time, money, appointments, home time; I can't recall, exactly, but they seemed real enough



then. I made my choices, and fortunately nobody has had to live with the consequences. Not so for the young aviator who perished trying to get his plane and his passengers safely back on the ground.

Some might say he had his chance to refuse, but didn't take it. I empathize with the guy if he really felt that way. His job likely hung in the balance, and it's not easy for a young pilot to build time preparing for a job driving the big jets. If pilots were in hot demand, he might have been more comfortable saying no. I've faced similar choices, and chose like that pilot did. Only,

I'm still here.

A driver's life may not hang so precariously in the balance following a bad decision, but there are instances where drivers are forced into situations they'd likely rather not be in. For example, picking up a trailer at a customer's loading dock and finding a

ing been there—borrowing an expression from aviation, I'd much prefer to be on the ground wishing I were flying, than the other way around. I'm sure that pilot had a moment, some minutes before he augered his plane into the ground, recalling that he should have called in sick that day.

As is often the case in trucking, novice employees sometimes take jobs with carriers that place them in situations beyond their competency. When the driver can't get a job with a good carrier, they take work with a poor one—being new to the biz, they often don't know the difference. And for many of the same reasons as our ill-fated pilot, take an assignment they might have refused if that gig wasn't the only one in town.

Experienced drivers do it too, often believing they can manage the risk. And carriers sometimes roll the dice believing they aren't likely to be caught in an inspection with faulty equipment so close to home, or that once they've dispatched the driver, the risk is for him or her to manage. More often than not, everything works out. But as the smashed Cessna 108, buried up to the windscreen on a mountainside near Port Alberni, B.C. will attest, not always. ▲

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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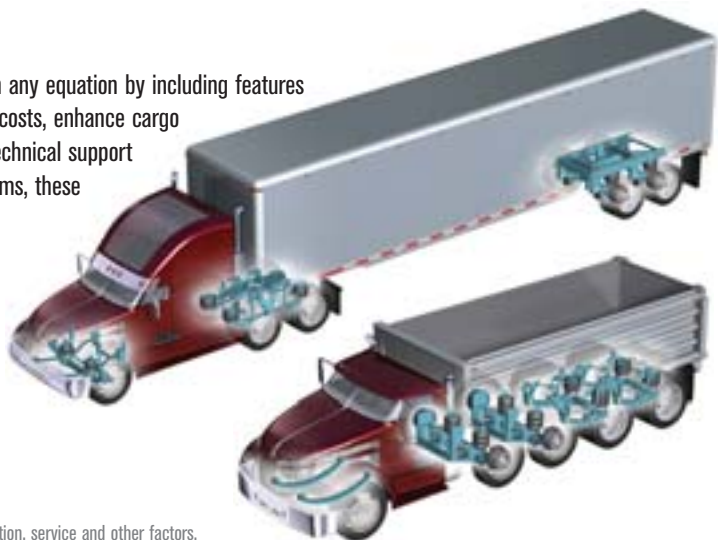
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MANAGING PEOPLE, TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS, AND SAFETY



FREIGHT-FREE TRAINING: Simulators let new drivers make big mistakes, safely.

Simulating Conversation

safety dept *How to prep your drivers for emergencies before they happen. By Duff McCutcheon*

Ever have a steer-tire blow out? We pray you never do. But if it happens, here's a suggestion: Don't hit the brakes. Instead, gently apply some power, look for a safe place to get off the road, then ease off, and bring the unit to a stop.

That's what the drivers at Winnipeg's Bison Transport are taught, and they put

this into practice from within the safe confines of the company's state-of-the-art driver training simulator. It sure beats learning on the road.

Bison's three simulators play an integral part in the company's Tatonka training program—an ongoing skills-development program for drivers that focuses on improving the level of operator safety and

reducing the risk of collision for all its drivers, from rookie to veteran.

"It's a refresher program that uses advanced technologies such as simulators and computer-based learning, as well as classroom instruction, to update drivers' skills," says David Klassen, Bison's manager of driver development. "I compare our program with the airline industry, where they use simulation and advanced technology to review emergency procedures for their pilots."

While Bison was the first Canadian fleet to start implementing simulator training, other fleets are catching on. Cambridge, Ont.'s Challenger Motor

Street Smarts

Freight is apparently looking at acquiring one, and numerous driving schools are also using the technology.

The Tatonka program includes courses on Decision Driving, Fuel Management, Speed Management, Space Management, Extreme Weather Driving, the Seven-Second Rule, in addition to regular



PILOT PROJECTS: Long used in the airline industry, simulator training also minimizes wear and tear on training vehicles as well as later on the real rigs.

compliance-type courses like dangerous goods and brake adjustment. Instructors provide the theory in the classroom, then the drivers head to the lab for some computer-based learning where they review the concepts and theory. “And from there they go into the simulator, and this is where you put the theory into practice,” says Klassen. We’re able to have the driver demonstrate for us that they know how to apply certain techniques in certain situations. And in the simulator it’s consistent because we can run the same scenario for each driver. And of course, if there’s any accidents it’s in a safe environment.”

Bison uses L3 Communication’s TranSim VS stationary simulator and the Mark II full-motion simulator that features a realistic cab, fully operational dashboard, steering wheel and stick shift, and realistic vehicle noises and vibrations associated with tires, engines, and road noise.

“With the simulators we can introduce all sorts of different events—we can really

mess with the drivers if we want to,” says Klassen. “We can control the weather, road conditions, traffic, animals wandering onto the road and you can really feel it on the simulator. For example, if you put it on the maximum ice setting, it’s almost impossible to control the truck.”

What they don’t want to do is use simulation to lull drivers into a sense of false confidence, where they feel they can get away with driving too fast for conditions secure in the knowledge that they know what to do because “hey, I did it all on the simulator.”

“Our main focus is on preventing the jackknife in the first place,” says



Klassen. “It’s about looking at the decision making of the driver in advance of getting into those kinds of difficulties.”

ROI

There’s a lot of investment to return with simulators—L3 makes simulators for jet fighters for the U.S. military, and wheelhouse simulators for ship captains, and the software and hardware that goes into making the simulation realistic doesn’t come cheap. The most current version, the TranSim VS 111 runs around \$190,000 and the next generation model, the VS IV will set you back roughly \$225,000.

Alan Masters of Drive Wise, Canada’s L3 distributor, says big savings can be found in the length of time it takes to train a driver, fuel costs in using the simulator to train a driver to drive efficiently, “as well

as a decline in maintenance costs from less wear and tear on equipment by drivers that use it properly, not to mention a reduction in accident rates after simulation training.”

Plus, Masters claims simulation training has been proven to provide better skills retention compared to other training models, including actual early experience behind the wheel of a real truck. “Because the student isn’t as nervous,” he says. “He or she isn’t concentrating on the fact that they’re at the helm of this massive machine.”

Does it work? Klassen admits it’s been a little tricky measuring ROI in terms of dollars and cents. “We’ve been at it on a large scale for about two-and-a-half years now and ultimately our priority measurement is to see how we’re actually able to reduce accident frequency and severity in our fleet. But of course, there are so many variables to deal with when it comes to accidents—training, the equipment, the load, the time of day—there’s so many factors that contribute,” he says.

“But we have done a time-between-crashes study, which did indicate that the training has increased the mean time between crashes. We’ve also had a look at some other stats that compared accident rates and I would say the trend is going in the right direction.”

BEFORE YOU BUY...

Not that many fleets would rush into an investment as large as a \$100,000 simulator, but Klassen cautions against purchasing one without ensuring you have training plans and curricula in place.

Masters says Drive Wise also offers leasing arrangements for companies, with customized training packages including software, training for company trainers, and “all kinds of programs available according to customer need,” he says.

Or, if you’re a smaller fleet looking for maybe an annual or biennial refresher for your drivers, Drive Wise will bring in its own simulator and instructors for a few days of training. “Typically we can go in and train 20 drivers a day in a custom program we’ve put together for a company. It’s a turn-key operation where we supply everything and charge it on a daily basis.” ▲



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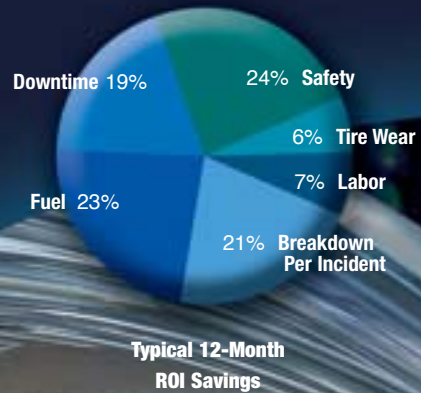


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Good News About Bad News

human resources *Why telling someone to “calm down” always backfires, and other tips for delivering unwelcome information. By Jennifer May*

It's the worst part of my job—delivering bad news. Some folks might find that surprising, seeing as I'm a dispatcher and many people believe we thrive on giving others bad news.

We don't. And we also know that how you deliver bad news can be just as important as how you deliver your freight.

Giving bad news to a driver in a hurried and off-hand manner can send that driver out to meet your customers in a decidedly bad mood. What kind of impression is an angry and unsatisfied driver going to give your customer? And if you're giving bad news to a customer, you have to do it with the greatest of tact, because you will want that person coming back.

Anything that puts your company in a bad light with a customer has the potential to affect your profits. I've worked in a shop where drivers were not respected, turnover was extremely high, and so were conflicts among management, drivers, and dispatch. Ultimately the customer suffered and that was reflected on the bottom line of the company.

Unless you are firing someone, you will need to have a good working relationship with that person. From my dispatch perspective, the driver I have to give bad news to today becomes the driver I need a favor from tomorrow.

If the transportation industry is to be seen as a profes-



sional industry, we need to treat all of our employees and customers as the professionals they are. After all, you will get better results from people if they believe themselves to be a respected and valued part of the organization.

Over my years as a dispatcher I have had to give a lot of bad news to drivers and customers and have developed a five-point game plan for delivering unpleasant news:

1 BE PREPARED

Before delivering the bad news, I make sure I have all my facts straight. I write down important details, regardless of whether I'm going to be delivering the news in person or

over the phone. That way I'm not scrambling for what to say. The more composed and prepared you are when delivering the news, the more accepting the driver or customer will be to the information. Kristin Robertson, President of KR Consulting in Colleyville, Texas, agrees. She trains customer service professionals and says customers “will sense your assurance and react positively to it.”

2 BE TIMELY

Unlike fine wines, bad news does not get better with age. I try to give bad news as soon as possible. This allows for maximum reaction time. The sooner I tell a customer

Unlike fine wines, bad news does not get better with age. I try to give bad news as soon as possible.

a truck has broken down and I won't be able to make the pick up this morning, the more time the customer and I have to work out a solution. Robertson adds that bad news early can be good news and “the sooner you can communicate what might be bad news to a customer, the more control the customer has over the outcome.”



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3 BE DIRECT

This is no time to be pulling the band-aid off slowly. That doesn't mean I am harsh and indifferent when delivering bad news; I am simply honest and direct. If business has slowed down and a work-sharing program is to be implemented, I say that. If really terrible weather means that a customer's freight is not going to get to the destination on time, I tell them that. I do try to show concern for the other person while I am giving them the bad news. I soften the more direct blow by opening the conversation with phrases like, "I'm sorry to have to tell you..." or "I'm afraid that..."

4 BE READY

Transportation professionals work under extremely tight deadlines and an amazing

amount of stress everyday. When I am going to be giving someone bad news I am ready for any reaction, from tears to an angry explosion of swearing, or possibly even a physical outburst. I will even ask someone else to be with me if I think the other person may react physically. This may sound extreme, but I've seen a telephone thrown across an office, and many doors slammed and kicked. I try to remain calm and composed, but I don't ask the other person to calm down. In my experience, that usually backfires, making them more angry or upset. I let them vent and ride out their reaction, after all, this is the first time they have heard the news. When people have an extreme reaction, I try to remember that they are

reacting to the news, not to me, and I don't get involved in a personal confrontation.

5 BE POSITIVE

When giving disappointing news I try to remember this is not likely going to be the end of my relationship with that



customer or driver. With that in mind, I am as positive as I can be when delivering bad news. The goods may be late, but I assure the customer they will get there safely and undamaged because the

driver is being cautious due to the weather conditions. Drivers may be disappointed with a particular run, or having to use equipment they don't like, but I reassure them it is only temporary, and likely they will back on their regular runs with their usual truck in no time.

In the transportation industry bad news is inevitable. Drivers and dispatchers are only human, and mistakes and miscalculations do happen. Equipment does fail, no matter how new or well-maintained it is. The industry is intense and highly competitive. I don't want to lose my company's edge by delivering bad news badly. ▲

Jennifer May is a former radio reporter and a dispatcher with Beeline Transport in Belleville, Ont.

