

STERLING DEMISE: Retired oval badge a sign of the times, PG. 8



Patterson:
"We're in
this to make
money."

November 2008
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Today's Trucking

The Business Magazine of Canada's Trucking Industry

Into the Wild

FINANCIAL MELTDOWN:

Why the industry's headed into uncharted territory and how the strong will survive.

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:



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Today's Trucking

The Business Magazine of Canada's Trucking Industry

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Today's Trucking is published monthly by NEWCOM BUSINESS MEDIA INC., 451 Attwell Dr., Etobicoke, ON M9W 5C4. It is produced expressly for owners and/or operators of one or more straight trucks or tractor-trailers with gross weights of at least 19,500 pounds, and for truck/trailer dealers and heavy-duty parts distributors. Subscriptions are free to those who meet the criteria. For others: single-copy price: \$5 plus \$0.25 GST; one-year subscription: \$34 plus \$1.70 GST; one-year subscription in U.S.: \$40 US; one-year subscription foreign: \$65 US. Copyright 2008. All rights reserved. Contents may not be reproduced by any means, in whole or in part, without prior written consent of the publisher. The advertiser agrees to protect the publisher against legal action based upon libelous or inaccurate statements, unauthorized use of photographs, or other material in connection with advertisements placed in *Today's Trucking*. The publisher reserves the right to refuse advertising which in his opinion is misleading, scatological, or in poor taste. **Postmaster:** Address changes to *Today's Trucking*, 451 Attwell Dr., Etobicoke, ON M9W 5C4. Postage paid Canadian Publications Mail Sales Agreement No. 40063170. ISSN No. 0837-1512. Printed in Canada.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program toward our mailing costs. PAP Registration No. 10788. **Canada**



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BIFA WORLDWIDE

Letters



A counter-balanced opinion

Re: "Questions of Balance," by Jim Park, Sept. '08).

News flash: If you have tires and wheels, and if you actually move your truck, there is almost zero chance that at least half of the wheel assemblies on that truck will not require balancing right now.

Tires don't develop funny wear patterns because they are running true and smoothly. The vibrations you feel on the steering wheel mean you have something in your system that is not running properly.

The biggest single reason for wheel vibration and strange wear on tires mounted to hub-piloted disc wheels is that the wheels are off-center on the hubs. Once you have a little bit of wear on those hubs, you'll find it nearly impossible to mount a wheel concentrically. There are wheel-centering devices, as your article mentioned. There is also a wheel-centering flange nut that not only centers your wheel, but eliminates the need for retorquing. It's called Skirt Nut; see www.safetytrigo.com.

As for moisture causing problems with balancing compounds, if you've ever seen a tire dismantled from a truck, the first things you see inside are little rubbery balls. That's "rubber dust" from the inner liner, and there is nothing wrong with it. Every

tire gets moisture inside—it's a result of a heated tire cooling down when it is stopped. Mix that rubber dust with moisture, add a balancing compound, you'll get clumping, and that will affect balance.

There are only a few compounds that do not clump. Look for the bead type as opposed to the flakes, and particularly the compounds that use Teflon coating. Frankly, most users of these products that I know believe they're a far superior balance to a fixed wheel weight—the balance will shift as necessary to compensate for tire wear or a flat repair. And at least some of the dry compounds are reusable. I personally know some folks who have used the same compound in different tires for 10 years with great success.

The bottom line is, if you have strange wear patterns you have a balance problem. You may even have an alignment problem. **The very first step:** Make sure your tires are properly installed and your wheels are running true on the hubs. If they're not, there is virtually nothing else you can do



that will make that assembly run properly. Remount the tires if necessary, use a centering device on your wheels or use the new-style flange nuts, but get that problem corrected first.

Step two: Balance those wheel assemblies, all of them. Use a compound, not a fixed weight.

If you're not balancing every single one of your tires, here's what it is likely costing you. You're spending roughly three to eight percent more than you need to on fuel; you are burning easily 15 to 25 percent off your tire life—we're talking about a lot more than "every last 32nd" of tread life here, but do you know how much each little 32nd of an inch costs you?

D. F. (Dave) Brennan,
Toronto

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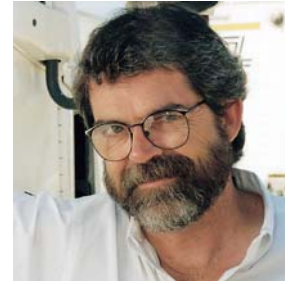
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Beyond today's standards.



By Rolf Lockwood



Calling Mr. Harper

Technology can help get us over the fuel-cost hump but fleets won't be able to afford it on their own.

Power in the pen, eh? In October's editorial I asked for avoidance of the Liberals and their Green Shift plans in our federal election, and you lot were clearly listening. Amazing. Thank you very much.

It wasn't that I wanted yet another Harper government, minority or otherwise. For that matter, it wasn't that I wanted any other party in particular to take the reins. I don't like any of 'em. My objection to the Liberals had only to do with the misguided nature of their carbon-tax platform.

That said, I do believe—and strongly—that Mr. Harper and his cronies must change their ways. A couple of years back, for example, they cut the cash incentive that saw a few thousand auxiliary power systems sold that wouldn't otherwise have hit the streets. Many liters of fuel have been saved as a result, and a bunch of truck operators both big and small were given a leg up in the fight to stay financially alive. Given what's happened in the last year to the price of fuel, the value of such incentives would be that much greater now.

I'm not especially worried here about environmental issues, though Harper *et al* will have to raise their game on that front in the coming months. Public pressure will demand it, and that pressure will get increasingly loud. Happily, anything that's done to reduce trucking's carbon footprint will necessarily help on the fuel-cost front too as consumption is cut. For the moment at least, we have differing priorities and differing values yielding the same result.

But Canadian businesses, trucking in particular, have problems when going 'green' means losing money, something Mr. Dion just couldn't figure out. And let's face it, in the business world almost nobody really gives a crap about saving the planet. Today, they just want to reduce costs to levels of survivability. Exceptions to that rule? Sure, but not many.

So what's a new old Prime Minister to do? In a word, bring back or create incentives that will help trucking fleets buy fuel-saving tools now and support the development of technologies that will help them make the transition to the new environmental demands that are doubtless coming—we just won't escape them—over the next 10 to 20 years. Not to mention simply helping them with the price of fuel. It's going to get ugly.

In 2050, to meet likely carbon-reduction demands, a freight-hauling heavy truck is going to need an impossible 35.3 mpg.

I'm writing this in a quiet little area outside the main meeting room of the Hybrid Truck Users Forum in downtown South Bend, Indiana. It's an appropriate place to be doing it, as much of the conversation today has centered on the issue of incentives to ease the purchase of hybrid trucks and to promote a faster commercialization process. Speaker after speaker amongst the fleet reps who hit the podium said they couldn't have bought into the hybrid idea without financial help of some sort. It seems they could tolerate a 20-percent upcharge for the technology but not the 40 percent or so that it actually costs. At the lesser of those two figures, a reasonable payback period of a couple of years is possible for many of them. New York State leads the way down here, not incidentally, covering 80 percent of the incremental cost of hybrid systems. Which is about 100 percent more than the help you'll get in Canada.

I'm mighty concerned about this, and my concern doesn't stop with the present. It's bad enough that Mr. Harper and his government haven't seemed to care enough about our industry—an utterly essential core industry—to help us now, but what are they likely to do in the future? Do they think it's going to get easier? Do they have any vision at all?

Here's a scary bunch of figures, all in American dollars and gallons which I'll leave as is, presented here in South Bend by the Environmental Protection Agency. Assume that a class 8 over-the-road truck gets 6.0 mpg in 2008 with fuel costing \$3.88 a gallon. Now, what sort of efficiency will that truck have to achieve as the price of diesel rises, in order to keep fuel cost per mile constant? When a gallon of diesel costs \$6.00, maybe in 2020 if not before, that truck will need to achieve 9.3 mpg. At \$8.00, it will have to get 12.4 mpg, and at \$10.00 it'll need a whopping 15.5 mpg to maintain the cost-per-mile status quo.

And get this: in 2050, to meet likely carbon-reduction demands, a freight-hauling heavy truck is going to need an impossible 35.3 mpg.

Listen up, Stephen, we're going to need your help here. Starting now. ▲

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



Dispatch

Sterling No More

Daimler Trucks proceeds with one less brand in its North American stable

The morning after Thanksgiving, Sterling Truck employees on their way in to work at the St. Thomas, Ont., plant were told they would no longer have a job after next spring. Thanks, alot.

In one of the best-kept secrets in the industry, parent company Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) announced without warning that it will eliminate the Sterling badge from its commercial truck lineup.

The truckmaker said it will shutter its two assembly plants—the St. Thomas facility in March 2009 and its Portland, Ore., plant in 2010. As part of the massive reorganization, production of Western Star trucks will shift from Portland to Santiago, Mexico. And Freightliner's Cascadia model will also be built in Mexico starting in February.

The St. Thomas plant, which makes the Sterling HX heavy-duty truck and the

Acterra medium-duty vehicle, was slated to drop production to 35 trucks a day, down from about 75 earlier this year.

Daimler blamed the changes on “continuing depressed demand across the industry and structural changes in the company’s core markets.”

In a conference call with trucking journalists following Daimler’s announcement, DTNA President Chris Patterson admitted that the Sterling brand simply couldn’t hold its own in the hyper-competitive North American market.

“We’re in this business to make money and Sterling has not been achieving the target level of all of our operations worldwide,” he said in response to a call-in question by *Today’s Trucking*. “That’s a combination of a number of factors, including market penetration.”

Andreas Renschler, the German-based head of

Daimler’s worldwide commercial truck business, added that buyers “are not thinking about the future right now” as they grapple with economic headwinds as well as rising fuel, maintenance and compliance costs. (See “*Into the Wild*,” on page

39, of this issue.)

He said there’s very little indication that the market could be propped up in 2009 by a small pre-buy in advance of the 2010 EPA engine regulations. “The boom market of 2006 will not return.”

The moves are expected to



Issues

cost Daimler \$600 million in severance pay and to compensate Sterling dealers, the company said, but will improve annual earnings by \$900 million by 2011.

Dale Hallman, founder and principal at Highway Sterling & Western Star in Ayr, Ont., first heard the news that morning. "It was a shock to me," he told us shortly after. "This is the biggest thing since Freightliner bought Western Star."

Hallman's been selling about 150 Sterlings a year for the past few years—mostly

DAIMLER FIRES SILVER BULLET: Sterling simply couldn't cut it in the hyper-competitive North American truck market.



construction-vocational types like the 360; and most recently the new offering, The Bullet.

Naturally, he's disappointed. But in the end, he acknowledges that the manufacturer had to make a business decision.

"You've got to remember when they make these decisions they're not only thinking about our little part of the world but they're also thinking globally."

Patterson said the company is prepared to press on with a "two-brand strategy," meaning that existing Freightliner and Western Star truck brands would move in and pick up some of the market-share lost with the elimination of Sterling.

While there will be no direct product carry-over, Daimler does "intend to augment continuing product offerings to fill niches that were previously occupied exclusively by Sterling," Patterson said.

"There's significant overlap, particularity in the medium-duty product range that services utilities and municipalities, so there's actually product from both brands already in the space, which is one of the considerations in today's decision."

Sterling currently holds



FREE FALL: It didn't take long for the diving economy to eclipse almost all other trucking issues in 2008.

TOP 10-4-'08

Not surprisingly, the price of diesel and the crumbling American economy ranked as the top two most critical issues the trucking industry faced in 2008. That's according to the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), which surveyed more than 5,000 trucking industry executives for the survey. It's American in theme, but most, if not all the issues apply here, too:

1 After ranking second in 2006, **fuel prices** once again attained the top ranking. The cost of diesel pushed past \$4 a gallon this summer, and while prices have subsided in recent weeks, carriers' fuel bills still play havoc with the bottom line.

2 If the survey were taken today, no doubt the **economy** would be the top issue, considering the headlines these last couple of months. (Check out our analysis on pg. 39.)

3 This one isn't going away. In the top two spots each of the last three years, the **driver shortage/retention** issue took a back seat in 2008. Many respondents are still wary as baby-boomers retire in large numbers.

4 Previously, **government regulation** ranked as low as seventh in 2005. So clearly the burdens of government intervention still have an impact.

5 **HOS**, the top-ranked issue in 2007, slipped four places. Last year, a U.S. Court's rejection of the 11-hour driving provision and 34-hour restart was a big deal.

6 Though **congestion** had seen a steady increase in the rankings, this drop may be explained by declines in vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled.

7 **Toll-highway** funding has gained in importance. No doubt, politicians' eagerness to charge rates to drive has a lot to do with that.

8 This is the highest ranking for **environmental** issues. It's tough to say whether truckers were concerned or proud of all the 'green' hurdles they're asked to jump through.

9 **Tort reform** fell to its lowest ranking in four years. The trucking industry seeks to clarify the distinction between civil tort liability and punitive damage awards.