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The Safest Stat of All

safety dept. *Want to make trucking safer and more driver-friendly? Read on.*

By Raymond Mercuri

It goes without saying that trucking is one of the most challenging industries today, and to succeed carriers need to be aware of new innovations and information that can identify and solve current problems while avoiding problems down the road.

The US SafeStat is an online service provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation that collects critical data on fleet operations. It's like an electronic ongoing report card of fleet-safety performance and I wish Canada had a similar system.

It works like this: SafeStat collects information on all U.S. roadside inspections, vehicle collisions, moving violations, hours-of-service violations, and fleet audits.

The information is then used to assign three general ratings: Pass; Optional; and Inspect. These ratings are used by the DOT to specify the action a DOT officer should take with a specific carrier.

A carrier with a Pass rating has a ratings score between one and 49 points. A carrier with a Pass rating is "waved through" at a roadside scale by a DOT officer because of the carrier's excellent safety performance. Doesn't that sound more efficient than what we're accustomed to in this country?

A score of 50 to 74 earns an Optional rating. This rating advises the DOT officer that the truck might be worth a look, at the officer's discre-

tion. If traffic at the scale is slow, chances are good that you will get an inspection.

If you arrive at a scale with a score of 75 to 100, plan on spending a minimum of one hour at the scale. Congratulations. Your inspect rating earns you a DOT officer's full attention.

The last rating category is "Insufficient Data," which means the DOT simply have little or no data on a fleet. The officer is required to conduct an inspection to capture information to build and establish a carrier's safety profile and rating.

SafeStat helps identify



problem carriers and encourages safer operations. For carriers, SafeStat is an essential tool that helps you anticipate your drivers' interactions with DOT officers while operating in the U.S. No carrier can afford to operate without knowing its rating. You don't have any reasons not to. After all, it's free to use.

To use SafeStat, visit www.ai.volpe.dot.gov and enter either your U.S. DOT number or company name. The site returns a graph measuring your fleet per-

formance and links to accident, driver, and mechanical vehicle inspection details on your fleet.

The driver violations-portion of a SafeStat report is critical for fleet managers. First, it identifies every moving violation assigned to a specific driver. As a result, SafeStat can help identify problem drivers, prompting you to take corrective action.

This information can identify drivers who require further training and attention.

Hours of Service violations are given substantial weight in a SafeStat rating calculation. Again, this information can identify drivers who require further training and attention.

Unfortunately, in my experience a surprising number of fleet managers are not familiar with SafeStat. Once they are, the site is quickly bookmarked in their Favorites.

As a fleet manager, I regularly reviewed the mechanical defects report noted on the company's SafeStat report with garage and maintenance

vendors. It was an effective way to spot problem trends and to improve our inspection checklist. It also helped us identify potential driver training needs.

Fleets can also leverage their SafeStat rating as a driver recruiting tool. Any carrier who's earned a "Pass" rating should be mentioning that fact in their driver recruiting efforts. It's a perk for prospective drivers to know that they won't be delayed at U.S. scales. In many instances, I've seen the SafeStat rating used to "close" the hiring of a quality professional driver.

Finally, a Pass rating can serve as a powerful marketing tool. In the same way that the site is free for you to use and access, SafeStat also makes your safety information freely available to anyone wanting to scrutinize your safety history. Not surprisingly, many U.S. shippers don't conduct business with a carrier without first looking at their SafeStat rating—another big reason to earn and maintain a Pass rating.

I would urge all Canadian trucking associations and transportation ministries to give a Canuck version of SafeStat—and one that's compatible with the American system—serious consideration. Trucking would become a safer business, guaranteed. ▲

Raymond Mercuri writes about safety and training for *Today's Trucking*.

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To EI, or Not To EI?

big money *That tax deduction that's sitting on your couch watching The Simpsons? Should he be paying into Canada Pension? By Scott Taylor*

They say trucking gets in your blood, and if you don't believe me just look at the number of family-run carriers. From a tax-planning standpoint, there's a good reason to hire someone in the family: income splitting, where you distribute business profits among family members who helped generate the returns.

But if you're putting your spouse, kids, or some other relative to work, paying a wage or salary, don't forget you're their employer. You may have some type of tax and legal obligations as you would if you'd hired someone off the street. These might include source deductions like Employment Insurance and/or Canada Pension Plan.

Then again, they might not. The Employment Insurance Act states that employees who are related to their employer—be that a sole proprietor or corporation—may not be eligible for EI benefits and should not have EI premiums deducted from their pay. The Income Tax Act deems that related persons do not deal with each other “at arm's length.” People who are connected by blood relationship (relatives of common descent, like a father and son), marriage, common-law partnership, or adoption are considered “related persons.” You also can be related to a corporation if you're related to one or more of the people who control the corporation, or when a corporation employs

someone who controls more than 40 percent of the corporation's voting shares.

On the other hand, some family employees might indeed qualify for EI. For example, a related employee may be insurable if it's reasonable to conclude that you would have hired a non-related person to do the same job at a similar rate of pay. What is reasonable? Some considerations Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) would use:

Remuneration. Is the pay you offer your related employee commensurate with what a non-relative would accept for similar work?

Don't try to arrange a haphazard payment formula or job description after your year-end.

Employment terms and conditions. Are the terms and conditions of employment substantially similar to the ones in an arm's length employment relationship?

Nature and importance of the work performed. Are the services you hired your employee to perform necessary and important to the business operation?

If you're not sure whether to deduct EI premiums for your employee, you can ask Canada Revenue Agency to make a ruling on the case. Rulings are formal CRA decisions that cannot be reversed. They clarify your obligation

as the employer, and your employee can be assured that if he or she is eligible to make an EI claim (due to lay-off, pregnancy, or sickness), coverage would not be denied.

Either you or your employee can make the request by

Hiring family takes serious forethought and solid tax advice from someone who has experience with family businesses. Don't try to arrange a haphazard payment formula or job description after your year-end. Put an employment



sending a letter or a completed Form CPT-1 to the nearest tax services office; you have until June 30 of the year following the year in which the employment occurred to send it in.

Once a ruling has been requested, an authorized CRA officer will contact you or your employee. Sometimes the officer will ask for more information such as payroll records, copies of written contracts, or other related documents; so follow their instructions and be prepared. Once a ruling has been made, the officer sends a letter to the worker and the employer giving the reasons for the ruling. If you've already deducted EI premiums and the officer rules that you shouldn't have, you have up to three years to request a refund of the EI premiums.

agreement in place at the beginning of your fiscal reporting period outlining your decisions behind income splitting, and be ready to defend the value and worth of your family members' contribution to the business and to the bottom line.

If you think the amount you've chosen to pay a family employee seems unreasonable for the job at hand, it probably is.

For information about CRA's rules regarding family employees, visit the Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Zone at www.cra-arc.gc.ca and click on “payroll deductions.” ▲

Scott Taylor is Vice President of TFS Group of Waterloo, Ont. For more information visit www.tfsgroup.com or call 1-800-461-5970

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WESTWARD yo!



A look at the Top 100 for-hire fleets of 2006 shows that even though you'll be paying more for diesel, the oil itself will be helping truckers prosper.

The very day this issue of *Today's Trucking's* Top 100 was going to press, an announcement came out of Calgary. The Mullen Group

Income Fund (number six on our list of the biggest for-hire fleets in Canada) amalgamated with Producers Oilfield Services Inc, which is Number 16.

We cannot officially adjust the charts until the plan passes through regulatory approvals and gets the nod of assent from shareholders, but otherwise, it looks like a done deal.

Just chalk it up to another day in the mercurial business known as Canadian trucking, right? Yet another big income fund stragically consumes a smaller competitor, right?

Wrong.

Did you happen to notice that the company the Mullens purchased was actually the 16th largest for-hire fleet in the country? Bigger than Transfreight, Yanke or Reimer? And that you probably never heard of the company before?

The Mullens, you're familiar with. And they always seem to be in growth mode. Indeed, in January they announced another purchase—that time they bought Pe Ben Oilfield Services Inc.

But Oilfield Producers Services? As Seinfeld would ask, "what's up with that?"

Ric Peterson is what's up with that. He's 46, an entrepreneur out of Grande Prairie who grew a fleet-of-foot outfit called Formula Trucking from zero in 1991 to the point where in 2004, his

BY PETER CARTER

company—with 278 employees, 506 trailers, 184 tractors, 32 trucks and 19 owner-operators—found its way onto the *Today's Trucking* Top 100 list.

Fifteen years ago, Peterson saw the opportunities that awaited companies who could provide special services to the oil patch in Northern Alberta and he started providing mud, rigs, camps and anything else the exploration teams needed.

"The first three years were pretty tough going," he told *Today's Trucking*, "but then things started happening."

Things started happening indeed. And now, as we take a look at the state of the trucking industry in Canada, Ric Peterson is not the only one with his eyes on western wealth. Everybody's facing that direction.

When we last compiled this list, nobody thought that a single hurricane could disable more than half the American fuel supply in one quick storm. Then Katrina hit. Prices went wild. George W. Bush declared that the American economy can no longer remain "addicted" to unstable foreign oil sources. And you can be confident that Mr. Bush considers neither the Oil Sands of Alberta foreign nor the government of Stephen Harper unstable.

The oilpatch. For one thing, the boom is exacerbating the driver shortage because workers who might otherwise choose to drive for a living are being lured west because of the high wages.

There's uncertainty in other parts of the trucking industry, too.

continued on page 48



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Today's Trucking

2006

CANADA'S TOP 100

Rank (2005)	Company Name, City, Province	Total	Trucks	Tractors	Trailers	O/O's	Employees
1 (1)	TransForce Income Fund , Saint-Laurent, PQ	12183	0	3359	8824	1540	9180
2 (3)	Vitran Corporation Inc. , Toronto, ON	7230	0	1407	5823	435	2671
3 (4)	TransX , Winnipeg, MB	5140	38	1120	3982	720	1906
4 (6)	Challenger Motor Freight Inc. , Cambridge, ON	5000	6	1382	3612	346	1641
5 (5)	SLH Transport , Kingston, ON	4490	0	345	4145	530	900
6 (8) ¹	Mullen Transportation , Aldersyde, AB	4279	167	1398	2714	838	1736
7 (11) ²	Day & Ross Transportation Group , Hartland, NB	4199	499	1309	2391	2809	1882
8 (9)	Paul's Hauling Group , Winnipeg, MB	4084	81	1085	2918	147	1695
9 (10)	Contrans Income Fund , Woodstock, ON	3660	0	1400	2260	800	1912
10 (7)	Groupe Robert , Boucherville, PQ	3413	10	906	2497	280	1887
11 (12)	Armour Transportation Systems , Moncton, NB	3300	130	780	2390	75	1625
12 (13)	Kindersley Transport Group , Saskatoon, SK	2837	54	776	2007	136	1545
13 (14)	Bison Transport Inc. , Winnipeg, MB	2795	0	845	1950	239	1260
14 (2)	Trimac Transportation Services LP , Calgary, AB	2621	0	357	2264	568	1240
15 (15)	Schneider National Carriers Canadian Division , Aberfoyle, ON	2515	0	515	2000	55	715
16 (nr) ¹	Producers Oilfield Services Inc. , Calgary, AB	2350	10	640	1700	80	800
17 (23)	Transfreight , Cambridge, ON	2127	1	292	1834	24	866
18 (18)	Reimer Express Lines , Winnipeg, MB	2027	30	535	1462	235	1495
19 (20)	Yanke Group of Companies , Saskatoon, SK	1912	0	504	1408	179	795
20 (26)	Bruce R. Smith Limited , Simcoe, ON	1865	0	415	1450	130	500
21 (19)	Allied Systems Canada , Burlington, ON	1818	0	899	919	108	1270
22 (25)	Gibson Transport , Alliston, ON	1809	0	311	1498	61	625
23 (22)	Manitoulin Transport Group , Gore Bay, ON	1784	58	527	1199	139	0
24 (24)	Wilson's Truck Lines , Etobicoke, ON	1737	0	503	1234	265	350
25 (30)	H&R Transport Limited , Lethbridge, AB	1714	0	439	1275	72	650
26 (21)	XTL Group of Companies , Etobicoke, ON	1700	0	500	1200	200	150
27 (28)	SGT 2000 , St-Germain-de-Grantham, PQ	1660	0	460	1200	60	620
28 (31)	C.A.T./Canadian American Trans. , Coteau du Lac, PQ	1635	0	450	1185	50	550
29 (29)	Groupe Guilbault , Ste-Foy, PQ	1631	3	329	1299	100	776
30 (33)	QuikX Group of Companies , Mississauga, ON	1625	65	460	1100	185	1050
31 (35)	Gibson Energy Ltd. , Calgary, AB	1602	600	2	1000	490	474
32 (27)	Erb Group of Companies , New Hamburg, ON	1594	158	444	992	148	956
33 (32)	Verspeeten Cartage , Ingersoll, ON	1506	0	515	991	272	540
34 (40)	Celadon Canada , Kitchener, ON	1500	0	375	900	225	1974
35 (41)	Meyers Transport , Peterborough, ON	1440	16	342	1082	65	592

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2006

CANADA'S TOP 100

Rank (2005)	Company Name, City, Province	Total	Trucks	Tractors	Trailers	O/O's	Employees
36 (37)	M-O Freightworks , Brampton, ON	1430	138	364	928	384	323
37 (39)	Groupe Thibodeau , Portneuf, PQ	1427	5	375	1047	10	785
38 (36)	Landtran Systems , Edmonton, AB	1382	41	387	954	251	770
39 (45)	Purolator Courier , Mississauga, ON	1370	150	370	850	14	12500
40 (47)	Kriska Transportation , Prescott, ON	1369	0	384	985	110	530
41 (38)	Northern Industrial Carriers , Edmonton, AB	1365	0	265	1100	5	200
42 (34)	HBC Logistics , Mississauga, ON	1357	0	212	1145	0	275
43 (16) ³	Clarke Inc. , Halifax, NS	1330	155	—	1005	170	550
44 (42)	Canada Cartage System , Mississauga, ON	1275	225	350	700	8	700
45 (43)	Penner International , Steinbach, MB	1273	0	398	875	361	158
46 (44)	Consolidated FastFrate , Woodbridge, ON	1229	49	430	750	190	1500
47 (46)	Cooney Group , Belleville, ON	1150	0	250	900	20	320
48 (49)	Muir's Cartage , Concord, ON	1128	18	160	900	50	400
49 (50)	Travelers Transportation Services , Brampton, ON	1080	2	312	766	14	366
50 (43)	Muir's Cartage , Concord, ON	1078	18	160	900	50	400
51 (48)	Arnold Bros. Transport Ltd. , Winnipeg, MB	1070	16	302	752	139	351
52 (53)	Vedder Transport Group , Abbotsford, BC	1024	0	373	651	77	348
53 (52)	BLM Group , Kitchener, ON	1021	1	294	726	60	479
54 (55)	Arrow Transportation Systems Inc. , Richmond, BC	918	70	298	550	240	220
55 (54)	Shadow Lines Transportation Group , Langley, BC	910	0	235	675	235	57
56 (56)	Thomson Terminals , Etobicoke, ON	900	3	232	665	9	0
57 (59)	Transport Morneau , Saint-Arsene, PQ	885	20	210	655	45	503
58 (57)	Musket Melburne , Mississauga, ON	885	0	225	660	115	320
59 (65)	Glenncoe Transport Ltd. , Kelowna, BC	865	41	211	613	29	281
60 (63)	Groupe Boutin , Plessisville, PQ	861	2	262	597	23	413
61 (62)	MacKinnon Transport Inc. , Guelph, ON	841	0	274	567	194	190
62 (61)	RAM Contract Carriers , Cottam, ON	838	1	195	642	189	48
63 (67)	Rosenau Transport , Edmonton, AB	819	44	170	605	65	325
64 (58)	Simard Transport , Lachine, PQ	816	60	196	560	130	505
65 (73)	Sokil Transportation Group , Edmonton, AB	760	120	130	510	0	250
66 (70)	Team-Transport Services Ltd. , Richmond, BC	757	1	104	652	104	17
67 (64)	B&R Eckel's Transport , Bonnyville, AB	738	28	160	550	7	275
68 (68)	Wolverine Freight System , Windsor, ON	712	5	205	502	65	293
69 (69)	Williams Moving & Storage , Coquitlam, BC	699	195	138	366	77	400
70 (77)	Normandin Transit Inc. , Napierville, PQ	688	2	219	467	25	292
71 (71)	Mackie Moving Systems , Oshawa, ON	680	20	260	400	190	150
72 (90)	Big Horn Transport , Calgary, AB	654	17	112	525	0	160
73 (80)	Nesel Fast Freight , Bolton, ON	629	5	139	485	5	250
74 (72)	DCT Chambers Trucking , Vernon, BC	624	5	184	435	83	87

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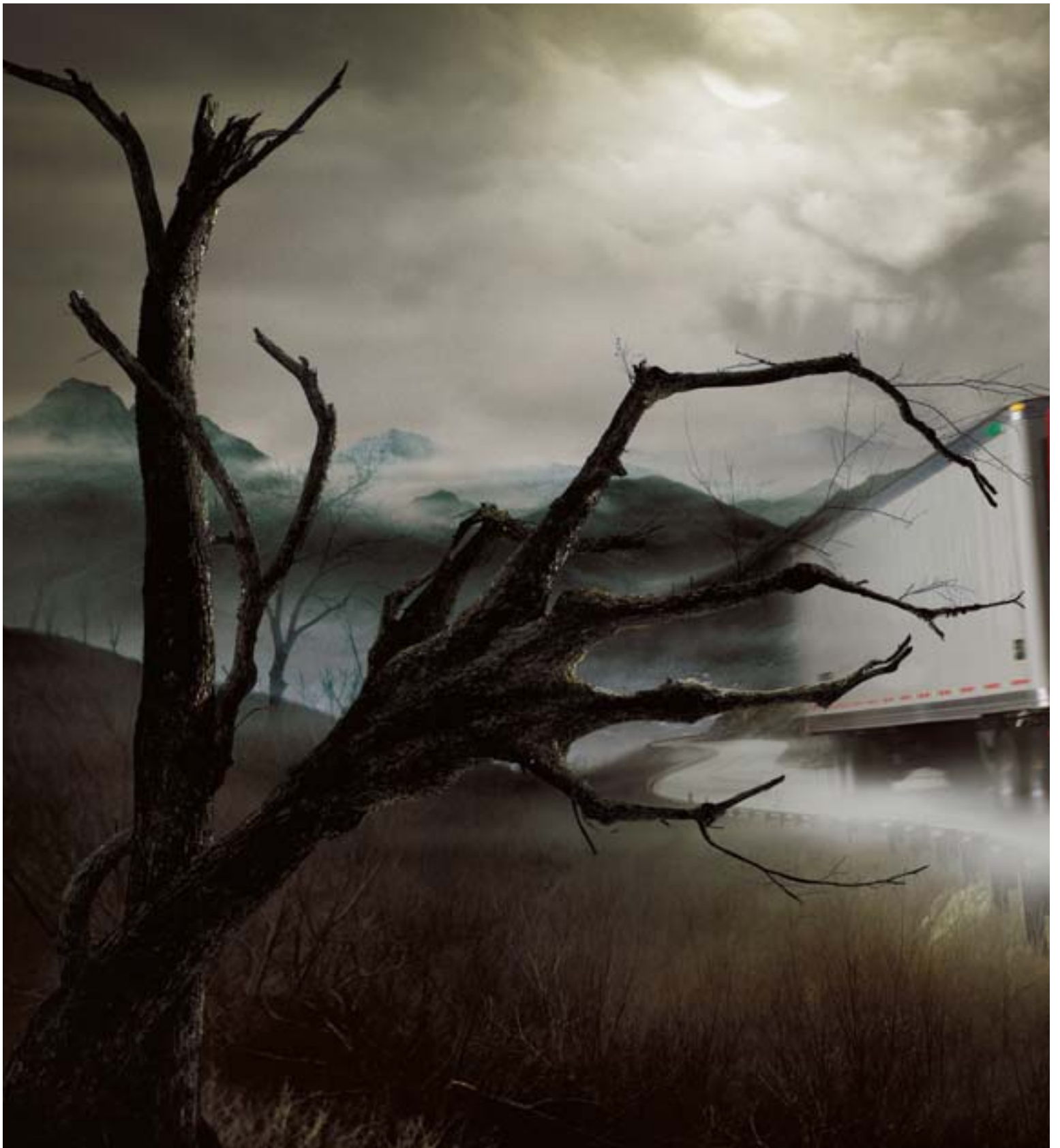
CANADA'S TOP 100

Rank (2005)	Company Name, City, Province	Total	Trucks	Tractors	Trailers	O/O's	Employees
75 (76)	Speedy Transport , Brampton, ON	620	0	170	450	170	450
76 (75)	Big Freight Systems Inc. , Steinbach, MB	620	0	230	390	65	245
77 (79)	System 55 Transport , Oakville, ON	614	4	134	476	53	98
78 (86)	Hyndman Transport , Wroxeter, ON	613	0	185	428	21	170
79 (60)	Andlauer Transportation Services , Etobicoke, ON	607	224	142	241	210	692
80 (82)	Fluke Transport , Hamilton, ON	593	18	100	475	67	210
81 (na)	Samuel & Son Ltd. , Mississauga, ON	591	6	170	280	135	0
82 (81)	ProNorth Transportation , North Bay, ON	590	0	160	430	15	215
83 (87)	ECL Group of Companies Ltd. , Calgary, AB	578	34	152	392	57	409
84 (85)	Transport Herve Lemieux , Saint-Laurent, PQ	554	47	192	315	39	336
85 (nr)	Totalline Transport Inc. , Vaughan, ON	539	45	189	305	63	253
86 (83)	Muskoka Transport , Bracebridge, ON	532	4	160	368	40	185
87 (93)	Groupe Goyette , Saint-Hyacinthe, PQ	522	1	72	449	65	240
88 (92)	Transport LFL , Vallée-Jonction, PQ	519	32	147	340	7	295
89 (nr)	Con-Way Canada Express , Mississauga, ON	517	2	165	350	0	280
90 (98)	Transport Bourret Inc. , Drummondville, PQ	510	9	151	350	15	360
91 (91)	Gosselin Express , Thetford Mines, PQ	505	25	85	395	25	175
92 (99)	Transport Bourassa Inc. , St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, PQ	496	2	118	376	9	228
93 (95)	Transport V.A. Inc. , Laurier-Station, PQ	491	7	103	381	1	381
94 (nr)	Groupe Jules Savard , Jonquiere, PQ	489	0	139	350	1	210
95 (na)	Les services logistiques Trans West Inc. , Lachine, PQ	485	0	150	275	60	300
96 (nr)	Elgin Motor Freight , London, ON	465	0	165	300	18	225
97 (nr)	J.D. Smith & Sons , Concord, ON	458	55	81	322	0	300
98 (nr)	McKevitt Trucking , Thunder Bay, ON	433	2	140	285	6	175
99 (nr)	Transport Couture & Fils Itee , Saint-Ephrem, PQ	433	0	118	315	14	202
100 (nr)	Empire Transportation , Grimsby, ON	426	1	75	350	11	105

FOOTNOTES: 1) In mid-February, Mullen announced an agreement to merge with Producers Oilfield Services Inc. The deal had not been officially approved by stakeholders or regulators by press time. So the two companies' figures are have been kept separate until those approvals are final. 2) Day & Ross figures do not include McCain Transport, a wholly owned reefer fleet based in Maine. 3) Clarke Inc.'s listing of number of trucks includes tractors, flatbeds and vans. nr = not previously ranked. na = information not available.