10 Electronic onboard recorders (**EOBRS**). They're coming, so here's betting this issue climbs the ladder in '09.

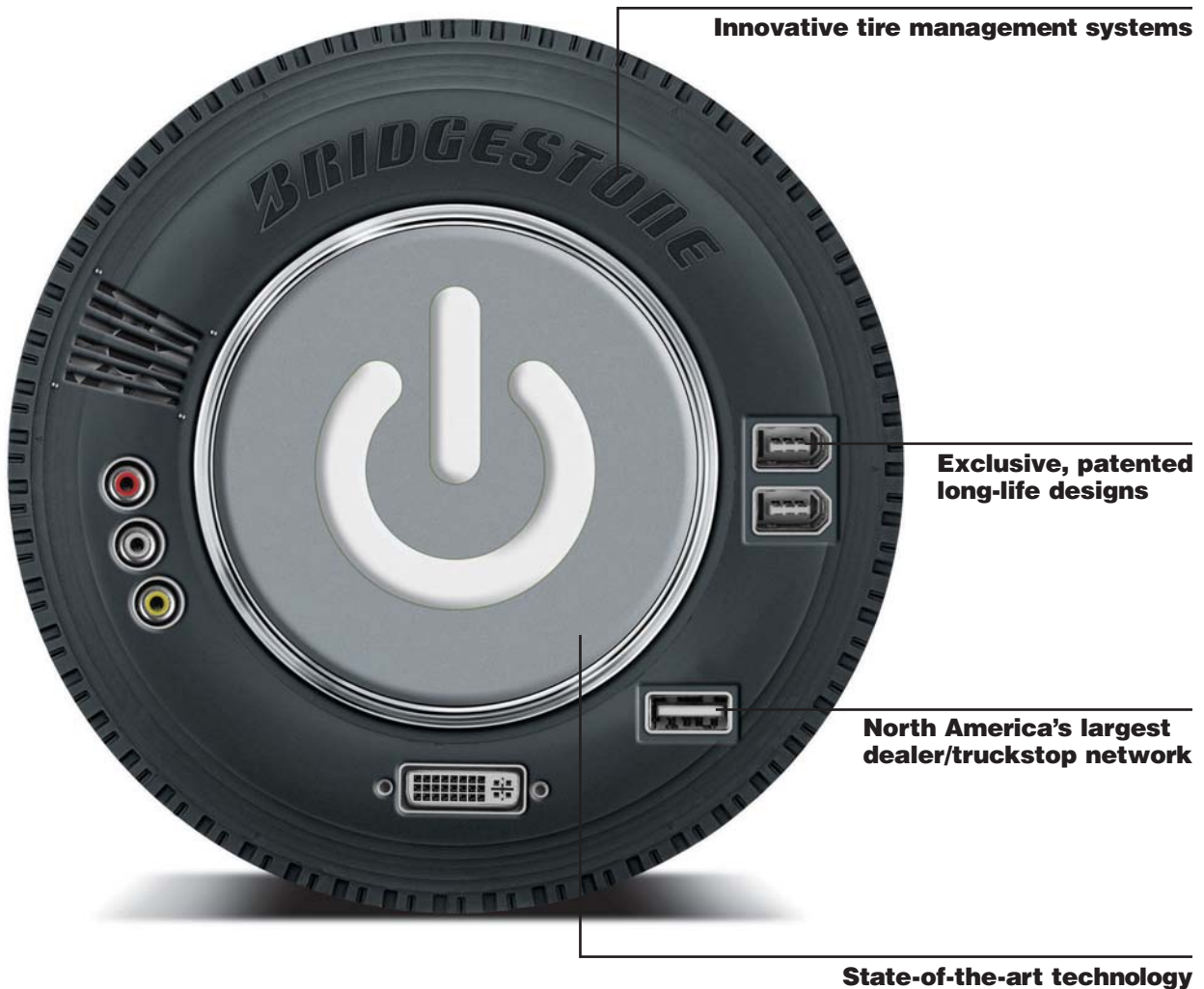


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about 4.5 percent of the North American medium-duty market, and Patterson suggested Daimler's existing brands could cover most of that.

As for doing the same in the heavy-duty segment, which Sterling has about a five-percent stake in, Patterson said modifications to a variety of Freightliner and Western Star model frames would be required.

"There are some gaps in the [heavy-duty] product range where there isn't a Freightliner product that's configured exactly for some of the markets that Sterling served, but those are relatively small segments," said Patterson, who preferred not to go into specifics.

The manufacturer confirmed that dealers will con-

tinue to accept orders until Jan. 15, 2009. And new truck sales will continue until present dealer stocks are depleted.

There are few stand-alone Sterling dealers in North America. Most franchises are dueling with other brands in the Daimler stable; and some others still have ties to non-Daimler brands such as Ford, which sold Sterling to Freightliner in 1998.

"We're extending to Sterling dealers an ongoing service agreement that would encourage them to provide service and warranty repairs as well as continuing to offer replacement parts and technical information to Sterling operators. And those negotiations have already begun," Patterson said.

The timing of the St.

Thomas plant closure apparently coincides with the expiry of the company's labor contract with the Canadian Auto Workers union.

About 2,000 workers will be affected, although layoffs for nearly 800 of those employees were already set to take effect in November.

While Daimler denies it, some industry insiders indicate that it wouldn't be too surprising if the truckmaker eventually re-launches some of the Sterling products under a new nameplate for production in Mexico.

Steve Tam, director of ACT Research in Columbus, Ind., told the *London Free Press* that Daimler can't open a new plant without trucks to assemble, "and there isn't any demand for

additional trucks."

Mexican automotive workers earn about \$2/hr while Sterling workers in St. Thomas and Portland earn in the neighborhood of \$30/hr.

Sounds like a clean break.

Borders

Border Enforcement Debate

It was big news in the region a couple of years ago, but it seems that hardly anyone notices anymore that the privately-owned Ambassador Bridge at the Windsor-Detroit border continues to allow hazmat trucks on the structure despite a 75-year-old U.S. law that prohibits it.

So says Gregg Ward, who hasn't forgotten. The owner

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COMPETITIVE SAIL: Regulatory hurdles and levies put marine transporters at a competitive disadvantage, says one cross-border barge operator.

TAKING ON WATER

Windsor-Detroit Truck Ferry operator Gregg Ward is a busy guy these days. While he battles the Ambassador Bridge over loads that should be crossing the border on his barge, he also continues to lobby Capitol Hill to boost border-crossing redundancy as well as loosen regulatory restraints for short-sea shippers in the Great Lakes region. When contacted by *Today's Trucking*, Ward was in D.C., trying to convince politicians to eliminate the so-called Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) for certain marine cargo in the Great Lakes region. The tax

(\$125 for every \$100,000 in merchandise value) is a competitive impediment since it only applies to water-bound freight and not, in the case of Windsor-Detroit, to the Ambassador Bridge or tunnel. Because of the tax, diversion of traffic from congested highways and bridges to waterborne services is unlikely, expensive, and requires extraordinary co-ordination among the carrier, shipper and import community, Ward told Congress. While there doesn't seem to be any stiff opposition to the proposals, Congress, for obvious reasons, has "become dysfunctional" these last few months and only a small number of the legislative items are moving forward.

and operator of the Detroit-Windsor Truck Ferry—the only link designated by the U.S. and Canadian governments to transport cross-border hazmat loads in Windsor—has fired off a letter to Michigan Department of Transportation Director Kirk T. Steudle, urging him to enforce the federal routing restrictions.

The transportation of flammable, corrosive, radioactive, and explosive materials across the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel is banned under a federal rule called the National Hazardous Materials Route Registry (NHMRR).

The designation of a restricted route for such loads across the bridge has been on the books since 1929. But because of the

Ambassador's autonomous control of the structure (it can deny safety inspectors, and even police access to the bridge), law enforcement agencies are powerless to step in and block hazmat trucks once they're on bridge property.

In the past, Ambassador Bridge President Dan Stamper has insisted the route registry does not apply to the bridge because the state doesn't have the "authority to determine what crosses a private piece of property."

In 2006, *The Windsor Star* revealed that bridge company managers were writing special permits to a select number of hazmat carriers. Reportedly, some truckers have also been known to remove their hazmat placards before crossing the Ambassador, which is quick-

er and cheaper than the truck barge or Blue Water Bridge in Sarnia.

Politicians on both sides of the border promised to investigate, but according to Ward, not much has changed.

"Historically the operators of the Ambassador Bridge have demonstrated their arrogance by continually dismissing state or federal authority as it pertains to the operation of their privately owned and operated bridge," wrote Ward, who also copied Canadian and Ontario transport ministers Lawrence Cannon and Jim Bradley on the letter.

"...they continue to ignore the legal authority of your department to establish, maintain and enforce restricted hazardous material routes at their privately owned, publicly used facility"

The ferry operator was recently denied a Freedom of Information Act request to get records on the types of loads that frequently cross the bridge. The Michigan DOT wrote back, stating: "The Ambassador Bridge is a privately owned structure and does not fall under the jurisdiction of the MDOT. No records of this nature are maintained within this agency."

Asked if the bridge's private status exempts it from the NHMRR, Eileen Phifer of the MDOT told us that the agency has the authority to determine the routes where hazmat materials can travel, including the Ambassador Bridge. She said, however, that state police are responsible for enforcement on the ground.

Phifer said she's aware of the past reports detailing that hazmat loads may be illegally crossing the span, and while on-road enforcement has the responsibility to restrict those loads, she doesn't know of any fines that have been given.

More recently, Ward has been corresponding with the Windsor Port Authority (WPA), which in a letter indicated it is willing to help from the Canadian side. Asked what the WPA could do, Ward said it would be useful if there was a protocol between Canada Border Services Agency and the DOT for sharing information on the vehicles coming into Canada with hazardous materials. "It is not necessary to share personal data," says Ward. "Just date, time and name of the trucking company. With that information investigators

could follow up.”

In Windsor there are signs notifying border-bound hazmat truckers they must cross by ferry. But part of the problem on the U.S. side, says Ward, is that MDOT hasn't posted similar signage warning drivers of the regulations.

He adds that in a post-9/11 world, Michigan needs to intensify its efforts to protect the traveling public as well as the only bridge at the world's most important international trade gateway.

Interprovincial

Albatchewan On Trucking Regs

The booming provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan seem to be in perfect harmony these days. So, why should their respective trucking industries be any different?

The governments of the two prairie provinces have banded together to strengthen uniformity across both jurisdictions. This fall, at a joint cabinet meeting, leaders signed a protocol of

cooperation, which promises to bridge outstanding issues in energy, the environment, trade, education, health care, and transportation.

On the latter point, the aim is to ensure that provincial and federal transportation regulations don't impede the competitiveness of industries in both provinces.

“Regulation consistency is a key to economic success,” Saskatchewan Highways and Infrastructure Minister Wayne Elhard told *Today's Trucking*. “There's no justifi-

cation to the regulatory differences that impede the industry. We'll try to get a standard approach, or at least remove barriers.”

At the top of the list will be harmonizing weight and dimension regs wherever possible. Saskatchewan highways are on the lighter side of a 1,000-lb difference in GVW. The ministry will be working to increase the GVW to 63,500 lbs on highways where bridge weight restrictions will not be an issue.

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National Seminar Series: The State of Logistics Report 2008, Novotel Montréal Aeroport, Montreal. This tour will officially launch the first-ever Canadian State of Logistics Report, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the Canadian supply chain industry. Call 1-866/456-1231 or go to www.sclcanada.org.

December 1-3

CVSA Electronic On-Board Recorders (EOBRs) Symposium, Hyatt Regency Minneapolis, Minn. The EOBR Symposium is to educate regulators, law enforcement, drivers, suppliers, safety directors, insurers, fleet managers and others on what these devices can do, what they can't do, how they benefit those who use them. The info is appropriate considering U.S. rulemakers are working on a EOBR mandate. Call 612/370-1234 or click on www.cvsa.org.

December 8-9

National Freight Demand Forecast Conference, Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto, ON. This year's event, presented by the

shipper group the Canadian Industrial Transportation Association, is themed: “National Freight Demand Forecast Conference—Is Ontario's Transportation System Up To It?” Contact Denise Fata at 613/599-3283 Ext. 221 or go to www.cita-acti.ca.

January 12-15

ProMat 2009, McCormick Place South, Chicago. ProMat is North America's premier material handling and logistics event. One Show, four days, and thousands of manufacturing and supply chain innovations! Contact: 704/676-1190 or click on www.promatshow.com.

February 10-13

TMC's 2009 Annual Meeting & Transportation Technology Exhibition, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. Sponsored by Technology & Maintenance Council (TMC), this event showcases all the latest in truck technology and reveals all the regulatory news you need to know. Call 703/838-1763 or go to www.truckline.com.

March 19-21

Mid-America Trucking Show (MATS), Kentucky Expo Center, Louisville, KY. The largest heavy-duty trade show in North America, with over a million square feet of show floor. Go to www.truckingshow.com for more info or email clockwell@truckingshow.com.



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trucking sector, the provinces will also work harder to harmonize hours of service.

"A lot of owner-operators are being impacted and haven't been able to respond to the needs of the oil and gas industries," explained Elhard. "That segment requires a quick response."

Or at least quicker than the last two years Alberta has spent trying to match the newest federal driving time rules.

The Saskatchewan minister also noted that technology advances could be handled together by the provinces, including the use of wide single tires and a joint road condition reporting system.

"I don't think having two

JPEG JUSTICE

Clackamas County, Ore., may have only 300,000 people, but don't be fooled into thinking that on-road traffic enforcement there is of the Roscoe P. Coltrane variety. The sheriff of the small town is using 21st-century technology to spot one of the oldest traffic violations there is.

According to *The Oregonian* newspaper, Sgt. John Naccarato of the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office has a new weapon—a long-lens camera hooked up to Bluetooth technology on a mobile Wi-Fi network used to catch truckers not wearing their seatbelts.

The EOS 1D Mark III camera is equipped with a missile-length lens and shoots 10 frames a second. Snapshots are immediately transmitted



wirelessly via the Internet to pursuing deputies, who are ready with the \$97 tickets.

Deputy Jodi Westerman told the paper that one of the first truckers caught under the police department's new scheme "said nothing until he got out of the cab and looked at the photo. At that point he offered, 'Yup, you got me.'"

provinces take one stance will ever be a disadvantage," added Elhard. "There are so many areas of similarity that if we can work together on all these issues it would

be very helpful."