HOW WE DID IT

1. Companies are ranked based on total vehicle counts, including power units and trailers owned by owner-operators, as reported in January, 2006. Only trucks of class 6 or above are enumerated unless otherwise noted. Vehicles and employees based in the United States are included provided they are administered from a Canadian head office.
2. Most of the statistics were entered into the Today's Trucking data base by representatives of the companies themselves. The remaining companies and additions were gathered by Today's Trucking editors via phone, email or fax. While we strive to present accurate figures, the statistics have not been independently verified.
3. Several large fleets do not respond to our requests for information. These include Irving Transportation Services (comprising Midland Transport, Sunbury Transport and RST Industries based in New Brunswick; Direct Integrated Transportation of Winnipeg, and RTL Robinson of Yellowknife. As well, the Canadian operation of Federal Express is not on the list.
4. If you have any enquiries or if you think your company should be on next year's list, please contact Peter Carter at 416-614-5828 or peter@todaystrucking.com



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2006 CANADA'S TOP 100 Company Directory

Company Name	Total Units	Rank ('05)	Company Name	Total Units	Rank ('05)
A			F		
Allied Systems Canada	1818	21 (19)	Fluke Transport	593	80 (82)
Andlauer Transportation Services	607	79 (60)	G		
Armour Transportation Systems	3300	11 (12)	Gibson Energy Ltd.	1602	31 (35)
Arnold Bros. Transport Ltd.	1070	51 (48)	Gibson Transport	1809	22 (25)
Arrow Transportation Systems Inc.	918	54 (55)	Glenncoe Transport Ltd.	865	59 (65)
B			Gosselin Express	505	91 (91)
B&R Eckel's Transport	738	67 (64)	Groupe Boutin	861	60 (63)
Big Freight Systems Inc.	620	76 (75)	Groupe Goyette	522	87 (93)
Big Horn Transport	654	72 (90)	Groupe Guilbault	1631	29 (29)
Bison Transport Inc.	2795	13 (14)	Groupe Jules Savard	489	99 (nr)
BLM Group	1021	53 (52)	Groupe Robert	3413	10 (7)
Bruce R. Smith Limited	1865	20 (26)	Groupe Thibodeau	1427	37 (39)
C			H		
C.A.T./Canadian American Trans.	1635	28 (31)	H&R Transport Limited	1714	25 (30)
Canada Cartage System	1275	44 (42)	HBC Logistics	1357	42 (34)
Celadon Canada	1500	34 (40)	Hyndman Transport	613	78 (86)
Challenger Motor Freight Inc.	5000	4 (6)	J		
Clarke Inc.	1330	43 (16)	J.D. Smith & Sons	458	97 (nr)
Consolidated FastFrate	1229	46 (44)	K		
Contrans Income Fund	3660	9 (10)	Kindersley Transport Group	2837	12 (13)
Con-Way Canada Express	517	89 (nr)	Kriska Transportation	1369	40 (47)
Cooney Group	1150	47 (46)	L		
D			Landtran Systems	1382	38 (36)
Day & Ross Transportation Group	4199	7 (11)	Les service logistiques Trans West Inc.	485	95 (na)
DCT Chambers Trucking	624	74 (72)	M		
E			Mackie Moving Systems	680	71 (71)
ECL Group of Companies Ltd.	578	83 (87)	Mackinnon Transport Inc.	841	61 (62)
Elgin Motor Freight	465	96 (nr)	Manitoulin Transport Group	1784	23 (22)
Empire Transportation	426	100 (nr)	McKevitt Trucking	433	98 (nr)
Erb Group of Companies	1594	32 (27)			



Company Directory **2006** CANADA'S TOP 100

Company Name	Total Units	Rank ('05)	Company Name	Total Units	Rank ('05)
Meyers Transport	1440	35 (41)	Sokil Transportation Group	760	65 (73)
M-O Freightworks	1430	36 (37)	Speedy Transport	620	75 (76)
Muir's Cartage	1128	48 (49)	System 55 Transport	614	77 (79)
Muir's Cartage	1078	50 (43)	T		
Mullen Transportation	4279	6 (8)	Team-Transport Services Ltd	757	66 (70)
Musket Melbourne	885	58 (57)	Thomson Terminals	900	56 (56)
Muskoka Transport	532	86 (83)	Totalline Transport Inc.	539	85 (nr)
N			Transfreight	2127	17 (23)
Nesel Fast Freight	629	73 (80)	TransForce Income Fund	12183	1 (1)
Normandin Transit Inc.	688	70 (77)	Transport Bourassa Inc.	496	92 (99)
Northern Industrial Carriers	1365	41 (38)	Transport Bourret Inc.	510	90 (98)
P			Transport Couture & Fils ltee	433	99 (nr)
Paul's Hauling Group	4084	8 (9)	Transport Herve Lemieux	554	84 (85)
Penner International	1273	45 (43)	Transport LFL	519	88 (92)
Producers Oilfield Services Inc.	2350	17 (nr)	Transport Morneau	885	57 (59)
ProNorth Transportation	590	82 (81)	Transport V.A. Inc.	491	93 (95)
Purolator Courier	1370	39 (45)	TransX	5140	3 (4)
Q			Travelers Transportation Services	1080	49 (50)
QuikX Group of Companies	1625	30 (33)	Trimac Transportation Services LP	2621	14 (2)
R			V		
RAM Contract Carriers	838	62 (61)	Vedder Transport Group	1024	53 (53)
Reimer Express Lines	2027	18 (18)	Verspeeten Cartage	1506	34 (32)
Rosenau Transport	819	63 (67)	Vitran Corporation Inc.	7230	2 (3)
S			W		
Samuel & Son Ltd.	591	81 (na)	Williams Moving & Storage	699	69 (69)
Schneider National Carriers Canadian Division	2515	15 (15)	Wilson's Truck Lines	1737	25 (24)
SGT 2000	1660	27 (28)	Wolverine Freight System	712	68 (68)
Shadow Lines Transportation Group	910	55 (54)	X		
Simard Transport	816	64 (58)	XTL Group of Companies	1700	26 (21)
SLH Transport	4490	5 (5)	Y		
			Yanke Group of Companies	1912	19 (20)

SOLUTIONS - POWERED BY VOLVO

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Canada's Top 100



continued from page 37

In the Ontario auto-manufacturing sector—as reported by Marco Beghetto and Duff McCutcheon elsewhere in this issue (See “Backup on the 401” on page 52—a small brigade of medium-sized outfits who rely on the auto sector for their livelihood are being forced to adapt to changes brought about by the Big Three North American automakers. And it’s actually fomenting a bit of a price war—this after a year during which most truckers across the country were confidently boosting rates and meting out surcharges.

As for looking toward the Maritimes these days, as one trucker said recently, “we used to worry about getting backhauls from the U.S. to Quebec. No we worry about getting the front hauls.”

It’s not just labor-hungry workers or oil-hungry politicians looking toward the oil sands. Last year, Transforce’s Alain Bedard turned his attention westward and purchased two Calgary-based truckers, TST Porter Trucking and Rebel Transport. Then early in 2006, he announced another Alberta buy, KOS Oilfield Corp., as well as its associated companies. KOS is projected to turn over about \$77 million this year.

Meanwhile, everybody’s watching the team of regulators and bureaucrats who will be combing that part of the country over the next year to see if they should give Imperial Oil Ltd., and its partners permission to tap into the more than three trillion cubic feet of natural gas laying in what’s called the MacKenzie Valley gas fields. Much of northwest Canada is buzzing with anticipation of the ensuing prosperity that might come from the \$7 billion project.



FORMULA FOR SUCCESS: Peterson’s company grew up serving the specialized heavy-duty needs of the oil patch.

FROM MUD TO HUTS: For the first few years at Formula, profits seemed remote.

It’ll come as no surprise that Peterson mentioned to *Today’s Trucking*, “We’re ready for MacKenzie.”

So inasmuch as the list of Top 100 for-hire fleets in Canada looks pretty much the same as it did this time last year, with a few disappearances due to mergers and the arrival of a few clever upstarts—Uwe Petroschke’s imaginative LTL outfit Totalline out of Concord springs to mind—it’s business as usual.

Unless you’re in the oil patch. Then it’s business as unusual.

Producers Oilfield Services Inc., with 640 tractors, 1,700 trailers, 10 trucks, 80 owner-operators and 800 employees overall, will be a natural fit for the Mullens, dedicated as much of it will be to serving the northernmost territory of the Mullen empire. It is also somewhat of a homecoming for Peterson.

In January 2001, the Mullens actually started Producers Oilfield Services, albeit under the name Moveitonline.

The Mullen brass felt they could supply software and online logistic solutions in a separate company and spun out Movitonline.

At the time, Murray Mullen called it “a logical step that allows Mullen to continue to focus on serving our oilfield and trucking companies while Moveitonline develops software solutions to resolve many of the transportation industry’s current challenges.” Little did he know that the spinoff



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Canada's Top 100

would, in the span of half a decade, expand to be one of the country's 10 biggest truckers, a competitor to Mullen, and then, an acquisition..

Moveitonline had an inauspicious start but in 2003 bought Patch Point Enterprises, a company specializing in construction and maintenance and waste-haulage services to the oilpatch. A far cry from moving data across the information

highway, but far more profitable indeed. (Such morphing is a hallmark of this industry. Transforce started life as a means of delivering the Saputo family's cheese.)

Moveitonline continued to show red on the books but losses were being stemmed quickly.

Also in 2003 Moveitonline saw the oil-field services divisions eclipse the software side. That year, it changed its name to

Producers Oilfield Services Inc.

Then Producers, a publicly traded company, purchased Peterson's Formula Trucking, and brought Peterson on board to run things. Co-chair of the Mullen Group Murray Mullen, who was in charge of Producers at the time, left, saying "Ric Peterson didn't need me around to babysit him."

Producers last year, under Peterson, went on its own buying spree picking up eight companies—most of them truckers or related operations, and each of them serving a specific oilpatch niche. Among the purchases: the Swanberg Brothers (Number 100 on last year's Top 100) J.L. Powell, Raydan Trucking, NWP Trucking, Supply-Rite Rentals and Withers Services most recently, R.Robinson.

When Peterson started at Producers it was trading on the TSX for \$3 per share. It was just nearing \$11 two days before the company reached its deal with the Mullen Income fund.

People who work around Peterson say he's down-to-earth, a fast thinker and that he has a good sense of humor.

Murray Mullen calls him an "astute businessman."

When Peterson started at Producers it was trading on the TSX for \$3 per share. It was just nearing \$11 two days before the company reached its deal with the Mullen Income fund in February.

The Mullen-Peterson team's a powerhouse. "This is a wonderful opportunity to bring together two strong, well managed western Canadian businesses," Stephen Lockwood, the President and co-CEO of Mullen said at the time of the merger. "We expect that on a combined basis that revenues will exceed \$1.0 billion generating EBITDA of approximately \$250 million."

On the night of the Federal election less than one month earlier, when Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced to Canada that "the west is in," the new PM was saying something Murray Mullen, Ric Peterson and other people in Canada's trucking industry have known for a long long time. ▲



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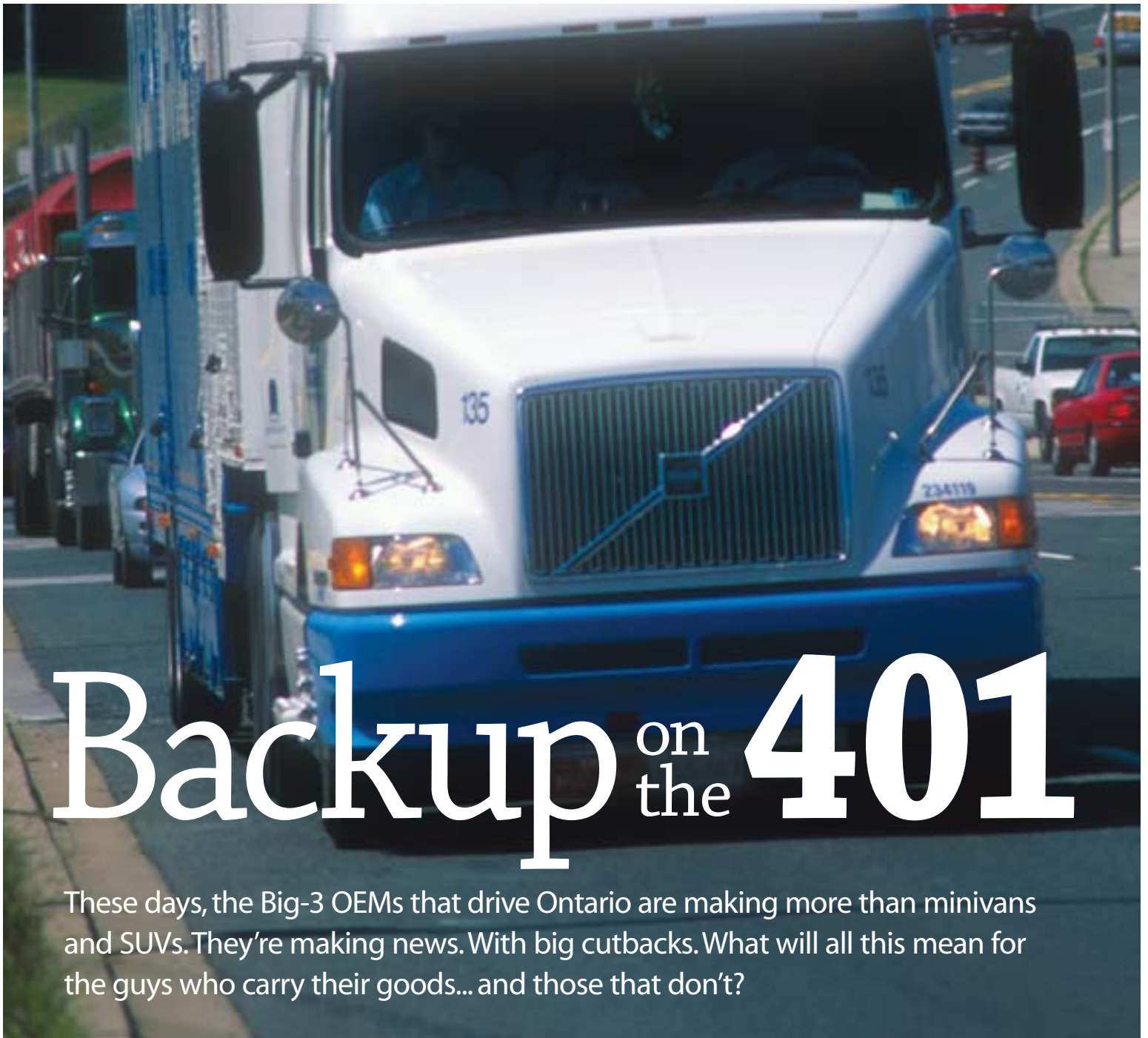
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Backup on the 401

These days, the Big-3 OEMs that drive Ontario are making more than minivans and SUVs. They're making news. With big cutbacks. What will all this mean for the guys who carry their goods... and those that don't?

BY MARCO BEGHETTO and DUFF McCUTCHEON

It's barely over 100 years ago that Ford Motor Co. of Canada produced its first automobile—the Model C in 1904. Back then, the Detroit-based carmaker let its Canadian arm operate with a great deal of autonomy. For example, there were various departures between American Fords and their homegrown Canadian counterparts, which sped a large number of Canadian components.

Canadian innovation actually led the way at times. During the booming Model T era, Canada produced four-door sedans before they were available in the U.S.

Times have surely changed. As Ford, GM, and DaimlerChrysler's

North American operations have become integrated over the years, market shifts have become completely reciprocal and the multiplier effect is felt almost instantaneously by suppliers and service providers on both sides of the border.

The tremors from a series of recent "Big Three" plant closures—resulting from an 87-cent dollar, soaring material and labor costs, and dwindling market share in North America—has some carriers second-guessing the long-term viability of the auto-dependent Southern Ontario-Michigan corridor.

GM, the largest U.S. automaker, recently announced it would close 12 plants and cut 30,000 jobs in North America over the next few years. Ford, whose production fell 40 percent last year to 221,809 vehicles from 372,241 in 2004, announced similar measures in a restructuring plan unveiled this past January. Dozens of major suppliers—from instrument panel

providers to tiremakers—have reacted by announcing everything from production slowdowns to bankruptcies.

Some transport and logistics firms contracted to the Big Three and their suppliers are looking to diversify in order to avoid sinking further along with their customers. Others, however, see less reason to start panicking, preferring to wait for the automakers' cuts to have their desired effect at helping the companies make a comeback.

Richmond Hill, Ont.-based automotive market guru Dennis DesRosiers of DesRosiers Automotive Consultants doesn't think the sky is falling on the auto-rich Ontario sector. "Ontario has been the number-one auto producer in North America for the past two years and absolutely that's going to continue over the next five years," he says. "We're picking up plants, while Michigan is closing plants.

"As for the GM cutbacks, it was 'Canada-lite,' you might say. There were some job cuts and plants closed, but much less than what you would have anticipated. Twenty percent of GM is in Canada and you would have expected 5,000 to 6,000 job cuts, but it's actually more in the 3,000 range."

Besides, says DesRosiers, the general influence the Big Three have on the total market is softening. "GM, Ford and [DaimlerChrysler's] share of the North American auto sector has declined for eight consecutive years and will continue declining for at least another three to five years," he continues. "So they're quickly getting a smaller piece of the pie. However, the pie itself is growing."

And it's the Japanese with the appetite to swallow the extra slices of market share. In fact, DesRosiers predicts whatever is spilled by the U.S. vehicle manufacturers is quickly offset by expanding Japanese firms like Toyota and Honda, which are nestling themselves further on the Toronto-Windsor, Ont. Hwy. 401 corridor. Toyota is ramping up production and is slated to open a new Woodstock, Ont. assembly plant in 2008. Honda is rumored to be considering a third facility to complement its two Alliston, Ont. plants. And Japanese medium-duty truck manufacturer Hino Motors is also seriously scouting plant locations in the region.

"We do have some issues in Ontario," says DesRosiers, "but the growth in the new domestics [Toyota, Honda] far outweigh any declines in GM, Ford, DaimlerChrysler."

Gerry Fedchun, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturing Association, agrees that things look better than what's being reported in the media. Although he was slightly less bullish than DesRosiers in committing to a five-year success forecast, he did reiterate that the core sector is remaining upright on the back of Japanese companies.

"Certainly for the next couple of years at least, the total volumes in Ontario are relatively stable," he says. "But who's making what is changing relatively dramatically, and so there will be dramatic realignment where deliveries are going and to who."

AMBASSADOR STILL KING

CONGESTION RELIEF UNLIKELY FOR NOW



About one-third of the traffic that crosses the Ambassador Bridge at the Windsor, Ont.-Detroit border is said to be directly related to the auto sector. So, with the Big Three U.S. automakers scaling back production and some of their suppliers taking a beating, will there be some relief in congestion at the world's busiest trade gateway?

A little, says Dan Stamper, president of the bridge's parent company Detroit International Bridge Co. Stamper told local media last month that recent Ford and GM cuts and related slowdowns in component and raw-material movement could translate to at least a five-percent drop in bridge traffic.

So, does that mean all the fuss being made to expand crossing capacity at the beleaguered border is overstated? In fact, if the Big Three continue to lose market share, is a second bridge which has been promised for so long even needed?

Absolutely, says automotive sector expert Dennis DesRosiers. Although Ontario's automotive market is evolving to focus more on east-west traffic, and even if the closures related to the Big Three are quietly providing a natural solution to Windsor's border woes, DesRosiers thinks those problems won't iron themselves out for at least another decade or two. "It's just an impossible situation down there right now."

Automotive Parts Manufacturing Association President Gerry Fedchun thinks the Ambassador will regain that volume, and then some, as Japanese automakers situated north of the border continue growing. While it's true the Japanese companies have slightly more suppliers positioned closer to home base, the majority of all parts manufacturers still sit on the Michigan-Indiana-Kentucky corridor and will continue to look for more capacity at Michigan crossings, says Fedchun.

"Toyota's biggest plant is in Kentucky, which is four hours south of Windsor down I-75. There's still going to be a whole cluster of suppliers around that plant," he says. "In some cases, for economies of manufacturing, you'd take that production and ship it to Ontario and vice-versa."

The Big Three

For Ontario line-haul carriers, it means rethinking some partnerships and diversifying across a broader spectrum of sectors and industries.

Obviously, trucking companies able to secure lucrative contracts with any of the growing Japanese firms and their providers will be riding shotgun along the Mich-Can corridor. Others will likely look to increase their stake in general goods and blanket-wrap truckload freight like electronics and computer equipment. Bigger companies with capital to burn are making a mad dash for Alberta's oil patch these days, buying local assets and equipment in hopes of getting a piece of the booming energy sector.

However, while most large carriers are careful to spread themselves out evenly, there is a sizeable contingent of smaller Southern Ontario truckers and owner-ops that could be feeling the pinch for being too heavily invested in a couple of Big Three-related contracts.

"If you have 70 or 80 percent of your business with the Big Three, you're pretty much at overexposure," says Norm Mackie,

of Oshawa, Ont.-based Mackie Moving Systems. "The long-term planning is you need to try to shift to other markets."

Mackie says about 30 percent of his business is with GM—still his largest customer, but allowing enough flexibility to position the company in other markets. There's no denying the desire to pick up other automotive business, both in Japanese auto business and other Big Three freight. "I've been trying for over a year to get my foot in the door at Chrysler," says Mackie. "Obviously the plum of the business right now seems to point towards the Japanese, and we're going to work at trying to get our foot in the door with those folks as well."

Rick Way of Guelph, Ont. doesn't haul so much as a wheel nut, but he's still paying close attention to what's happening in the automotive sector. Way, president of 30-truck general freight and flatdeck carrier WayFreight Services, says that transport providers heavily leveraged on GM and Ford business are looking to maintain volumes by poking around other general freight and niche sectors.

"I sense it's happening already with

[truckers] moving into other markets. There's some carriers with capital equipment tied-up and drivers looking to work," he says. "When you need 100 loads, it doesn't matter whose 100 loads they are. You need to get 'em back somewhere."

Way knows of a few carriers, including himself, that are watching rates more closely than they were a year ago. After several plush years of raising rates and successfully recouping surcharges, Way predicts a mini-price war in some lanes along the corridor. "I found myself in the last couple of months paying more attention to the competitive factor, especially on van traffic, whereas on the flatbed there's still a little more market freedom," he says. "I just hope it doesn't reach a point where carriers start to give back some of the gains they've worked so hard to get collectively. For some people, I think rates are going to be under attack just to keep the volumes up." ▲

If you have 70 or 80 percent of your business with the Big Three, you're pretty much at overexposure.

DIVERSITY INC.

VARIETY IS THE KEY IN ONTARIO, SAYS SCHNEIDER GM

John Ferguson isn't interested in hearing all the doom-and-gloom forecasts about southern Ontario. Even as Ontario's Premier pleads to Ottawa for more of booming Alberta's cash to rescue his province's struggling sectors, the new general manager at Schneider National's Canadian division says he's still making a good living off Ontario manufacturing—auto, and otherwise.

Trucking in the province is particularly robust for carriers, so long as they don't pick up most of their loads at one dock. Ferguson, who was recently named the first GM at Schneider's Guelph, Ont., office, says diversification is key in weathering storms in any one sector. Schneider is known for being a preferred transport provider of U.S. auto manufacturers, but Ferguson says the company has made it a point to remain flexible in a variety of industries.

"We have done work with the Big Three, but not so much that, as they've scaled back, we've seen a degradation along the corridor ... We have a very diversified client mix and we

make sure there's not any one business that makes up too high of a percentage overall. That's a continual strategy at Schneider."

The Green Bay-based truckload giant has held operations in Canada since 1990. But now, head office in the Badger State wants a more Canadian identity for its northern ops. Enter Ferguson, who's been charged with development and execution of a new business strategy in the Canadian marketplace. "The role has been put in place to really look at Canada more strategically, where [originally], we were put in service for our cross-border customers, which were pretty much U.S. based," says Ferguson, who comes to Schneider via PBB Global Logistics, a provider of third-party international logistics services in Fort Erie, Ont. "As Schneider becomes more of an international player, as we go beyond asset-based trucking, we need more representation around the world."



John Ferguson

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EQUIPMENT NEWS, REVIEWS, AND MAINTENANCE TIPS



Disc, Disc

shop talk *They're reducing stopping distances. Is your fleet ready? By Stephen Petit*

It wasn't so long ago that the foundation brakes on the steer axle of a heavy truck were, almost literally, a non-issue. Until regulations required braking on all wheels, truckers would disconnect the front brakes on three-axle tractors because doing so carried no penalty; at least, not one that would get you in Dutch with the law.

Today, steer-axle brakes are the focus of regulators who want to improve the minimum stopping-distance standards for commercial trucks, tractors, and buses.

Current rules require a 52,000-lb rated tractor and unbraked trailer to be able to come to a full stop from 60 mph in no more than 355 feet. In a notice of proposed rulemaking published in December, the U.S. National Highway Transportation Administration (NHTSA) concluded that this distance can be reduced by 20 to 30 percent using current braking technology, specifically larger S-cam-actuated foundation brakes on the steer axle.

To understand why, consider what happens to your vehicle during an aggressive

stop. As the vehicle slows down, the weight you so carefully balance across your trailer, drive, and steer axles lunges forward. On a five-axle combination, this "dynamic" load can approach 20,000 to 22,000 lbs on a 12,000-lb steer axle. And that's okay: the extra weight bearing down on the portion of the road where the tires interact makes the front wheels far less likely to skid.

"As brake engineers, we want to take advantage of the physics happening there," says Jim Clark, director of foundation drum brakes at Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake. "The more braking torque you have when that weight shifts forward and concentrates itself on a patch of pavement, the more effectively your vehicle can come to a halt in a shorter distance."

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The job of any brake, remember, is to convert motion into heat and then shed that heat away from the vehicle. Increasing the area of the lining that contacts the drum gives you the ability to generate more braking torque with less in-stop fade, and the most logical place for a bigger brake is up front. NHTSA set the current stopping-distance standard (mirrored in Canadian regulations) using 15-x-4-in S-cam brakes and Type 20 air chambers on the front axle. In writing its proposed new rule, NHTSA tested two beefier steer-axle brake packages you could spec today if you wanted to: 16.5-x-6-in and 16.5-x-5-in sizes. In concert with standard S-cam brakes on the drive axles, the bigger steer-axle brakes helped produce an average stopping distance of 269 feet, a 25-percent improvement on the existing standard.