While carbon tax or cap-and-trade systems have emerged as the popular avenues to curb greenhouse gas emissions in B.C., Alberta

has taken a different route. It looks like now 'Berta might have some company.

Earlier this year, Alberta revealed plans cut greenhouse gas emissions in half

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by 2050. The reduction plan included a system to capture air emissions from industrial sources and lock them permanently underground in deep rock formations. Carbon capture and storage, the practice is called.

The environmental plan, however, was given less ink in the media than B.C.'s carbon tax plan—and subsequently the federal Liberals' similar proposal.

Regardless, Alberta forged ahead with its own home-grown solution, utilizing the help of economic and policy analysts, as well as a trio of Nobel Prize-winning scientists. The plan made so much sense that it eventually landed a partner in Saskatchewan, whose Premier Brad Wall has been vocal in his opposition

to a carbon tax or cap-and-trade-system.

"Saskatchewan and Alberta will continue to take our own unique paths," Wall said.

And the way they're going, who can blame them?

— Steven Macleod

Fuel Supply Running on Fumes

Although not completely shielded, Western Canada's trucking sector has arguably sustained the current global economic crisis better than most industries. But it isn't bulletproof.

A couple of fuel refineries in Alberta shut down in October due to scheduled maintenance. But complications kept the facilities

closed much longer than expected and delayed full-scale production for weeks. On top of that, Suncor Energy's oil sands plant in Fort Mac had been shut down since August due to a problem with the hydrotreater. The company announced in mid-October that it had finished repairs, but couldn't say when the facility could ramp up to full capacity.

The resulting fuel shortage across the three prairie provinces brought trucking to a near standstill. Caught off guard by a spike in demand, fuel companies had no choice but to ration diesel—reportedly by as much as 50 percent in some areas.

There were also wide-scale reports of limited

hours of operation at several cardlock outlets and even closures at other locations.

With some of their trucks on the verge of being idled, many trucking companies were forced to choose which customers they would service.

Alberta typically posts the lowest diesel price averages in Canada, but during the shortage average pump prices in Calgary, Edmonton, and Red Deer neared \$1.30. That's compared to an average of \$1.18 in many parts of Southern Ontario.

At press time, there were concerns that supply won't return to normal perhaps until late November, threatening delivery schedules for pre-holiday freight.

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Eastern Quebec carriers experienced similar disruptions when a fire at Imperial Oil's Nanticoke, Ont. petroleum refinery and a CN Rail strike squeezed fuel supplies.

At the time, industry watchers called for governments to create a contingency planning system to mitigate the effects of unexpected shortages.

Suggestions included building additional refineries, stockpiling petroleum for emergencies, or creating a Canadian version of the Energy Information Administration, which monitors inventory levels in various regions in the U.S.

To date, there's been little progress made. It looks as if decision makers haven't learned their lesson. ▲

heard on the Street

■ One of British Columbia's most successful trucking companies has set up a beachhead in Saskatchewan for the first time. Long-haul trucking firm **COASTAL PACIFIC XPRESS** of Surrey, B.C., has acquired the outstanding shares of Tri-Cal Trucking and sister company Calac Trucking of Saskatoon. Calac operates almost exclusively in Saskatchewan, where it provides exclusive service to the Loblaw Group of grocery operations. Tri-Cal has a presence in Edmonton and Calgary and serves such customers as Connect Logistics (Alberta Liquor Board), Canadian Tire, Pepsi, Maple Leaf, Saputo, and other customers that CPx also serves.

The trucking industry as a whole might be facing stiff economic headwinds, but CPx continues to grow. Here's a quote you don't hear often these days: "We are feeling highly optimistic about the future," says CPx president and co-owner Jim Mickey. "We are in expansion mode."

Tim McKechnie and Kirk Fulton each own half of

CPx co-owner Jim Mickey



both Tri-Cal and Calac. McKechnie will join CPx's senior management team and will be based in Calgary. Fulton will consult to CPx, assisting with the integration of the companies before taking partial retirement.

McKechnie said he was motivated by CPx's "driver-first" culture. "We are so impressed with how they treat their drivers," he said. "We know our drivers, many of them long term, will be well taken care of by this company."

■ A group of managers at **ATS ANDLAUER INCOME FUND**, including founder Michael Andlauer, will make an offer to unit holders in a bid to take the company private. Andlauer—a specialized electronics and pharmaceutical carrier in Etobicoke, Ont.—is the latest publicly traded trucking company to shed its income trust status. Former income trusts TransForce and Canada Cartage have already gone private.

RBC Capital Markets analyst Walter Spracklin says this latest move by Andlauer could spur some of the remaining trucking trusts to follow suit. He thinks the Calgary-based bulk hauler, Trimac, could be next. Facing the prospect of refinancing debt in the current downturn makes Trimac Income Fund a likely candidate for a takeover bid by its founders, the McCaig family, says Spracklin. That would leave Mullen and Contrans as two of the last trucking trusts in Canada.

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— Gerry Roberts, All Freight Systems, Kansas City, KS

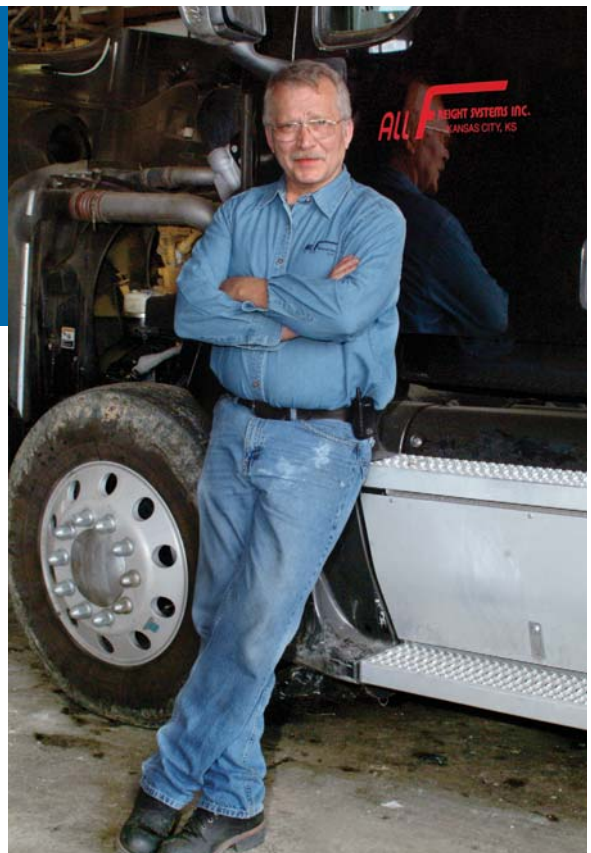


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Canada: Truck Sales Index

August 2008

CLASS 8	This Month	YTD '08	YTD '07	Share
International	326	3841	3839	23.3%
Freightliner	314	3064	3428	18.6%
Kenworth	270	2783	2820	16.9%
Peterbilt	166	1807	2067	10.9%
Volvo	178	1543	1190	9.3%
Sterling	185	1446	1827	8.8%
Mack	121	1194	1117	7.2%
Western Star	91	836	1362	5.1%
TOTAL	1651	16,514	17,650	100.0%



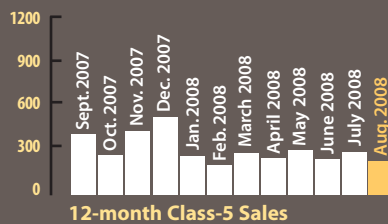
CLASS 7	This Month	YTD '08	YTD '07	Share
International	65	886	840	33.5%
Peterbilt	53	484	428	18.3%
Kenworth	50	472	455	17.8%
Freightliner	26	322	425	12.2%
Hino Canada	30	280	341	10.6%
Sterling	18	202	229	7.6%
General Motors*	0	0	485	0.0%
Ford*	0	0	96	0.0%
TOTAL	242	2646	3299	100.0%



CLASS 6	This Month	YTD '08	YTD '07	Share
International	19	263	171	49.4%
Hino Canada	14	141	286	26.5%
Freightliner	19	92	79	17.3%
Sterling	3	36	24	6.8%
General Motors*	0	0	99	0.0%
Ford*	0	0	89	0.0%
TOTAL	55	532	748	100.0%



CLASS 5	This Month	YTD '08	YTD '07	Share
Sterling	41	607	105	35.6%
Hino Canada	31	465	543	27.3%
International	25	423	403	24.8%
Kenworth	108	170	0	10.0%
Freightliner	0	41	153	2.4%
Ford*	0	0	1680	0.0%
General Motors*	0	0	984	0.0%
TOTAL	205	1706	3868	100.0%



Canada: Provincial Sales (Class 8)

CLASS 8	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	CDA
International	23	51	1	15	135	64	22	1	0	14	326
Freightliner	27	26	32	9	136	50	18	9	0	7	314
Kenworth	40	107	17	11	39	47	2	7	0	0	270
Peterbilt	18	41	22	8	41	26	8	2	0	0	166
Volvo Trucks	13	15	3	10	97	34	3	2	0	1	178
Sterling	26	34	23	4	61	28	4	5	0	0	185
Mack	10	10	12	15	61	10	3	0	0	0	121
Western Star	9	29	3	2	22	13	10	3	0	0	91
TOTAL	166	313	113	74	592	272	70	29	0	22	1651

Sources: Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association and Ward's Communication.

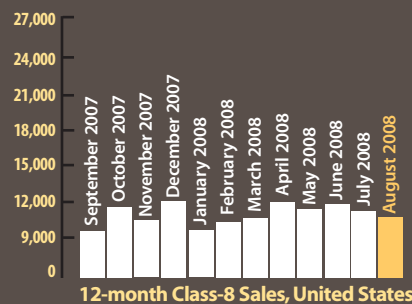
* The Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, which supplies these numbers, reports that it is in the process of making changes to its monthly GVW sales stats report. Until that project is completed, the sales stats report no longer contains Ford or General Motors monthly sales numbers or current YTD numbers. Because of this, we've defaulted these totals to zero for the time being. CVMA indicates that reported sales numbers for both OEMs will resume for the June 2008 monthly report. Thank you.



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U.S.: Retail Truck Sales

CLASSE 8	This Month	YTD '08
Freightliner	3135	22,185
International	2520	20,190
Peterbilt	1496	11,380
Kenworth	1298	10,760
Volvo	730	8771
Mack	827	7826
Sterling	629	5191
Western Star	79	806
Other	8	105
TOTAL	10,722	87,214



The search has begun for the
2009 highwaySTAR of the Year

We're looking for one driver who embodies the term professional. A driver with that certain outlook on life and the industry that sets them apart from the rest. A driver who gives to the community, operates with the highest regard for other road users, and who generally sits tall in the saddle. In short, we're looking for a driver with STAR quality to be the 2009 highwaySTAR of the year.

The highwaySTAR of the Year award is open to

ALL drivers — company drivers and owner-operators alike. If you know someone worthy of such an honour, please take the time to complete the nomination form and return it to us as soon as you can. We'll be presenting the award during ExpoCam 2009 in Montreal, Place Bonaventure, on Saturday April 18, 2009. Forms are available on-line at www.highwaystar.ca, www.todaystrucking.com, or use the form on the opposite page to tell us about your nominee.

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Please take a moment to NOMINATE someone today.

The highwaySTAR of the Year may be nominated by anyone with a business or personal relationship to the nominee. We will conduct follow up interviews with both the nominee and the nominator to ensure the accuracy of the information provided.

I WOULD LIKE TO NOMINATE:

Name: _____

Company driver Owner-operator

Current employer/contracted to _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Tel. home: _____ Bus: _____ Mobile: _____

NOMINATED BY:

Name: _____

Relationship to nominee: family/spouse ; employer ; co-worker ; friend .

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Tel. home: _____ Bus: _____ Mobile: _____

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CHOICE. USE ADDITIONAL SPACE IF NECESSARY.

In your own words please explain why you think this person is deserving of the title highwaySTAR of the Year: Discuss their unique approach to work, their problem solving skills and business skills. Detail any courses taken, and certifications earned. Give examples of extraordinary customer service or any unique hobbies or extra-curricular interests including any community involvement.

Remember, we can only judge your nominee by what you tell us. You may make a stronger case by sending additional information on a separate sheet. Feel free to include supporting documentation with your nomination.

FAX THIS FORM TO (416) 614-8861. This form can also be found at www.highwaystar.ca and can be electronically submitted. You may e-mail your nomination with all of this information to rolf@highwaystar.ca, or, mail this entry to:

highwaySTAR of the Year
451 Attwell Drive, Toronto, ON M9W 5C4
Deadline for entries is March 1st, 2009.

Description of selection criteria

In keeping with highwaySTAR's mandate, we are looking for a well-rounded, community-minded company driver or owner-operator who is active outside the trucking industry and takes the image of the industry personally. While driving record, years of service, and driving habits are important; they will be considered along with other aspects of the driver as a whole.

All nominees will be awarded points based on the extent of their community and industry involvement, efforts to improve our industry's image, general outlook on life, safety record, and years of service.

Nomination forms will be reviewed by a panel of editors and contributors to highwaySTAR magazine. A short-list of finalists will be peer-reviewed by a panel of drivers and owner-operators from across Canada.





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Our Wreck-less Drivers

right turn *Why the battle in our own defence needs a surge from our side.*
By Marco Beghetto

It seems to me that anti-truck lobbying groups like Public Citizen (PC) and Canadians for Responsible and Safe Highways (CRASH) are stepping up their efforts to make the trucking industry look dangerous, dirty, and reckless in an attempt to transfer freight to railways, among other agendas.

The following was published in a magazine called, appropriately enough, *Lawyers and Settlements*. "Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen (PC), says trucks are involved in a high number of accidents ..."