It's important to keep in mind that these bigger brakes not only are wider, they're larger in diameter than the 15-in brakes they would replace.

"Wide brake packages tend to shed heat better and wear longer; today's wider shoes give you almost a 25-percent increase in the wearable lining life," says Paul Johnston, senior director of the North American foundation brake business unit at ArvinMeritor. "But wider brakes alone won't necessarily put out enough torque to stop the vehicle in a shorter distance."

For that, you need a shoe and lining with a greater diameter. A 16.5-x-5-in drum brake provides 12 percent more wearable lining volume than a 15-x-4-in brake. There's more lining for the drum to grab, giving a boost to the brake's coefficient of friction.

"No one is certain what the final stopping distance requirement will be," Johnston says, "but I'm confident that when all is said and done a larger-diameter front brake with a more aggressive lining and larger brake chamber will allow most three-axle tractors to comply using an all-drum solution."

HEAVY CHALLENGES

The shorter stopping distance requirements in NHTSA's proposal would not be a snap to achieve for everyone. They raise important questions for brake engineers, vehicle manufacturers, and certain segments of the trucking industry to tackle in the coming months:

1 What about trucks that already use 16.5-x-5-in brakes on the steer axle? Roughly 10 percent of air-braked tractors made today have high-output drum brakes on the steer axle, most of them for heavy hauling, refuse fleets, and other severe-service applications.

"A 4x2 tractor or a tractor involved in pulling very heavy weights probably already has a larger drum brake on the steer axle," Johnston says. "Vehicles in these types of service may need disc brakes either at the steer position or at all positions to meet the standards in a final rulemaking."

2 Will larger brakes require a more robust suspension and other components? "When the steer axle has to accommodate more brake torque during a hard stop, what you can get is tremendous wrap-up on what is typically a light-duty spring," says Clark. "To prevent that, what you'll see is an anti-wrap up type of suspension—something that's better equipped to manage the stresses that may come with a more aggressive brake."

3 Should truck owners expect longer service life from larger brakes? That depends. All the basic principles of brake maintenance apply to bigger drum brakes on the steer axle, says Tom Golden, manager of technical services for BrakePro, which supplies a broad range of both OE and aftermarket linings for a range of applications.

"The effectiveness and longevity of any drum brake depends on one thing: lining contact with the drum when the brakes are applied," Golden says. "A bigger, wider brake still has to be properly maintained in order to ensure adequate contact, and the friction material still should meet the load and axle requirements and the application or use of the truck." If one wheel is doing too much work, or not enough, the result will be premature wear and poor performance no matter what size brake you use.

4 Will NHTSA put forth a firm stopping distance benchmark, instead of the range of improved braking performance in its proposal? Johnston says yes.

"I think it's clear there will be one minimum performance standard, one stopping-distance number instead of a range," Johnston says. Imagine a market where

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some vehicles are designed for a 20-percent improvement in stopping distances while others are designed for a 30-percent or 25-percent reduction. "All the comments on the proposed rule will be in by April. Then we'll see NHTSA determine a minimum stopping distance, one that is practical for the majority of commercial vehicles on the road, and let the market determine the solution."

5 If most trucks can satisfy new requirements using bigger drum brakes, where does that leave the disc-brake market in North America?

The proposed performance standards will require brake engineers to maximize the potential of S-cam brakes, but the round after that most assuredly will require a disc-brake solution. NHTSA's tests showed that only all-disc-brake configurations can reliably achieve a 30-percent reduction in stopping distance over the existing 355-foot mark, a benchmark of 249 feet.

"You should educate yourself about disc brakes now, on your own terms, before the regulations require you to do so," advises Johnston. "There's a lot to learn about how discs work, how to maintain them, and how they perform on the road."

Clark agrees. "I think the disc brake is going to be something everyone understands better and becomes more available in manufacturers' data books," he says. "The torque output of a disc is so consistent. We've taken drivers who used to disconnect the steers, when that was legal, and we put them in vehicles with discs on the steers and they love them."

As an intermediate step, Clark suggests, spec disc brakes on the steer axle of your next tractor. "Even if it's one truck, the experience will give you a head start on managing the transition to discs at some point down the road," Clark says. "And that point will come."

For some truck owners, discs will be a

necessity in 2008 or 2009 when the rules are expected to take effect, either in combination with high-performance drums or at every wheel position on the vehicle. Disc-braking performance comes with a price: currently about \$1,000 US to equip a three-axle tractor, according to estimates in NHTSA's proposed rulemaking.

In the meantime, there are steps you can take now to improve the braking performance on your equipment.

Instead of waiting two years for a rule that will only apply to the next new truck you buy, look at how you can get more reliable stopping performance out of the trucks you have today, says BrakePro's Tom Golden.

"Put your trucks on a performance-based brake tester, determine the ability of your brakes to stop your vehicle, and develop a maintenance program to address the problems," he says. Use high-quality com-



WIDER IS BETTER: The more lining a drum can grab, the greater the stopping power.

ponents from suppliers who can support those products here in North America. Air disc brake components, Golden adds, require an even higher degree of inherent quality than do drum brakes.

"The reality is," he says, "bigger shoes, better friction materials—none of it amounts to anything if your brakes aren't in good working order." ▲

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Magic Gas?

tech tips Nitrogen tire fills are nothing new, but new technology makes it affordable for truck fleets of all sizes. By Jim Park

There's nothing magical about nitrogen's ability to prolong tire life. It won't restore the original luster to the innards of your tires, it doesn't smell better, and neither will it save the environment. But using nitrogen rather than compressed air to inflate tires has two principle advantages. First, its permeation rate is 35 percent slower than air, resulting in tires that stay properly inflated longer, keeping tires running cooler, improving tread life, minimizing sidewall flex, and overall, lowering the rate of pressure-induced blowouts. Second, nitrogen is dry and contains no moisture. Nitrogen is inert so rust cannot form since there is neither oxygen nor moisture present to cause oxidation of the wheel.

Remove the oxygen and the moisture

from inside your tires and replace it with a gas that stays in place longer, runs cooler, and won't corrode the inner surfaces of the wheel rim or the tire and you've solved many of your tire management issues—all at once.

Until recently, there has not been a convenient, reliable, economic means of distributing nitrogen to inflate tires. In the past, nitrogen would be provided in large liquid tankers transferring the nitrogen to large on-site storage vessels, or it was delivered in high-pressure cylinders. But recently, technologies have been developed for on-site use that purifies regular compressed air into high purity nitrogen.

There are two types of nitrogen generating systems: membrane generators and pressure swing adsorber generators (PSA). Both produce 98-to-99-percent pure nitrogen, but the PSA generators are typically rated for less than 90 psi output—a little weak for heavy-duty truck applications, but suitable for light- and medium-duty trucks. The output of membrane generators, however, is equal to the input pressure.

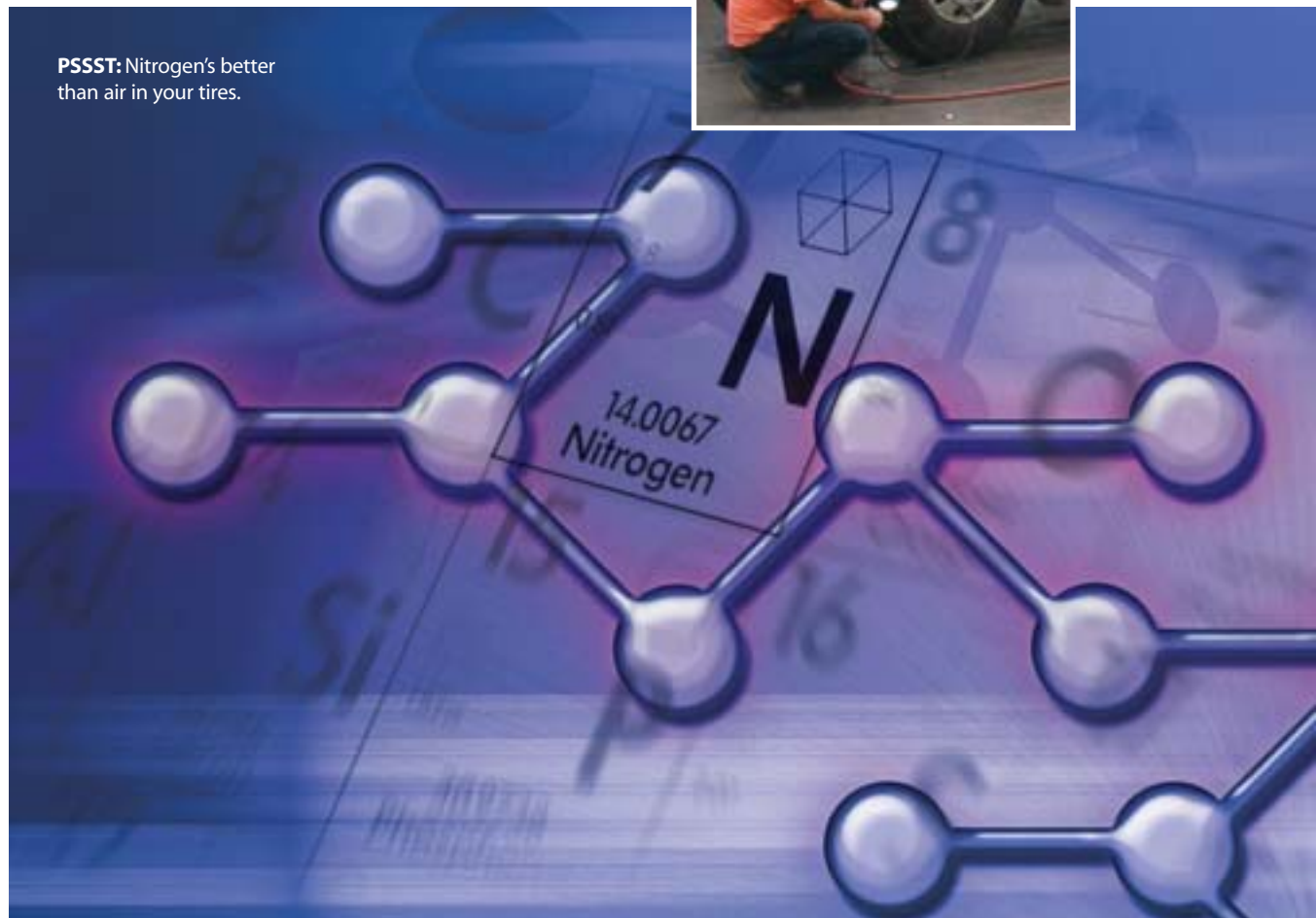
The nitrogen generators are rated for certain volumes. Higher volume units are capable of filling over 30 truck tires per hour from 150-psi compressed air systems. There are no storage reservoirs required, as the nitrogen is used as it's produced.

The definitive study on nitrogen-filled truck tires, "Million Mile Truck Tires—Available Today" was conducted in 1986

by Lawrence Sperberg and clearly demonstrates the advantages of using nitrogen for truck tire inflation. Sperberg found in a



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study involving 54 new and 44 used tires running 7,345,497 tire miles in drive-axle service, that the nitrogen-filled tires ran 26 percent more miles before tread wear demanded replacement.

In the case of the failed tires, a smaller percent of nitrogen tires failed physically (30 percent vs 57 percent), and they gave 48 percent more miles before failing than did the air tires. This 48-percent improvement was due, Sperberg concluded, to the tire bodies lasting longer and not the better wearing properties of the tread.

More recent testing conducted by Drexan Corporation, the Canadian distributors of Parker Hannifin's TireSaver

system, with a major Winnipeg-based truckload fleet showed similar results. Two trailers recently measured showed 25 percent tread wear after 180,000 km with 3-5 psi pressure loss after 11 months, and 38-percent tread wear after 208,000 km with 6-10 psi pressure loss after 12 months.

According to Konrad Mech, vice president of Drexan Corp., fleets that closely monitor tire condition and tire-related maintenance costs could easily see a full payback on a nitrogen generator system within three to six months. "The more rigorous the maintenance program, the clearer the payback is," says Mech. "The system we recommend to medium-sized fleets

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(300 power units and 500-1000 trailers) represents a \$12,300 investment. It costs about \$1,000 to install and requires about \$600 in annual maintenance. There are no ongoing costs other than what a shop would normally incur in the operation of the compressors, labor, etc. The improved tread wear, longer casing life, increased retreadability, and lower failure rate, all attributable to nitrogen fills, will quickly become apparent to a fleet that watches its numbers closely." ▲

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PEACEFUL EASY FEELING: ...of knowing your truck's greasing itself regularly.