Of course, we all know that trucks are involved in a low number of accidents compared to car-on-car crashes; and when a truck-car incident does occur, the car operator is overwhelmingly at fault (as much as 80 percent in some jurisdictions). This has been well documented for years.

Then, in a clearly partisan attack, Claybrook goes on to claim, absurdly, that: "the Clinton administration was on its way to regulating hours of service for truckers but the Bush administration has not followed suit."

That's just plain weird. The current hours of service rules in the U.S. were, rightly or wrongly, created by bureaucrats, many of whom were, I'm sure, on staff during the Clinton years as well. The wheels on HOS were set in motion in the '90s. And the final version, rubber stamped

in 2003 (only two years after Bush took the White House) didn't drastically change from what the DOT had been working on for years prior.

Since those rules went into effect in 2004, Public Citizen and others have been fighting to have them overturned in court, with minimal results. To bolster its case, the group alleges that the HOS rules are leading to more tired drivers and, therefore, more dangerous roadways. Of course, there isn't a smidgen of evidence to suggest that's true.

Year-over-year stats show that truck-related fatalities have steadily dropped since 2004 even as truck traffic has increased. This year in particular, the rate in fatal crashes declined to its lowest level since the DOT began tracking large truck safety records in 1975. Is that a direct effect of the new HOS rules? That needs to be studied further, but the new rules surly aren't hurting.

Claybrook says a second issue with large trucks is the difficulty in enforcing the rules limiting the driver's hours of service. In fact, Claybrook notes the logbooks are often called "comic books" because it is so easy to lie about hours.

She's right on this front. And the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has spent the last few years working on an EOBR rule. In fairness, Public Citizen's court challenges had a lot do with the govern-

ment's action on this issue, but I find it interesting that there was little effort to force the DOT's hand to legislate on-board recorders when, 'ol Bubba was in power.

So, what's the point of this PC article? We all know the U.S. is an over-litigious culture,

being educated on their nature, some tended to fade away. In Canada it's been years since I last heard from CRASH, but now they're back in the news (still propped up with railway funding, as far as I know).

One could argue that the mandates of ATA and CTA



and groups like PC are in business to exploit that. Claybrook tells her lawyer audience: "Unfortunately, in the last year, the trucking industry has exercised so much power that change is not happening, except where there are lawsuits for the industry."

Ah, yes. The American way.

When I first started in this industry nearly nine years ago, trucking groups like the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) and the American Trucking Associations (ATA) spent a lot of time battling anti-truck talking points in the court of public opinion.

I believe as a result they did a lot of damage to the credibility of these groups; and with more politicians and reporters

have grown and today it's in their best interest to focus on business and operational interests instead, like speed limiters, larger trucks, technology incentives, etc.

But Congress, Parliament Hill, and the media aren't static. And if anti-truck groups once again make headway with the public at the same time as industry representatives are distracted by "more important matters," how do they expect to get the policies they really want passed? ▲

Marco Beghetto is Senior Editor of *Today's Trucking*. You can reach him at 416/614-5821 or marco@todaystrucking.com. Check out his blog at www.todaystrucking.com/blog.

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INSIDE:

31 A trans-Canada rant

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Drive It Like You Own It

fuel savings *Would you shift like a wimp for a 25-percent boost in fuel economy? By Peter Carter*

It's pretty humbling to learn how much fuel you can save by changing your driving style. Especially when you think you're pretty good.

I recently participated in an eye-opening exercise called the Isuzu Fuel Economy Challenge in which 15 trucking journalists from across North America drove class-3 trucks—with a GVW of only 13,650 lbs.

For the first trip around the track, the Isuzu hosts instructed us to accelerate, change gears, and brake normally.

The trucks, all 2009 Isuzu ELF's, (known on our side of the ocean as N-Series) were equipped with the company's new proprietary Mimamori vehicle-monitoring systems. For the purposes of the test, the Mimamori recorded, among other things, fuel consumption, average vehicle speed, accelerator-pedal depression, use of foot brake, use of engine brake, gearing, and rpm.

Then, we sat through the hour-long fuel-economy seminar, in which Isuzu specialists looked at our Mimamori results and discussed techniques that would increase fuel efficiency.

Then it was out to the track again.

This time, we were to drive like our fuel

was liquid platinum. We weren't supposed to waste one precious molecule.

The conditions of the two trips were identical.

From the starting point, we were to accelerate to 50 km/h, then slow down as we approached a stop sign, as if it were the end of a city block. Then, we were to speed up to 40 clicks until we neared another stop sign. One more short hop and then one kilometer at 70 km/h followed by a slow approach to the final stop sign.

The short drive mirrored, more or less, a few blocks of regular city driving.

(One big difference for all of us was that we were using right-hand-drive trucks. The test-track is in Northern Japan and our test vehicles were destined for the Asian market. For the record, manipulating the six-speed Aisin with your left hand is way easier than you might expect.)

Then came the second Mimamori results.

On my first ride, I averaged 13.9 mpg, which translates to 16.92 liters/100 km. Second trip? My four-cylinder diesel got 17.5 mpg, or 13.44 liters/100 km.

According to Mimamori, my conservation-minded driving habits boosted fuel efficiency by 26 percent. Also, Mimamori

IT'S THE LITTLE GUYS YOU GOTTA WATCH

Expect to hear a lot more about Isuzu over the next year. The president of the Tokyo-based OEM, Susumu Hosoi, told a group of visiting North American trucking-industry journalists recently that his company is on the verge of staging "an aggressive offensive" to increase its medium-duty market share in North America.

And the fact is, Isuzu's in a good position to do so. In its most recent annual report, the truck-and-engine manufacturer tallied an almost billion-dollar profit on about \$18 billion in global sales.

In its first year of operation here in Canada, Hosoi said, Isuzu Commercial Truck of Canada opened six dealerships and intends to have two more operating by the end of the year.

But more significantly, head office is also looking at opportunities for strategic alliances with another truck manufacturer, the most likely candidate being General Motors.

The industry's rife with rumors of a sale by GM of its medium-duty truck division to Isuzu, and although Hosoi said no official offer has been made, Isuzu would be "interested" if The General actually did come to the table with a proposal.

And even if it doesn't, the company might have to turn to other alliances in order to boost volume next year.

"If they choose to sell their commercial vehicle assets to another company, that would affect Isuzu's ability to increase our commercial vehicle volume and because we are now focusing on increasing our volume base, we may have to turn to other companies."

Isuzu's VP fleet operations and marketing, Todd Bloom, said sales predictions for 2009 are down once again, but "compared to the rest of the automotive landscape, we're [Isuzu] doing very well, thank you very much."

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told us my engine emissions dropped, too. Carbon dioxide went from 1,250 grams to 993; NOx from 1,771 mg to 1,278 and particulate matter dropped from 24 mg to 17 mg.

My percentage improvement between the first run and second was about average for the 15 journalists present, though one of the writers managed to wring a full 22 mpg out of his truck. In every case, the savings were substantial.

One of the editors, a New Jersey-based journalist who spent a few decades as an OTR driver in the states, had the lowest mpg after the first round but after the seminar, upped his fuel-economy by almost 30 percent. Another improved by 50 percent.

The key to the fuel saving? Driver behavior.

The Mimamori revealed all: Most of us accelerated rapidly and over-revved before upshifting and then once we were in high gear, didn't stay there long enough. We were quick to downshift, and that increases fuel consumption.

According to my report, in my first trip around the track my average rpm for an upshift was 2,080. According to the Isuzu folks, 1,600 rpm is ideal.

Most of us braked too hard and didn't take advantage of the engine's braking. Using the exhaust and regular brakes

reduce highway speed; maintain consistent speed; accelerate gradually from stops; limit the use of the exhaust brake; decelerate gradually using just the engine braking (easier said than done); and minimize idling. "Tests," Isuzu publicity materials boast, "show that a single truck averaging 35,000 miles annually could reduce fuel consumption by over 1,200 gallons per year by implementing these techniques.

"At \$4 per gallon, this would translate into a savings of \$4,800 per truck. For a fleet of 50 trucks it means a savings of \$240,000 per year."

Time was, fleets with trucks the size of Isuzu's Class 3s didn't worry about fuel efficiency. Those days are gone. Are the days of hard braking and dexterous downshifting on their way out too? ▲



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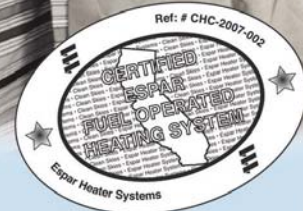
brings the truck to a halt more quickly but drinks more fuel too. All of the drivers were surprised that the Isuzu people suggested that when we come to a slow gradual stop, the driver should actually leave the truck in high gear, using the engine to slow us down, and only release the clutch moments before we roll to a stop.

The downside is, this kind of driving pretty much defies every habit you've learned. When you're driving in full fuel-efficient mode, it takes longer to slow down or stop. And you have to know further in advance where you're going to be stopping.

The Isuzu fuel-economy challenge distills down to six critical suggestions:



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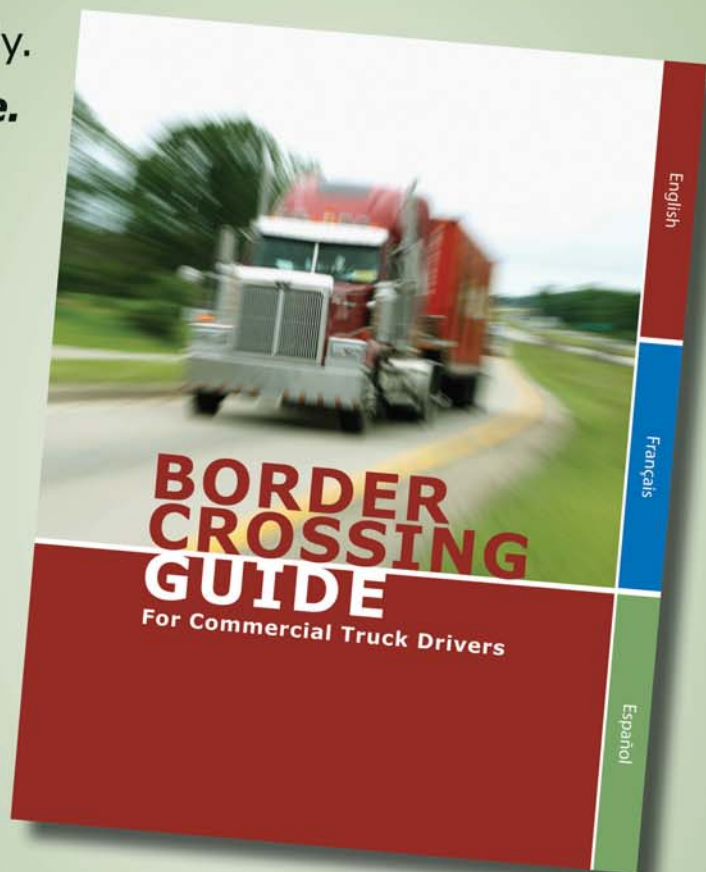
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This Country of Hours

safety *Why is a Quebec work day different than one in Ontario or Alberta?*
By Brian Botham

Two issues ago, I wrote about the need for local haulers to keep track of their miles, and that column (*"Local Logs,"* Sept. 2008), attracted more email than anything I've written to date.

For one thing, the emails were educational. One of the messages that stood out came from a fellow safety manager in Quebec, who said that in his province, the rules for local drivers are different than they are in Ontario.

In Quebec, if a driver stays within 160 km of HQ, he is considered local. If the carrier ensures the shift starts and ends in the same day, the shift is no more than 13 hours and the period of rest before and after the shift is at least 11 hours, then the carrier only needs records of the start time of the day, if it is different than midnight, the start and end time of the driver's shift, the date, and the cycle.

This is a whole lot easier than having a driver do a logbook or a keep a time record.

But the gentleman's letter really made me wonder why we don't harmonize the rules in this country. Why are the laws in Quebec different? In fact, why do we have so many variations of the HOS regulations from province to province?

I thought when Transport Canada drafted the hours of service regulations, the provinces, territories, trucking associations and the federal government worked together to come up with regulations

we could all live with.

If that was indeed the aim, I suppose problems arose when each province tried to fit the federal regulations into its provincial legislation.



In Quebec, if a driver stays within 160 km of HQ, he is considered local.

It seems each province had to shape them to fit.

For example, when it comes to identifying trucks, Ontario will only accept the vehicle licence-plate numbers and not unit numbers. In every other province, you can identify vehicles by the plate number or the unit number.

As well, Ontario is the only province that refuses to call the cycles "Cycle 1" and "Cycle 2." In Ontario, we have to call them "Cycle 70/7" or "Cycle 120/14," and it is a violation if you don't have it marked properly in your log book.

What does that have to do with safety?

Then there's Alberta. They are still running the old HOS regulations for some carriers.

I think you get the point. If you start your logbook in Manitoba and drive into

differences in legislation from province to province and territory?

Imagine what it feels like to be ticketed for a violation that doesn't exist in your home province. Imagine having to phone your safety manager back in your home province and explain that you've just been busted for having the wrong code in your logbook?

Every one of you knows what it feels like to travel down the road angry, upset, or stressed. If you're not focused on the job at hand, you're not running safely. And having to worry about complicated and seemingly useless bureaucratic rules just adds to a driver's stress load.

Also, if a driver does get ticketed, fines based on these apparently arbitrary variations in rules cost money; money that could be better spent in other areas of your operation.

Not only that, but it just doesn't make sense to have all these separate laws.

Whether you're hauling logs in B.C., apples in Ontario, or lobster in Nova Scotia, you are still a Canadian trucker and should be running by the same rules in every province.

Thanks. I feel better now.

A good rant now and then always lets a guy shed some stress. And who needs the extra headache? ▲

Ontario and you've identified your vehicles by unit number rather than plate, you can be fined.

It's time each province followed the same rules.

Are our drivers not under enough stress already? Drivers face relentless changes in legislation and compliance regulations, increasing fuel prices, short-tempered shippers and receivers, aggressive four-wheelers, border complications, and whatever else the world throws at them.

Would somebody please tell me why they should also be expected to remember

Brian Botham, CDS, is a certified director of safety through NATMI. He can be reached at 519-533-3656 or bbotham@cmvsafety.ca.

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Northward yo!

How a few guys turned an unlikely
DIY trucking project into a
full-fledged carrier and flourished.

HANDS-ON TRAINING: Ross Weitzel
learned trucking by doing trucking.

BY STEVE MACLEOD

If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself. It's not exactly new-age wisdom, but it's the thought process that led three people from Canada's North into the trucking business.

For too many years, late and damaged goods hindered Ross Weitzel's construction business. Fed up, Weitzel decided it was time to get the materials he needed on his own.

With the help of two others, he launched Qilamik Industries in Inuvik, N.W.T., with one truck and one trailer, mainly to provide service for Weitzel Construction. Weitzel kept his focus on the construction business, while the day-to-day operations of the fledgling carrier were left to Adele Campbell and Mike Smith.

In four short years, Qilamik transformed from a carrier hauling construction supplies into a full-blown LTL outfit, offering daily service from Edmonton to Inuvik.

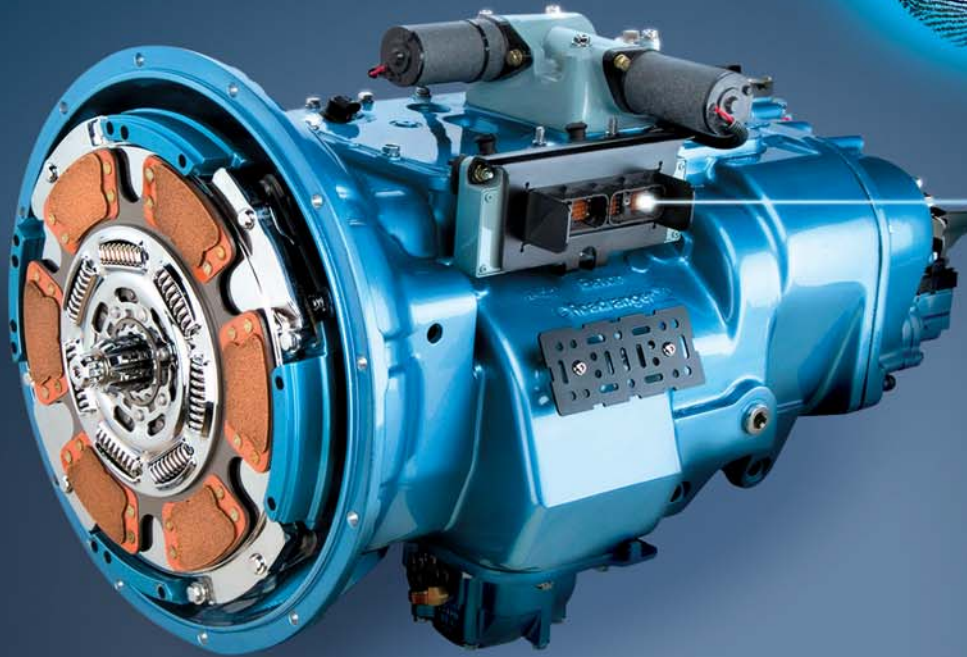
"It's really just spawned itself," explains Mike Smith, co-owner and operations manager at Qilamik.

Inuvik isn't exactly along a major trade route in Canada. Freight shipments have historically been inconsistent, expensive and sometimes the brand-new products arrive in second-hand condition.

Four years ago, the Qilamik tractor-trailer only traveled as far as Whitehorse, Yukon. Orders were placed to Edmonton companies, and interlining carriers from Alberta's capital city brought goods as far as the Yukon for Qilamik to pick up.

Before long, pickup requests from people and businesses in Inuvik began pouring in. They began: "if you're heading into the city do you think you could pick up..."

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As the requests for freight delivery continued to grow, so did Qilamik. The carrier now has two class 8 trucks and four five-ton straight jobs. Nine owner-operators also are on hand to help haul Qilamik's 13 trailers into Inuvik filled with LTL and TL loads.

The loads themselves are now coming straight from Edmonton.

"The more people who handle the goods, the more there's a chance for damage and it lowers the costs if we have less people handling everything," explains Smith.

'Qilamik' is an Inuvialuktun word that means speedy in English. The name was picked to represent service, but it's an equally good word to describe the carrier's growth. Smith constantly pauses during the conversation to answer Qilamik's phone at the front desk of the carrier's office in northwest Edmonton.

Smith moved down to Edmonton from Inuvik to help open and establish the Edmonton office. It was only supposed to be temporary, but two years later he's still an Edmontonian.

"We've taken off so fast," says Smith. "There was obviously a need for good service and routes into Inuvik. We were very surprised though with how fast we've grown; it was a bit overwhelming, but we've managed."

Of the three founding partners, none had experience in trucking. Weitzel owned a construction business and Campbell was the bookkeeper at Weitzel Construction, while Smith worked in telecommunications, which gave him management experience.

Starting a trucking company was a



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Profile

strange endeavor for all of them, but they figured it could be successful if they stuck to their main goal.

"We knew what we wanted to do, which was get freight up there on time and without damage; and it's really starting to come together," explains Smith.

Smith believes the fleet's success can be attributed to providing daily service from Edmonton to Inuvik, but it has been their

customer service that has put them in the position to operate the timely route.

"Being from the North, I knew a lot of our customers on a personal level," explains Smith. "We weren't really dealing with strangers and being able to provide a personal level of service probably helped us build a lot of trust in the beginning."

Like most carriers, fuel prices are a pressing issue for Qilamik, and maybe

even more so, considering the farther into Canada's North you drive, the more expensive fuel gets.

But fuel isn't the only challenge in trucking to Northern Canada. While a personal touch has helped Qilamik, understanding and preparing for the varying weather elements is how they really earn their keep.

"Mother Nature is our biggest challenge going up there," adds Smith. "The highway gets shutdown sometimes from storms, avalanches and washed out from flooding. We also get shut down a couple times by the ice roads."

There are two ice road crossings along the route—the Peel River and the MacKenzie River—and they shut down in spring when the snow is melting and at the beginning of winter before the crossing is packed down.



LATITUDE IS ATTITUDE: The unpredictable weather and road conditions mean heightened customer-carrier communications.

Even the traditional highways can be challenging. Edmonton to Inuvik is a 6,400-km (4,100-mile), seven-day round trip. Nearly 1,400 km (900 miles) during the roundtrip are spent driving along a gravel stretch known as the Dempster Highway.

With the terrain challenges to overcome, a good relationship with customers is even more important to keep things running smoothly.

"Our customers are very understanding of it," says Smith. "They're Northerners themselves and we always make sure they're aware of the situation. We place a lot of courtesy calls." ▲

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Trucking—and the rest of the economy—has entered uncharted territory. Only the strong and fleet of foot will come out the other end.

BY MARCO BEGHETTO

The ringside bell at a prizefight must sound like a Bach symphony to a boxer who waits to be saved as he's pummeled against the ropes. For Wall Street money managers on Sept. 29, though, the opening bell might as well have been an air raid siren, warning those below that something perilous was on its way. Within minutes of the start of the New York Stock Exchange (NYMEX) that Black Monday, traders slipped into a panic as stocks began their rapid plunge. By the time the business day closed, the U.S. stock market had lost over a trillion dollars. Yes, that's trillion, with a T—making the crash the hardest fall since 1987 and the third worst since WWII. Not surprisingly, from that epicenter of instability, other globalized markets followed the NYMEX over the cliff. The Toronto Stock Exchange, (TSX) for example, plunged more than 10 percent that same day.

The mass sell-off was in part a reaction to a string of major bank and investment firm collapses or near-failures since the start of the summer and threats that more were coming. Like pylons at this writer's first Class-1 road test, down they went: Bear Stearns, AIG, Washington Mutual, Lehman Brothers, Wachovia, Merrill Lynch, and dozens of smaller institutions.

The losses instantly dragged the embattled U.S. economy to the brink of the recession threshold, if it wasn't there already.



Into the Wild

THE JENGA SYNDROME

A year ago, most people could be forgiven if they thought Fannie & Freddie was some sort of second-rate ventriloquist act. While that's apt, considering all the talking heads in Washington, the anatomy of the government-sponsored mortgage purchasers' failures is no laughing matter.

At the start of this year, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac (handles for the Federal National Mortgage Association and Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation) owned or guaranteed about half of the \$12-trillion mortgage market. Sub-prime mortgages (many of them high-risk) went from two percent of the market in 2002 to 30 percent in 2006. When that bubble burst, the taxpayer-subsidized mortgage behemoths were left holding the bag of bad debt, as well as any other investment firm to have a heavy portfolio of deadbeat mortgage loans (hello Lehman Bros.).

Actually, it's not so far off of what happened to the trucking industry eight or so years ago, when, hell-bent on increasing marketshare, some OEMs flooded the market with cheaply-financed equipment to higher risk operators.

Notwithstanding the triggers (both economic and political) that caused the Fannie & Freddie meltdown, can a similar housing collapse happen here? Probably not close to the same degree since our

That's not to say that soup kitchen queues are going to triple overnight, but it's disconcerting that in October, Congress' \$700-billion bailout package for Wall Street was hardly able to file down the bear market's claws. In fact, days after President Bush signed what some have called the new New Deal, stocks took another major tumble. Analysts at the time suggested the package came too late. Others speculated that anxious investors had little confidence in the taxpayer curative, which not only signified Washington was all but nationalizing the country's banking system, but also ballooned from about 1,000 words to 451 pages as partisan politicians earmarked bits of pork for their own pet projects. (A

market is overall more sanguine, but some "bubbly" markets like Calgary, Vancouver, and Montreal are already vulnerable and in danger of bursting.

Speaking in Toronto last month, Yale

ANOTHER BRICK FROM THE WALL:
Subsidized mortgages weakened the sector's foundation.



University Professor Robert Shiller said Canada—which in recent years has also encouraged mortgages with virtually nothing down—is not immune from a housing bust. "I would be surprised that the bubble that appeared in the U.S. and elsewhere didn't appear in Canada," he told the *Financial Post*.

very peculiar trait of American rulemaking, by the way).

The situation is reminiscent of one of the most memorable lines in cinema, where, in the original Superman, our hero scoops Lois Lane in mid air as she falls from a building. "Easy, Miss. I've got you," he assures her. "You've got me?" Lois asks incredulously. "Who's got you?"

Good question. Can anyone in Congress fly?

CUE THE GRINCH

Worsening housing and credit markets, the infectious loss of consumer confidence, and creeping unemployment, therefore, have all but evaporated whatever modest optimism American truckers

and cross-border Canadian carriers had for short-term recovery.

It might be too early to say conclusively if the Wall St. collapse in itself put a wet blanket on the previously expected boost for the fall peak shipping season, but anecdotally, more than a few Canadian carriers are reporting a sharp U-turn in pre-Christmas freight volumes.

"Over the course of the summer we saw signs of capacity slowly stabilizing. But now—and this is not a scientific survey—I have noted that there has been a slowdown again," Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) boss David Bradley told us in mid-October. "Whether that's a blip and things carry on again, who knows? But in the short-term that's what we're seeing."

Still, the Canadian situation needs to be put in context, stresses Bradley. "I don't want to be seen as spreading panic. Yes, this is a serious situation, and we won't be immune, but overall, we are in better shape than the U.S."

No kidding. At the recent American Trucking Associations (ATA) annual convention, ATA chief economist Bob Costello said the economy hasn't even bottomed out yet.

With fading hope that shoppers will be flooding malls these next two months, expectations for the fall shipping season—a time when carriers can sometimes squeeze out higher rates from shippers—has been revised from "muted" to "negative," he said.

When we asked what he's doing to counter more expected weakness to close the year and in '09, Michael Ludwig, president of the Simcoe, Ont.-based general freight carrier Ludwig Transport, was even more circumspect: "We are at least six months away from even being able to identify a clear trend [in the marketplace]."

What he does know, though, is that he won't be partying like it's 2004 for the next half-year at least. "From where I sit right now, right this minute, it is not a pretty picture. Usually one can see some semblance of light at the end of the tunnel. However, this time around it's still looking pretty dark down there."



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TILL DEBT DO YOU APART

As the price of diesel continued to climb, Fred Cover found his receivables list getting progressively longer. The Drumbo, Ont., owner-operator has been on his own for a decade hauling loads for 19 different outfits, including load brokers. Right now, he figures only about four or five of his customers cut him cheques on time.

There have always been companies around who aren't swift when it comes to paying, but because so many are hanging on by their fingertips in these troubling times, Cover says there are many more in the market than there used to be.

Without consistent cash flow, his set of super-B's are up for sale and he's leasing his trucking service to a van operation. He's been given a fleet fuel card, so the veteran of 35 years can at least deliver the loads, while waiting—and hoping—for his cheques to come in.

With owner-operators, the payment schedule set out in a contract isn't protected by labor laws, so a violation of the contract—like late payments—would have to be dealt with through the power of faith, a collection agency, or small claims court. You might eventually be paid, but if it comes to that, the relationship will likely be done for.

At the same time, available credit is freezing fast, making it more difficult for some operators to keep things afloat until payment flows in.

Scott Taylor of TFS Group, a tax and money management consulting firm for owner-ops, offers little solace for truckers in this predicament. "If you have some equity in a truck asset that equity may not be there in the not-too-distant

future depending on how this thing all plays out.