Metal Health

shop talk *The ABCs of auto-greasers. By Duff McCutcheon*

What price freedom? Freedom from the weekly chore of greasing a truck, that is. And the price? Around \$3,000, if it comes in the form of a central automatic greasing system or “auto-greaser.”

An auto-greaser is a device on the back of a truck that squirts minute amounts of grease into all the greaseable points—slack adjusters, brake components, king pins, spring pin bushings,

fifth wheel, etc.—every couple of hours or at whatever interval you choose to set the device's timer at.

“When you've got one installed, it gives you the warm and fuzzy feeling that the truck is always greasing itself,” says Mike Hopper, fleet maintenance manager with Moncton, N.B.'s Armour Transport. “Speaking from a mechanic's viewpoint, with an auto-greaser, whether you set it at every hour-and-a-half to three hours, you

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know moving parts are getting a shot of grease. There is a nice feeling about that.”

Most of them work the same: the grease sits in a canister and a spring or a plunger forces it down to a pump that sends the grease to your lines and injectors. They also feature a timer device to deliver the grease on schedule, and a metering system in the distribution manifolds to ensure each fitting gets the proper amount of grease. Slack adjusters, for example, need less grease than the fifth-wheel plate. The systems mete out the grease in amounts suitable to the application.

There're a couple of different ways of looking at ROI here. One involves money and the other involves the time you save every weekend not having to grease your truck—which isn't necessarily a bad thing if you're a do-it-yourselfer that enjoys getting dirty. One of the benefits of getting out the grease gun and going under is that you're inspecting the truck on a regular basis and can catch small problems before they get big. Although there's a big difference between greasing your truck in July and doing it in January, and you might wish you had that auto-greaser for the latter.

The systems generally cost between \$2,500 and \$3,500.



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“We sell it by the grease point,” says Jim Pinder of Groeneveld North America. “Every system is going to need a pump, a timer, and a control for it, then we sell it for X dollars per grease point. Your average highway tractor with 32 grease points will be around \$3,200 installed.”

Pinder says the average ROI of an auto-greaser is between 12 and 14 months, with the bulk of the savings coming from extended component life, as well as less downtime. Fewer lube jobs and fewer breakdowns.

Hopper agrees: “With auto-greasers, you just bring it in, change your oil, check your fluids and ensure your greaser’s working.”

There are also benefits come trade-in time. Not only is it a bonus in its own right, but it also tells the would-be buyer that the truck’s been well looked after. Pinder says some users take the units off their old

The bulk of the savings come from extended component life, as well as less downtime.

trucks, get them remanufactured and install them on their new rides. “I’ve seen a couple that are 15 years old now,” he says.

The grease recommended for most OEMs is an EP2 grade of chassis lube (EP stands for extreme pressure, 2 is a measure of the viscosity or soap content of the material). The truck makers also recommend certain chassis-lube intervals because they know the EP2 grease will stay in place under certain conditions for a certain period of time.

Two schools of thought exist on the type of grease best used in the automated systems. One says a thinner grease, an EPo, offers better flow characteristics, more even coverage, and it requires a less powerful pump. The other follows the EP2 theory that the thicker grease provides better clinging power, a more robust film between two surfaces, but requires a stronger pump. But given that competing systems, and even different systems offered by the same manufacturer, are priced in the same ballpark, it becomes a matter of personal preference.

Whatever you choose, make sure your technicians keep the reservoir filled with grease. Some models come with a warning

light that tells you if you’re running low. If you let it empty, you may end up having to bleed the lines. How often you fill depends on the time cycle of the greaser, which in turn depends on the season.

“In winter you usually set them to a higher frequency cycle interval because it’s cold. Maybe an hour-and-a-half, versus in the summer you could get away with every two to three hours. One longhaul

driver would probably fill it every three to four weeks; if you’re running a P&D truck, you’d need it more often,” says Hopper.

Whether an auto-greaser’s for your shop depends on how much value you place on your technicians’ time, and your drivers’ patience for getting wet during the winter months. Some guys might like doing all their own work, but most would rather watch the game. ▲



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Show Time!

training *How to make the most of Canada's biggest truck show.*
By Today's Trucking Staff

If the dates April 20 to 22 are not already blocked off on your daytimer, grab your highlighter and do so now because those are the dates for Truck World 2006, Canada's biggest trucking industry trade show at the International Centre in Mississauga, Ont.

Truck World is produced by Newcom Business Media, the same company that publishes this magazine as well as *highwaySTAR*, *Transport Routier*, *Truck & Trailer*, *Truck & Trailer West* and—last but definitely not least—the trucking-industry resource site *Today'sTrucking.com*.

According to Truck World show manager Elizabeth McCullough, the show is a natural extension of what Newcom does best and that is provide new and useful information in easy-to-digest ways so that you can make more money and help your company operate more efficiently.

To that end, McCullough has expanded this year's Truck World program well beyond the trade show itself, so regardless of what end of the business you're interested in, there'll be something for you.

Truck World opens Thursday morning and runs until Saturday. And on the last day, much of the emphasis will be on the

owner-operator, so McCullough advises fleet owners and managers to spread the word among their o-o's that these seminars are available and are free with admission to the show.

Here's a list of the offerings:

ADVANCED TRUCK TIRE KNOWLEDGE

For equipment that has no moving parts, tires sure can get complicated. And a badly managed tire program can be huge drain on your budget. Representing Michelin North America (Canada), Ralph Beaveridge will lead a discussion on maximizing casing value, reducing tire costs, and improving on-road performance.

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HAMILTON	90.8	-1.1	66.6
ST. CATHARINES	88.6		64.5
MONTRÉAL *	103.7		69.9
QUÉBEC	100.6	-1.3	67.2
SHERBROOKE	99.9		66.7
GASPÉ	102.9	2.5	69.3
CHICOUTIMI	99.0	-1.0	65.9
SAINT JOHN *	103.9	-3.0	69.4
FREDERICTON	106.5	-1.2	71.7
MONCTON	102.2	0.3	68.0
BATHURST	102.9		68.6
EDMUNDSTON	103.2		68.8
MIRAMICHI	101.9	-1.8	67.7
HALIFAX *	99.0	-0.1	66.7
SYDNEY	102.3	-0.3	69.5
YARMOUTH	101.9		69.2
TRURO	100.2	-1.0	67.8
CHARLOTTETOWN *	99.8	1.6	69.3
ST. JOHNS *	105.5		71.2
GANDER	107.5		73.0
CORNER BROOK	103.6		69.6
CANADA AVERAGE (V)	94.0	-0.7	67.5

V-Volume Weighted
(+/-) indicates price variations from previous week.
Diesel includes both full-serve and self-serve prices.
The Canada average price is based on the relative weights of 10 cities (*)

www.espar.com



In Gear

from representatives of CTA, Kasar, and Erb Transport why the program was developed, what it entails and what benefits carriers can obtain by putting a HACCP program in place. Panelists will include Ron Lennox from the CTA, Erb Transport's Tim Zehr, and Kasar's Brad MacCallum.

Date: Thursday April 20

Time: 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

LUBRICANTS: PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT AND IMPROVE YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Amanda Damen from Petro-Canada's Product Development Team will be on hand to answer all your questions on new and innovative lubricants that meet the demanding needs of today's trucking industry for fleet owners, fleet managers, and owner-operators.

Date: Thursday April 20

Time: 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Sponsor: Petro-Canada

RETREADS AND FLEETS

There are myths galore surrounding the world of retreads—chief among them that there's a relationship between 'gators and retreads. This session will provide fleet owners and managers with the tools they need to reduce their operating costs—and be environmentally responsible—by using retreaded tires and by properly maintaining and repairing tires. The speaker is the managing director of the Tire Retread Information Bureau Harvey Brodsky.

Date: Friday, April 21

Time: 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

ULTRA-LOW-SULPHUR FUELS

Ross Munro, the Lubricants and Products Manager Specialist with Ultramar, will explain what you need to know about Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel and how you can meet the challenges related to the new formulation derived from new specs.

Date: Friday April 21

Time: 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

OWNER-OPERATOR SATURDAY

Cost per mile: How much does it really cost you to operate? How can an owner-operator expect to tell a good load from a bad one if he can't figure out how much

he's going to make in the first place? This seminar will help o-o's tally operating costs so they'll recognize their bottom line so they'll never actually hit bottom. The presenter is Jim Park, *highwaySTAR* magazine editor and a former owner-operator. As one of the first Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) Road Knights, he understands the needs and challenges of today's truckers.

Date: Saturday, April 22

Time: 10:30 to 11:00 a.m.

REDUCING OPERATING COSTS WITH RETREADS

The Managing director of the Tire Retread Information Bureau Harvey Brodsky will lead a discussion on how owner-operators can reduce their operating costs and be more environmentally responsible by using, maintaining and repairing retreads.

Date: Saturday, April 22

Time: Noon to 1:00 p.m.

COMPARING PAY PACKAGES

Quick. What's a better deal? \$1.25 a mile for all miles or \$1.10 a mile plus drops, layovers, and a fuel surcharge? Making sense of recruiting-ad fine print can mean the difference between making a buck or going broke. But it's not easy. This seminar is designed to help owner-operators decipher the pay-package code so they won't have to wait until payday to know whether they're making money or not. The presenter is Jim Park, experienced owner-operator and editor of *highwaySTAR* magazine.

Date: Saturday, April 22

Time: 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Sponsor: highwaySTAR magazine

VIP BREAKFAST

Truck World kicks off with a look at the industry by one of its most important leaders. As CEO and President of Freightliner LLC, Canadian Chris Patterson has been charged with providing the vision and direction for DaimlerChrysler's NAFTA Truck operations. It's a \$16 billion (US) operation and includes Freightliner Trucks, Sterling Trucks, Western Star, Thomas Built Buses, Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation, Detroit Diesel Corporation, and Axle Alliance Company. Mr. Patterson will be the keynote speaker at the breakfast,

and Truck World's Elizabeth McCullough says tickets are still available but going fast.

Date: Thursday, April 20

Time: 8:00 to 9:30 a.m.

Admission: \$50 (plus GST)

Pre-registration Required

(www.truckworld.ca, hold your icon on Visitors and scroll down to Special Events)

Sponsors: Freightliner, Bridgestone Firestone

highwaySTAR CAREER FAIR

It's the single biggest issue facing the industry, so if you know of anyone who might be either considering a career in trucking or who might have influence over people thinking about career changes (your early-retiring friends or acquaintances) tell them about this first-of-its-kind trucking fair. Whether they're interested in driving, dispatching, sales, IT, or personnel, they'll find something of interest here. There'll be senior industry members and recent graduates of the industry training programs to share their experiences. Plus there'll be recruiters on hand

to give first-hand info to potential truckers. Visitors will also get to tour the truck show and qualify to win one of 10 iPods, door prizes.

Date: Friday, April 21

Time: 10:30 to noon

Sponsor: Power to Drive Program

highwaySTAR OF THE YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION

HighwaySTAR Magazine, along with sponsors Freightliner Trucks, ArvinMeritor, Espar Heating Systems, Caterpillar, Chevron, Michelin, SelecTrucks and OBAC will honor one of Canada's dedicated, professional truckers with the 2006 highwaySTAR of the Year Award. You'll meet some of Canada's most outstanding truck drivers—the industry ambassadors. It's an inspirational event not to be missed.

Check www.truckworld.ca and announcements during the show for more information.



TRUCK WORLD SHOW TRUCK COMPETITION

Over the past year, Truck World organizers have invited some of Canada's snazziest operators to strut their best iron, so by show time, the field has been winnowed down to nine finalists—the best of the best. Visitors to the show will be asked to vote for their favorite trucks and the winner will be announced just before the final moments of Truck World. For more information on Truck World, visit www.truckworld.ca



Date: Thursday, April 20, Friday April 21, and Saturday, April 22

Time: All day

Sponsor: SelectTrucks

UPCOMING NEWCOM SHOWS:

- CamExpo 2006
November 3-5, 2006, Quebec
- ExpoCam 2007
October 18-20, 2007, Montreal

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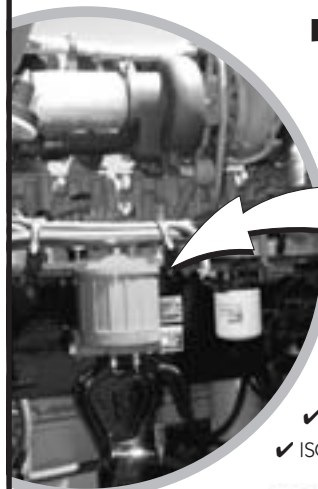
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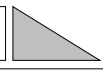
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USER-FRIENDLY FILTER

FLEETGUARD'S OIL AND
FUEL FILTERS HAVE
POLYMER CASING



With a few innovative twists on a familiar template, engineers at **FLEETGUARD** have redesigned their diesel engine lube and fuel filters. The accent is on user-friendliness, and fewer headaches for the guys in the shop.