"So, that may be cause for your next review for a line of credit to disappear," he says. The truth is, you're limited in what you can do, because if you're over-extended, no one has money right now to pay it off."

His advice? "I'd say get your ship in order—get your personal stuff paid for—so you have room to deal with the tidal wave of bad times as they come in."



He also says that truckers would be wise to act now if they planned to visit banks for additional capital in the next six months.

"A few months from now, restrictions or qualifications to get loans could be even stricter than they are now."

At the same time, keep an eye out for the writing on the wall when making deliveries.

"If the customers you're servicing start looking like they won't be able to pay, then your carrier might not have the money to pay you either," one western fleet owner warns.

Working for more diverse carriers could also provide some protection. Hauling for a carrier who doesn't have all their "eggs in

one basket" will help protect the fleet if the bottom falls out from a given sector.

If a carrier you're hauling for closes shop, being upfront with creditors will help keep the truck in your possession while you look to replace the lost earnings.

"It's in the creditor's best interest to help them through the situation," says Dave Brown, sales and marketing, Daimler Trucks Canada. "Nobody is anxious to go out and seize trucks. Equity in trucks is hard to come by and when a truck is seized it leads to a loss for all involved."

— Steve Macleod & Marco Beghetto

CAPTAIN CREDIT CRUNCH

It's not just demand-side economics the stock and housing crash is playing havoc with.

So far, there hasn't been a drastic chilling effect in Canada in response to the credit and lending freeze south of the border. Credit has gradually been getting tighter and borrowing costs more expensive here, sure, but it's still more available than in the U.S. Will that change, though?

There's little doubt that Canada's banks are more robust—in fact, a recent survey by the World Economic Forum found our system to be the soundest in the world. But some northern blowback from the crisis is expected.

For one thing, Canadians are no longer the net savers we used to be. Households first moved into deficit in 2002 and by

the start of this year deficit rose to 6.4 percent. Not too unlike the U.S. a few years ago, we're seeing property values start to fall while mortgage debt grows disproportionately.

Canadian banks have held up pretty well so far. But there are some cracks starting to appear on the surface. Just as we went to press, Ottawa moved to shore up national banks by picking up \$25 billion in mortgages to help ease lending, suggesting there's some real anxiety over an impending credit crunch of our own.

"Bankers are like sheep," said Bob Tebbutt, vice-president of Peregrine Financial of Mississauga Ont. "If you're down the street and you're not lending money, I'm going to see that and think I better not lend money either because you might know something I don't know."

In a market downturn, the possibility of tighter credit and creeping cost of capital could be detrimental to truckers, most notably for small and medium fleets and owner-operators who rely on short-term lines of credit or small loans to do things like meet payroll or make payments on equipment during periods when profitable loads are hard to come by. And if you've already ordered equipment for next year, there may be some new concerns of what it'll cost you in terms of requiring cash.

Jim Mickey of Coastal Pacific Xpress in Cloverdale, B.C., says the vise grips are out now. He says one fairly large financial house in the province has already shut the tap on most new equipment advances—even on previously-approved lines—and a big-name fuel supplier has reportedly

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been cutting upper credit limits (and days outstanding) in half. "It comes at the worst possible time when fuel prices are high and bank overdrafts are most needed," he says.

Alternatively, if carriers' cash is flowing at the speed of a solar-powered car on a cloudy day, chances are so is their customers'—especially if they're dependant on U.S. trade.

Cash is king in trucking and to survive, long-term receivables should routinely come in within 30 days. If they don't—and

Adds RBC Capital Markets analyst Walter Spracklin: "In times like these, we see that there's a polarization between well-capitalized, cash flow-positive operations and those that are highly leveraged with thin operating margins.

from risk, says Scott Taylor, president of Waterloo, Ont.-based TFS Group, a tax and financial planning firm for truckers.

"Bigger boys may or may not be wealthier, but what they can do is generate more fees," he says. "A bank looks at

"I told the guy I would have my driver take his truck to the Freightliner dealership, hand in the keys, and fly him home before I took a load like that."

THE STORM BEFORE THE CALM: When the clouds do part, those who still have their wheels will be in better shape.



credit isn't readily available as a stopgap solution—then what?

"What we're seeing is [receivables] creep up into 45 days and beyond," says David Bradley. "That is going to have a real impact on truckers who have fuel bills to pay within seven days and payroll to meet. If customers aren't paying their bills in a timely fashion, that's going to create some real problems."

"The weak players will be in a squeeze play, whereas the healthy players will develop somewhat of a competitive advantage through better access to capital—an advantage that wasn't there before when capital was easy to come by for everyone."

Fact is, debt doesn't discriminate between large and small carriers. Bigger fleets, typically, get the benefit of the doubt from banks trying to insulate themselves

a small guy or owner-operator and must determine whether to take a risk for a proverbial \$100-worth of service changes, whereas with the big guy they might be more willing to take a risk if instead he's providing \$15,000 worth of service changes. They play that game."

We used to say not too long ago that the insurance industry had become the de-facto trucking regulator in that it has total discretion over what types of fleets get to hit the road. Similarly, it seems banks are now the true gatekeepers by deciding more often which truckers get a lifeline and which have to fend for themselves.

"This is the death knoll to all but the strongest of businesses," says Mickey, "and will exaggerate the plight of the already weak players."

If there's a shiny chrome lining in all of this, it's that when the industry does emerge from recession—and it's anyone's guess when that will be exactly—capacity should tighten once again, principally because driver demographics are still sliding one way. Those truckers who hang

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AI-G-xiety Attack



It remains up in the air whether the collapse and subsequent emergency government bailout of AIG—the world's biggest insurer—will have any long-term impact on trucking insurance rates in the U.S. or in Canada.

When it first went under, there was speculation that other insurers invested in AIG or its holdings would also take a hit. But after Washington stepped in to underwrite the firm, analysts speculated that the playing field should remain stable.

When contacted by *Today's Trucking*, three of Canada's largest trucking insurers refused to comment on the impact of AIG on this market. However, some insurance firms quickly issued press releases highlighting their limited exposure to AIG and other embattled investment firms like Lehman Brothers. Kingsway Financial Services, for example, said its "conservatively invested securities portfolio" has only a minor stake in fixed income investments in Lehman Brothers and does not have any investment exposure to AIG or its subsidiaries.

Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) CEO David Bradley doesn't anticipate much of a fallout from AIG in Canada. He explained that most insurers learned harsh lessons from the mid 1980s when they "weren't pricing their product properly and living off of their investments." At that time, when the economy took a tumble, insurance capacity washed out of the marketplace and premiums skyrocketed. "We have not had the surplus capacity in the insurance market we saw previously, so there should be more stability now than in the past."

on by shedding debt, mitigating fuel costs, and have some role in more robust sectors like tank and reefer (plus whose own customers can stay afloat) should do well when things recover.

In the meantime, survival tactics are being put to the test every day on the highways, says Michael Ludwig.

"I was offered a load out of Denver the other day for \$1.00 a mile—all inclusive,"

he recounts. "I told the guy I would have my driver take his truck to the Freightliner dealership, hand in the keys, and fly him home before I took a load like that. And that's commonplace.

"The sad part is that guy moved that load, for that price."

Alas, probably not for long. That guy is on a standing eight-count and the final bell's about to ring. ▲

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WASTE NOT: Tailpipe emissions are almost too small to measure.



▲ **DEFT MOVE:** The 17-gallon DEF tank is currently mounted under the driver's door on Mack's Granite chassis. The air tanks and battery box can be moved inboard to make room for another fuel tank.



▲ **OVERHEAD COSTS:** Back-of-cab clearance has been a concern for body builders. Mack says they're now down to about eight inches, and getting closer.

What's the Fuss?

quick spin *A day spent driving a Mack Granite with an EPA 2010-ready, SCR-equipped MP7 engine suggests SCR will be just like Y2K—much ado about next to nothing. By Jim Park*

When you hear people referring to 2010 trucks equipped with SCR NOx aftertreatment systems as 40-ton air cleaners, don't laugh. That's very nearly what they've become. The quantities of regulated emissions emerging from the tailpipe are so infinitesimally small, that Mack's powertrain marketing manager, Dave McKenna,

claims engineers at the Hagerstown engine facility are having a difficult time accurately measuring them.

By now, we're getting used to the sight of a 100,000-mile exhaust stack having not a trace of soot on the inside. Reductions of NOx going into 2010 are on the same scale, but they won't be as obvious—at least to the eye. While loading the truck used on



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this test drive, I had the opportunity to get up close and personal with the exhaust outlet—like sticking my face right into the thing and drawing in a deep breath.

“The things you’ll do for a story,” the driver quipped as I drew my breath. But kidding aside, what I felt and smelled was nothing different from what you’d expect from pointing a hot hair dryer in to your face and breathing in. The exhaust was warm and moist, and it had utterly no diesel smell. Why should it? What actually comes out the pipe is little more than nitrogen and water vapor.

SCR, or selective catalytic reduction as a reminder, is the NOx reduction strategy for five of the six North American engine makers at this point. SCR is an exhaust-after-treatment system that reduces NOx produced during the combustion event. Cooled EGR was the chosen method for 2007, but it is widely felt that further NOx reduction couldn’t be achieved using EGR without significant fuel economy penalties. Treating NOx outside the cylinder allows engineers to scale back EGR rates slightly, which they estimate will yield a three- to five-percent improvement in fuel economy over 2007-model engines.

It seems a little odd to report that there’s nothing to report. The test drive went well, the MP7 engine worked like a champ under the two 72,000-lb loads of black-top I moved that day, and then we went for lunch. In many ways, that’s the story. There’s nothing different to see, feel, hear, or smell—and no operational differences save one. We didn’t need to do a stationary regen all day.



▲ **NOW YOU SCR IT, NOW YOU DON'T:** Mack places the DPF under the passenger door, behind the metal grate in the photo. The DEF injector is near the outlet of the DPF. The black box-like piece in front of the air tanks is the prototype SCR catalyst container/muffler.



MACK'S EPA-10 SOLUTION

Working upstream from the vertical exhaust stack, the square-ish unit contains the catalytic substrate where NOx is converted to nitrogen and water vapor.

At the upstream end of the pipe leading from the canister-like diesel particulate filter (DPF) is the diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) injector, where the liquid urea material is introduced to the catalyst. Upstream of the DPF, is the engine where EGR rates slightly lower than current levels will perform the first stage of NOx reduction.

On the left-hand side of the frame hangs the integrated DEF reservoir and supply pump, along with the after-treatment control module (ACM)—the brains of the operation. The tank holds 17 gallons of DEF, which when full would weigh less than 200 lb. All in, there’s likely to be 300 to 350 extra pounds in this set up (up to 400 lb in a refuse truck application), but this is still in the prototype stage. Frame space will be an issue in some specialized and unusual applications, but it’s going to be a relatively easy fit on most chassis.

SO-LONG TO THE REGEN

Depending on the duty cycles, DPFs on 2007-model engines may need to be cleaned out once a day or more. Active regen events see diesel fuel sprayed across an oxidation catalyst, which

produces temperatures inside the DPF high enough to burn off accumulated soot. Under some operational conditions, exhaust temperatures are sufficient to conduct this cleaning passively—without the addition of diesel fuel. In applications like this end-dump, running empty half the time, exhaust temps weren’t consistently high enough to accomplish that task on ’07-model engines. So, drivers often need to park the truck for 20 minutes or more and run a parked active regen cycle. With this SCR system, the operator has gone a week and longer without a parked regen.

McKenna says that in a highway application, active regen events might take place roughly every 500 miles or so with the ’07 engines, but with SCR-equipped highway trucks, if an active regen is needed at all, it might be 3,000 to 4,000 miles between events.



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SO, WHAT'S THE DOWNSIDE?

By using SCR to treat NOx downstream of the engine, we'll get back some fuel economy, Mack tells us—and the other like-minded engine makers agree. Most are saying something in the three- to five-percent range. The operator of this Granite, working it in an urban environment typical of the application, is seeing three percent right now. The truck has only 78,000 miles on it, and to be honest, the driver isn't managing the throttle as effectively as he could be—he leapt from a 10-year-old DM-model to this one and hasn't yet caught on to the new driving techniques required by contemporary engines. The conclusion is fuel economy can only improve.

The extra weight of the DEF tank and the catalyst (300 to 350 lb, on top of a similar gain on 2007 engines) will be a concern for some. Frame space, likewise, will be an issue in some highly specialized chassis such as twin-steer configurations, and trucks with lots of frame-mounted accessories.

In the photos, you'll notice the air tanks sit under the driver's door. Mack tells me they are being moved to inside the frame rails, making room under the door for another fuel tank. Mack's McKenna says the company is looking at moving the battery box too.

At this stage, 13 months before the 2010 roll-out, the DEF distribution network remains a concern to some. Haines & Kibblehouse maintains a bulk DEF tank in the shop, and puts a few gallons into the truck's tank weekly. DEF is consumed at a rate of about two to three percent of diesel consumption, so local and regional operations will have no difficulty if there's bulk storage on site. On-highway trucks are seeing about 200 miles from a gallon of urea, so a tank like the one on this truck will get you clear across the country and about one-third of the way back again.

Pilot Travel Centers announced in early October that it would have inventory in place by late next year—both bulk and package sales. Even in the worst case, a couple of gallons stashed in the jockey box will get you nearly a full day's driving.