For one thing, the filter casing's not metal. It's a solid black polymer composite and completely recyclable. That's an advantage because, with no metal parts, the danger of engine damage due to metal shards from the filter itself is gone. It's also 50 percent lighter. You can drain it and send it to a landfill or crush it and incinerate it. It also won't dent if you drop it. Furthermore, it's got a flat bottom. So it won't tip over, spilling fuel or oil all over the place, and it won't roll out of reach.

The interior chamber of the filter casing is

still rounded, but outside? Flat. Stackable. For easy handling. And if you look at the bottom of the casing, you'll see a little half-inch indentation, into which you can insert a socket wrench for easy removal. And it's claimed to be a hardy item to boot. The Fleetguard engineers say they drove over the prototypes in their Dodge Rams to test the filter's physical durability.

Fleetguard, a division of Cummins, says these new filters are ready now in a limited line for mid-range engines up to 10 liters. The lineup will be expanded to include both lower and upper ends of the engine spectrum, and the filters will be priced the same as the metal ones they're replacing. They're OK with low-sulphur and biodiesel fuels, by the way. Call 800-223-4583 or visit www.fleetguard.com.

MIXER STABILITY

MACK OFFERS BENDIX ANTI-ROLLOVER SYSTEM ON MIXERS

Mack Trucks now offers a new first-of-its-kind electronic stability system for concrete customers. Called Road Stability Advantage (RSA), it's made by Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems. Designed to reduce rollovers, the full electronic stability system is now available for mixer applications on the Granite model. Mack is the first to offer this technology to vocational customers, though it's been an option on the company's highway trucks since late last year.

"Concrete customer demand for stability protection is strong because mixers, in general, are recognized to have a high center of gravity and carry dynamic loads," says Steve Ginter, Mack vocational products marketing manager.

Mack RSA uses the existing ABS wheel-speed sensors, along with steering, yaw, and lateral acceleration



inputs, to deactivate the throttle and selectively apply the brakes in sharp curves, sudden lane changes, or obstacle avoidance maneuvers as necessary, reducing the potential of a rollover.

According to Tom Kelly, Mack's vice president of marketing, the company is "...committed to getting this technology in the hands of mixer and dump customers as soon as possible. We targeted mixers initially per customer

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demand. But we're working very hard with our partner Bendix on other vocational applications as well, to make the technology available across the board in the very near future." See your dealer or visit www.macktrucks.com.

PAYSTAR RETURNS: NEW MIXER

INTERNATIONAL REVIVES NAME ON LIGHTWEIGHT MIXER

International Truck and Engine

Corporation's new lightweight mixer package comes with an old name. The company is calling the truck a Paystar,



which will now be the brand name for all International 5000 Series trucks. The new mixer packages feature a lightweight design on a 12-in frame without compromising durability, the company says. The new Paystar loses weight primarily because of its engine—a 350-hp Cummins ISL.

The Paystar 5500 model allows customers to haul 10 yards of concrete legally (a 7.5-percent payload increase over the previous design), while the 5600 is good for 11 yards (a 6.8-percent increase).

Other weight-saving features include a McNeilus Revolution barrel that weighs approximately 2,000 lb less than other types, plus aluminum wheels and hubs and a centrifuge drum. All told, the new truck shaves 1,000 lb off the weight of the current International 5500 mixer.

The Paystar name dates back to the late 1970s, and International's severe-service vehicles carried the moniker until 1998, when they were re-named the 5000 Series. See your dealer or visit www.internationaldelivers.com.

RUST-JACKING SOLUTION

RUSTGARD UV COATING EXTENDS BRAKE LINING LIFE

New RustGard UV brake-shoe coating from **Carlisle/Altec** aims to solve the problem of rust-jacking and premature

brake-lining failure due to rusting brake shoes. Rust-jacking is caused by corrosive materials sprayed on highways to address slippery road conditions. Lab and field tests have proven remanufactured brake shoes with RustGard UV coating to be extremely resistant to chemical, heat, and water exposure, says Carlisle.

Testing was done in accordance with

ASTM B-117, a salt spray test. These tests indicate that brake shoes without linings and coated with industry-standard paint had 50 percent surface rusting after only 24 hours of exposure, Carlisle says, as compared to RustGard-coated/painted shoes which had less than 10 percent surface rusting after 250 hours of exposure. Call 434-975-6028 or see www.carlisleemotion.com.



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In Gear

CUMMINS VOCATIONAL '07 ISL

RATINGS UP TO 365 HP IN 8.9-LITER DIESEL

Cummins says that its 2007 ISL, an 8.9-liter diesel, offers the highest power-to-weight ratio in its class, in ratings up to 365 hp and torque of 1,250 lb ft. A new option allows mixer operators to monitor the engine oil level from inside the cab, eliminating the need for daily manual inspection. The '07 ISL will also feature an enhanced high-pressure common-rail fuel system that delivers higher injection pressures for lower emissions. It will continue to feature the same patented, variable-geometry turbo-charger used in current engines.

The ISL engine will also employ cooled exhaust gas recirculation technology and



**Cummins
2007 ISL**

an integrated Envirogard particulate filter to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency emissions standards for 2007. The combination of cooled-EGR and exhaust aftertreatment will be consistent across all

Cummins 2007 on-highway diesel engines.

The particulate filter is designed to last the life of the engine, the company says. It automatically collects and oxidizes particulates. When there is not sufficient

heat in the exhaust, the engine control module actively controls exhaust-gas temperatures so the catalytic reaction can take place. The particulate filter will require periodic service to remove the ash content. A typical vocational truck will need this filter serviced only once every 6,000 hours. *See your dealer or visit www.cummins.com.*

BENDIX ABS-6 AT KENWORTH

ABS-6 ADVANCED WITH ESP
ALSO AVAILABLE

Kenworth Truck Company says the Bendix ABS-6 system is now standard on its class 8 trucks, offering improved serviceability and a platform to introduce additional new features. For example, Kenworth now offers Bendix ABS-6 Advanced with ESP (Electronic Stability Program) as an option on selected



Kenworth T600, T800, and W900 tractor configurations. According to Bendix, this option helps stabilize the vehicle during under- and oversteer driving situations and may assist in avoiding a rollover. It's

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**EXTREME TRUCK:
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The world's largest production pickup truck was introduced last month at the Chicago Auto Show. **International's** MXT 4x4 pickup, with 16,000 lb of towing capacity, is a cousin to the International CXT introduced two years ago. The MXT, geared for the 'image' truck market, was a concept vehicle last year now with an anticipated launch date of summer 2006. International is about to launch its RXT this month, targeting commercial customers in the equestrian, boating, RV, and motorsports markets. The two new trucks join the CXT, billed as the world's largest production pickup truck, on the market since September 2004.

With the starting estimated MSRP of the MXT ranging from US\$69,900 to US\$85,000, it will be the most affordable pickup in the XT Family. The RXT starts at US\$76,000 and the CXT, loaded with a customized interior, starts at US\$115,000. All three XT trucks are powered by

International mid-range diesel engines. *Orders for the CXT and RXT can be placed now at any International dealer, while the MXT can be ordered this summer. See www.internationaldelivers.com/autoshow.*

**BATTERY IGNITION
SWITCH**

**COLE HERSEE'S
HEAVY-DUTY SWITCH**

Cole Hersee says its compact ignition switch with keys has a variety of trucking applications. These heavy-duty switches have plated steel casings to resist corrosion and



have two positions, Off and Ignition. To ensure safety the key is only removable in the Off position. The switches are rated at 5 amps. Available with two 12-inch wire leads with ring terminals, the switches are sealed with a rubber boot for protection against dirt and moisture. Call 617-268-2100 or see www.colehersee.com.



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In Gear

designed to detect a vehicle's impending loss of stability and automatically intervenes by selectively applying tractor and trailer brakes, and perhaps by de-throttling the engine to help control the vehicle in a jackknife condition.

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HAZMAT TRAINING

J.J. KELLER PROGRAM USES DVD/VIDEO TAPE

J. J. Keller & Associates has introduced Hazmat Training Made Easier For All Employees, a new program designed to help companies conduct required general-awareness hazmat training, as well as address function-specific and safety training needs. A 25-minute,

closed-captioned video (DVD or VHS) anchors the program, introducing employees to basic hazmat concepts and procedures they need to know, including how to use the Hazmat Table, how to prepare shipping papers, package selection, loading/unloading requirements, and proper marking, labeling and placarding. The video uses dynamic graphics, compelling narration and eye-opening statistics to "sell" safety to employees and help them understand why they should always perform their jobs properly. It's available on DVD for US\$395 and on VHS for \$319. Call 800-327-6868, reference Action Code 02086. See www.jjkeller.com.

AIR RIDE SUSPENSION

KELDERMAN KITS FOR GMC 4500/5500 TRUCKS

The air-ride suspension kits for GMC 4500 and 5500 trucks from **Kelderman Manufacturing** are bolt-on affairs. Designed with an electronic automatic height control unit with an air dump



feature, Kelderman's kit features parallel trailing arms to eliminate axle twist and minimizes pinion-angle movement, transferring power to the ground for a more stable, comfortable ride. The factory sway bar is not removed. Kelderman uses quality Firestone air bags and provides everything required including wiring harness, bolts, hardware and easy-to-read instructions, making this a do-it-yourself project. A tech department is available Monday through Friday to assist with installation. Call 800-334-6150 or visit www.keldermanmfg.com. ▲



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"We, along with our valued sponsors, Freightliner Trucks, ArvinMeritor, Espar Heater Systems, Caterpillar, Chevron, Michelin, = SelecTrucks, and OBAC, believe that owner-operators are a 'driving' force behind Canada's trucking industry. An under-appreciated force at that. So once again we honor one of these dedicated, professional truckers with our 2006 highwaySTAR of the Year Award."

Jim Park, *Editor highwaySTAR*

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By Peter Carter

FW: A Driver's Dream

Internet advice on making your office even more driver friendly.

My friend Michel Patry is a Montreal-based owner-operator working a night-time run on the 401 and he says he found the following on the Internet and doesn't know who wrote it but he said we both know guys who might have. Post it on the company fridge. At your own risk.

NEW OFFICE RULES

In an effort to promote better understanding between drivers and office staff, the following procedures will be implemented in the office immediately.

1. Effective now, every employee must remain in the office from Sunday at 5:00 a.m. until after 3:00 a.m. the following Saturday.

2. There will be a \$10-per-night parking fee for employee vehicles in the company lot. Your alternative is to park six towns away.

3. If for some reason an employee is not allowed to go home on a weekend, we will make every effort to let him or her go home the following weekend. Or not.

4. Each employee must bring all clothing and personal necessities that they require on Sunday. The company will provide storage space for personal items but this space is subject to inspection by company or government personnel.

5. Employees will be provided beds but must provide their own bedding. The sleeping environment will be very noisy and you will be interrupted. And of course if you receive a satellite message during that time you must answer it immediately even if it's only a message telling you about some other company getting some stuff stolen from one of their trucks.

6. Personal phone calls will be billed at a rate of \$0.32 per minute with a \$0.50-per-call surcharge.

7. Each employee must maintain a record of how he or she spent each minute of every day. These records will be submitted daily to the company and audited by company and or government personnel.

8. No matter how much work the employee has to do, it must be done within the time allotted for it. And your logbook must miraculously prove this. Any violations of these regulations will result in a heavy fine, reprimand, or termination.

9. Employees will be subject to random drug and alcohol testing and of course none of these substances will be allowed while the employee is in the office.

10. You may also be required to wait several hours before

starting work, for no apparent reason. During these periods, you must remain in your workspace; you may not use the phone or the restrooms and neither may you sleep or expect paid compensation for same. Okay, okay once in a while we will throw you \$25 for your waiting time. But don't abuse this generous gift or we will stop this nonsense.

11. We appreciate constructive criticism and suggestions but if we feel that your comments reflect badly on us you will be construed as having a bad attitude.

12. You are expected to maintain a positive approach in all situations and be cheerful, respectful and deferential in your dealings with management, other employees, customers, and the general public.

Finally, please don't worry. Since you are office personnel, we will never ask you to do any of the truly nasty stuff, such as deal



with crazy road-raging four-wheelers or negotiate with insolent dock guys who don't speak word one of English. You won't be responsible for midnight deliveries in downtown Manhattan or any other awful big cities and we certainly won't expect you to drive through snowstorms or tornadoes. We have drivers to do those things. ▲

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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