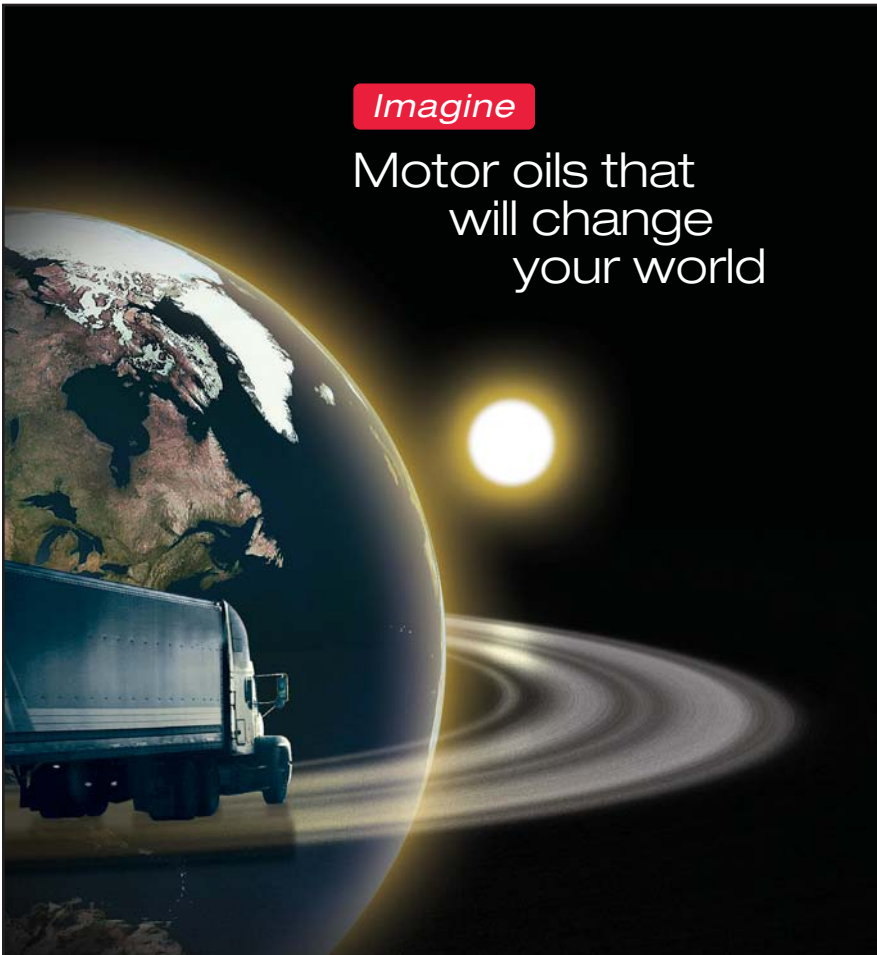
The engine and truck makers have a high degree of confidence in this technology, and it's proven itself already in Europe. There will be a few adjustments

required on the user's part, but nothing significant compared to the advantages.

My day driving the SCR-equipped Haines & Kibblehouse Granite around suburban Philadelphia revealed no driver-related issues. The driver explained that he was more than impressed with the MP7's performance compared to the old DM he drove, so the transition from old technology to new could be eased considerably by the

promise of fewer hands-on maintenance events (and possible lost time running a parked regen) for the driver to be concerned about, and improved performance.

There are still a few uncertainties among SCR truck buyers, but they should be put to rest long before these engines hit the street. One thing is certain: come 2010, we're going to have a whole bunch of new acronyms to worry about—if little else. ▲



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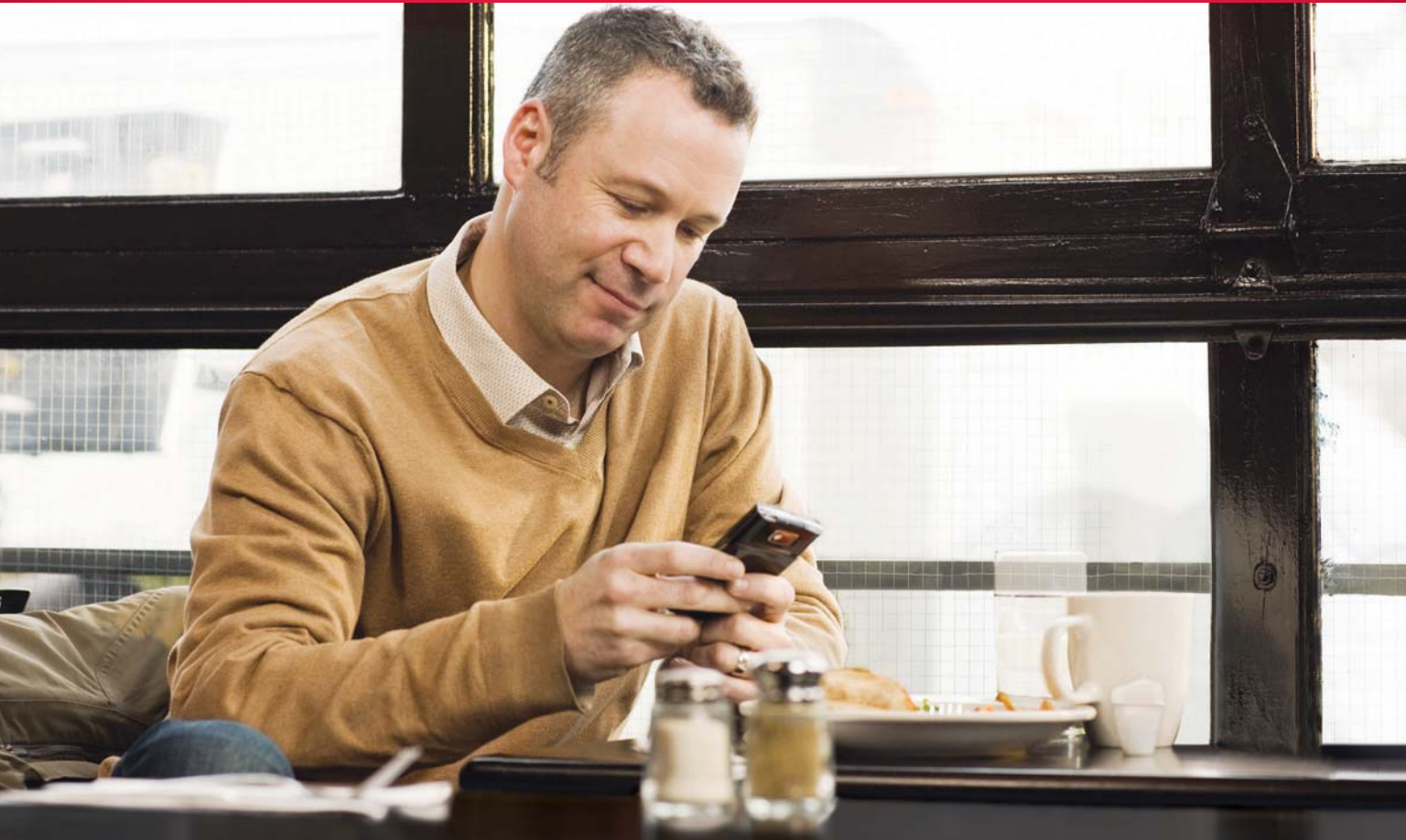
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or 180 gallons. Give or take, that's somewhere beyond \$850.

Shell also says the new 5W-40 oil showed an average of 34 percent improvement in wear (ranging from 2 to 90 percent) in standard industry tests, with substantially improved protection against cylinder-liner wear. This is good news for trucks used for low-speed operations.

The new Rotella T Synthetic 5W-40 formulation is fine with diesel particulate filters on 2007 engines, but it's also suitable for earlier heavy-duty diesels.

See www.shell.ca/rotella

COMPOSITE DRY VAN

UTILITY'S 4000D-X COMPOSITE DRY VAN

Utility Trailer Manufacturing has introduced its next-generation 4000D-X Composite trailer, a 2010 model. Production will start in January 2009.

Its newly designed standard sidewall is said to offer the same durability of a common plate trailer, with added performance characteristics like lower tare weight and load-securement versatility. The bonded construction of the composite sidewall combines Utility's patented sheet-and-post design with the foam technology benefits of its 3000R reefer—without compromising sidewall strength or the 101-in. minimum wearband-to-wearband inside width. The polyurethane foam core of the new trailer structurally bonds the interior lining panels to the outside skin panels.

Premium features available as standard, not options or upgrades, include an interior fitted with fully-recessed vertical logistic posts on 24-in. centers (minimum) throughout the trailer. Utility's 80,000-psi interior lining panels are "squeeze" riveted to the outer skin and side posts to form a patented Snag Free high-strength, durable wall system. Lining and side-post structural fasteners are fully recessed to avoid impact by cargo or lift trucks.

The first line of defence for the trailer's sidewall is the one-piece, full-length wearband. It's 12 in. high and made of 80,000-psi galvanized steel for added impact protection, strength and stiffness.

See www.utilitytrailer.com

FUEL-ECONOMY GUIDE

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Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions offers its fourth comprehensive fuel economy guide for heavy trucks, which first appeared in 1984. 'Tires & Truck Fuel Economy—a New Perspective' looks at what the company has learned over a quarter-century of studying the

relationship of tires to fuel economy. It says at the outset that there's no single thing that a fleet manager or driver can do to maximize fuel economy, but that "practically everyone can do a better job of getting the most out of a gallon of fuel."

In addition to focusing how tires fit into the overall fuel economy picture, the guide addresses how speed affects

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SUSPENSION PARTS

HENDRICKSON'S UPDATED CATALOG
Hendrickson now offers an update of its Truck Suspension Systems Parts catalog, a 248-page volume (literature number, SP-100) that features sections including Popular Kits, Popular Parts, Suspension Conversions, Product Profiles, Selection Guides, and Parts Lists. It's meant to simplify identification and selection of

truck suspension parts and parallels digital content available on-line at the Hendrickson website: www.hendrickson-intl.com.

Literature identification numbers at the bottom of the catalog pages reference appropriate individual publications, which can be viewed or downloaded under the 'Literature' menu online.

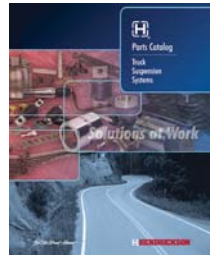
Illustrated with parts images, the Popular Kits and Popular Parts sections provide convenient reference to wear items, commonly ordered parts and kits.

The Product Profiles section reviews the functions of various suspension components along with inspection and maintenance recommendations and performance guidelines.

The Selection Guides chapter supplies specifications, part numbers and applicable measurements for components including torque rods; equalizing beams and components; RT and RTE spring hangers; RS frame hangers; and HAS and HA slipper pads.

The Parts Lists section features detailed exploded views, part descriptions, part numbers and components and contains specific requirements for Hendrickson truck, tractor, bus and recreational vehicle front and rear suspension systems.

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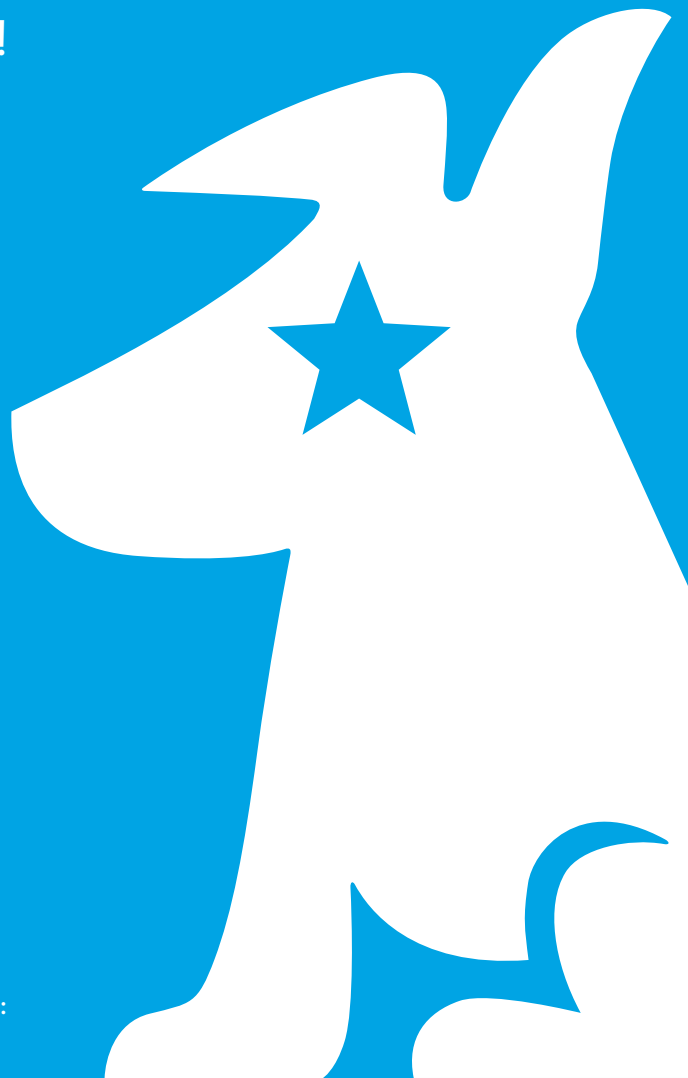
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BATTERY LEASE CUTS HYBRID COST

NAVISTAR is offering a 60-month battery-lease program on International DuraStar diesel/electric hybrid trucks, said to be the first of its kind in North America. It cuts about \$10,000 off the purchase price. There's also a 60-month fair-market-value lease and a \$6,000 credit to match any tax incentive, though that won't mean much in Canada where such incentives don't exist. The DuraStar Hybrid qualifies for U.S. federal tax credits of \$3,000 to \$12,000.

With the 60-month fair-market-value lease on the DuraStar hybrid, customers will have the option of either purchasing the truck or just walking away when the lease expires.

With the simple, 60-month battery-lease

program, the customer will receive an additional \$10,000 off the purchase price of the vehicle in exchange for paying 60 monthly lease payments on the truck battery.



All three programs run through December 31, 2008. See your International dealer for further details or visit www.navistar.com.

6-diode pattern, the lamps generate full brightness from only 8.5 volts for 12-volt models and from 21-volts for 24-volt models. Both have over-voltage protection. Twelve-volt models use 1.2 amps, while 24-volt lamps need only 0.5 amps. The lamps provide full brightness at voltage as low as 8.5 volts so they work under almost any electrical conditions a vehicle may experience.

The floodlamp has a die-cast aluminum housing with polycarbonate lens and is protected with a black powder-coat finish to stand up to adverse environmental elements. Mounting hardware is stainless steel. The polycarbonate lens system projects wide, rectangular illumination ideal for a wide variety of vehicle-related applications.

See www.truck-lite.com

WIRELESS SMART SCALE

ONBOARD SCALE FOR MECHANICAL SUSPENSIONS

Nova Scotia's **TruckWeight Inc.** has applied its Smart Scale wireless onboard scale technology to trucks, tractors, and trailers with mechanical spring suspensions. It's aimed at vehicles used in bulk

distribution, agriculture, construction, forestry, and the like.

The new Smart Scale, first introduced for air suspensions in 2005, includes three components: an axle-mounted load sensor, a low-powered radio transmitter, and a small handheld wireless receiver. The load sensor measures subtle changes in the deflection of the axle, then feeds



this data to the transmitter which relays it to the handheld receiver up to 500 ft away. The result is a weight calculation that's said to be accurate to within 1 percent compared to a certified scale.

The Smart Scale uses AA batteries for power and doesn't need electricity from the truck or tractor. So users can actively manage the weight of an untethered trailer as it's being loaded, with power units deployed elsewhere. That eliminates the time and inconvenience of hooking up a tractor in order to use a scale.

See www.truckweight.com

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WEEKLY PUMP PRICE SURVEY / cents per litre

Prices as of October 7, 2008 • Updated prices at www.mjervin.com

CITY	Price	(+/-) Previous Week	Excl. Taxes
WHITEHORSE	141.9	1.5	123.9
VANCOUVER *	134.9	-0.4	100.8
VICTORIA	136.2		104.5
PRINCE GEORGE	126.8	0.3	99.0
KAMLOOPS	131.1	-1.0	103.1
KELOWNA	133.6	-0.3	105.5
FORT ST. JOHN	133.9	-1.0	105.8
YELLOWKNIFE	147.0	7.0	126.9
CALGARY *	125.9	3.7	106.9
RED DEER	129.7	1.0	110.5
EDMONTON	123.4	0.2	104.6
LETHBRIDGE	123.4	0.8	104.5
LLOYDMINSTER	125.4	-1.5	106.4
REGINA *	129.4	-1.0	104.2
SASKATOON	130.5	-0.8	105.3
PRINCE ALBERT	128.9	-1.0	103.8
WINNIPEG *	125.1	-1.4	103.6
BRANDON	126.9	3.0	105.4
TORONTO *	122.2		98.1
OTTAWA	118.9	-4.3	94.9
KINGSTON	120.2	-0.3	96.2
PETERBOROUGH	122.9		98.7
WINDSOR	116.4	-1.9	92.6
LONDON	122.2	-0.3	98.1
SUDBURY	123.9	-2.5	99.7
SAULT STE MARIE	125.9	-4.0	101.6
THUNDER BAY	130.2	0.2	105.7
NORTH BAY	127.2	1.3	102.8
TIMMINS	130.1	-0.6	105.6
HAMILTON	120.7	-0.7	96.7
ST. CATHARINES	119.9	-1.3	95.9
MONTREAL *	132.2	-0.3	96.9
QUÉBEC	132.1	-0.4	96.8
SHERBROOKE	131.9		96.7
GASPÉ	131.9		96.7
CHICOUTIMI	130.4		95.3
RIMOUSKI	132.4	-1.5	95.3
TROIS RIVIÈRES	132.9	-0.5	95.3
DRUMMONDVILLE	127.9		95.3
VAL D'OR	131.4	-2.5	95.3
SAINT JOHN *	132.3	0.2	96.2
FREDERICTON	132.8	0.2	96.6
MONCTON	132.9	0.1	96.7
BATHURST	134.3	0.1	97.9
EDMUNDSTON	133.9		97.6
MIRAMICHI	133.7	0.5	97.4
CAMPBELLTON	134.2		97.9
SUSSEX	132.7	0.2	96.5
HALIFAX *	128.3	-0.6	94.2
SYDNEY	131.6	-0.9	97.0
YARMOUTH	130.1	-0.8	95.7
TRURO	129.1	-0.3	94.9
KENTVILLE	129.5	-0.8	95.2
NEW GLASGOW	130.4	-1.9	96.0
CHARLOTTETOWN *	126.0		95.8
ST JOHN'S *	137.3		101.0
GANDER	135.2	-2.3	99.1
LABRADOR CITY	144.7		107.6
CORNER BROOK	136.0		99.9
CANADA AVERAGE (V)	127.8	0.7	101.0

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

CAPACITOR, NO BATTERIES

SERIOUS ENGINE-CRANKING POWER

Can-Crank capacitors are now available from Ottawa's **Cantec Systems** for the starting needs of engines in all sizes. These 12- and 24-volt electric-double-layer capacitors (EDLC) are available in several sizes, dependent on application. They're safe and fully compliant, says

Cantec, to meet the demands of today's accessory-laden vehicles in on- and off-highway work.

The company says these capacitors have more engine-cranking power than four group 31 batteries. They can repeatedly crank your engine to higher rpm more quickly than batteries, it's claimed, and they can be fully recharged in less



than 10 seconds. They're especially useful for vehicles that have been parked for a long period of time with accessories left on.

The capacitors have been specifically designed and engineered for the heavy-duty market, says Cantec, with models available to crank engines from 200 to 600 hp, 8 to 18 liters.

Cantec capacitors have significant design and performance benefits over lead-acid batteries, the company says. The main benefit, aside from serious cranking power, is that they separate the engine-start function from the truck's batteries and thus extend their lives, as well as those of the starter and alternator. Other features include an epoxy-resin sealed case that's non-corrosive; deep-discharge capability with a life in excess of 500,000 cycles; and in a typical application will weigh 87 lb while measuring 22 in. L x 7 W x 9.5 H.

See www.cantecsystems.com

AIR DRYER

SKF BROCHURE AND MAINTENANCE GUIDE

SKF offers an updated brochure and a new maintenance guide for its line of Brakemaster air dryers. Both include information about the new Filtration Plus option available for the Dual Turbo-2000 and HD-2000. It removes oil and carbon before it enters the air system, said to optimize performance, extend service life, and protect components downstream.

The maintenance guide also provides fleets with detailed specs and schematics to help with operation and troubleshooting. As a quick reference, the guide also outlines several service procedures for each unit.

The SKF Brakemaster Air Dryer Brochure is stock #457969 while the SKF Brakemaster Maintenance Guide is #457938.

See www.vsm.skf.com



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Hardly new, but worth a mention with fuel prices being what they are, **Airtabs** vortex generators are said to produce fuel



savings in the four-percent range. And that means a payback in months, not years. And maybe just a couple of months.

These little streamliners are simple—small, triangular pieces of ABS plastic just under 5 in. long and about 3 in. wide tapering to a point, with a sort-of hollowed-out, scoop-like middle. From Aerserve Technologies of Nepean, Ont., they borrow from aviation technology

(even the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA, says they work) to create a controlled swirl of air, a vortex, behind a van box or trailer or at the gap between tractor and trailer.

Arrayed in a continuous line—three of them per lineal foot—up the sides and over the top of a van or a tractor at the trailing edge, they address the problem of air that has to rush in to fill the vacuum left by the truck. They work in concert with existing air-management kits.

Among the benefits, according to driver reports, are reduced splash and spray and better visibility to the rear. Others say the Airtabs 'stabilize' their vehicles and reduce the flapping of tarps while improving visibility in rain.

See www.airtab.com

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Kenworth is offering a special program for customers who buy new, eligible class-8 vocational trucks and finance the pur-



chase or lease through Paccar Financial. You'll get a no-cost, two-year, 320,000-km basic vehicle extended warranty, which doubles the standard offering.

The extended warranty is valued at over \$1,350. The offer ends Dec. 31, 2008.

See your dealer or www.kenworth.com

FLEET MANAGEMENT

MCLEOD ANNOUNCES LOADMASTER V9.0

McLeod Software's LoadMaster V9.0 software provides new time-saving and data-access enhancements. Key components include an enhancement to the Customer and Order Entry screens to show actual Available Credit information, not just over or under the credit



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limit, so carriers can confirm the credit amount is sufficient.

There are several enhancements to the ETA/Out-of-Route module to better manage late and out-of-route status based on user-defined controls. A new late status for assigning the reason (such as weather, traffic, or accident) is coupled with new filtering capabilities by driver, route or dispatcher and a report of active late stops.

Order Planning and Driver Management screens now include ETA information along with confirmation on which drivers have received and acknowledged pre-assigned movements via mobile communications devices, saving planners and dispatchers valuable time.

As well, there's a new Trailer Detention report to assist in negotiating rates or billing customers based on dropped days past the free-day limit; includes the ability to apply up to five daily rates once a trailer is detained past an allowed number of days.

See www.mcleodsoftware.com ▲

ZF COMPLETES TRANSMISSION LINEUP

We won't see it until 2010, but the new ZF POWERLINE 6-speed automatic transmission, little brother to the heavy-duty FreedomLine, feels awfully good in prototype form. It's going to be the main gearbox in the new Nissan light commercial vehicle, soon to be built in the company's Canton, Mississippi, plant where the Titan pickup truck is made.

We drove an early version of the transmission in Germany recently, installed for test purposes in a Ford F450. It felt good, as smooth and effortless a transmission as we've ever used in a truck. We'll have to wait for a year or two before a real test can be done, but first impressions? Superb.

The new truck will also sport a Cummins diesel engine, by the way, as the Japanese

company—44 percent owned by Renault of France—takes on market leaders Ford and GM.

The new PowerLine automatic is ZF's first transmission for light commercial vehicles

up to 15 tons. It handles torque between 600 and 1000 Newton meters—that's 443 to 738 lb ft. Thus, ZF closes the gap in its product portfolio between passenger car transmissions and those for medium and heavy

commercial vehicles. The PowerLine aims at other light commercial vehicles and small buses as well as pickups.

ZF has tailored the new transmission, designed for a life cycle of 700,000 km, for easy maintenance—the oil only needs to be replaced every 120,000 km, and oil-filter changes are no longer necessary at all. It will be built in the U.S.



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By Peter Carter

Road Scholars

Are your drivers good enough to be knighted? I bet they are

Two years ago I sat on the panel that helped select the Ontario Trucking Association's (OTA) Road Knights. It was a cold Toronto morning, and after the jurors exchanged greetings and topped up our Timmies, we watched as almost 20 drivers delivered speeches, instead of what they usually deliver, which is freight.

And then we questioned the drivers, to get a make on their off-the-top-of-the-headedness.

Put yourselves in the Kodiaks of those guys for a moment. It's early in the morning. You're in Toronto, for goodness sakes. Your natural element is behind the wheel.

If these men were at all like other people, they probably hated that morning. Public speaking ranks as many people's number-one fear. And I understand completely. Given the choice between, say, eating a draft glass or delivering an early morning speech to a bunch of strangers, I'd reach for the glass, any day.

So full marks to those drivers for just showing up.

Those presentations were the final step of a longer, more involved competition, but to me, they must have been the scariest part.

They all did swell jobs, whether they were discussing an ill-fated hunting trip with the boss or how they manhandled trucks to get past a particularly tricky over-the-road dilemma. One man talked about his relationship with his own father. And that, to talk about your dad with complete strangers in a boardroom somewhere, takes cojones.

Not to discredit their accomplishments, but I'd say our job that day, choosing the 10 best, was just as difficult.

But choose we did, and our 10 selects have spent the past two years doing even more public speaking, representing you and your industry at schools, service clubs, and shopping malls. That's what being a Road Knight is all about. They're ambassadors.

And the time has come for them to move out of the drivers' seats and let somebody else take over. Rebecka Torn, the OTA staffer who wrangles the Road Knights, is hoping you'll nominate drivers you think deserve the honor. (For more information check, www.ontruck.org/info/knights. The deadline is Dec. 15.)

Willie Hamel is vice president Eastern Canada for Trimac. His outfit has supported the Road Knights since 1995 and he says programs like this remind everybody around the head office that safety is the number-one priority. All the Road Knights have great driving records and Trimac does whatever it can to celebrate that.

It was a Trimac guy, incidentally, Rob Harding, who talked

about his relationship with his dad. And he brought to that speech the same deep passion all the Road Knights bring to their jobs. And he proved to every juror in the room that some truckers move a lot more than freight. With his speech, he moved the jury's hearts.

"That's one thing all these Road Knights share," Hamel says. "Passion."

Dan Einwechter, the founder and president of Challenger Motor Freight, is another big Road Knights booster. Challenger



is represented this time around by driver Mike Hahn on the current team, and Einwechter says he's got a double-barreled rationale for touting the project.

First, like Hamel says, if you take part in the Road Knights, the rest of your staff is reminded that you put a premium on safe operations.

The other motive, he says, is more selfish. Having Road Knights on board is good for business. "It makes you look professional, whether you're talking about attracting new drivers or lenders."

That said, if you are at all like me and hate giving speeches, here's a tip. Knowing your stuff and being confident of it makes oration that much easier.

So, if I'm ever asked to talk about why you should nominate your drivers for the Road Knights program, I'll be happy to deliver. It's something I'm sure of. Though I do think it's time to make it a country-wide affair. ▲

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