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The Business Magazine of Canada's Trucking Industry

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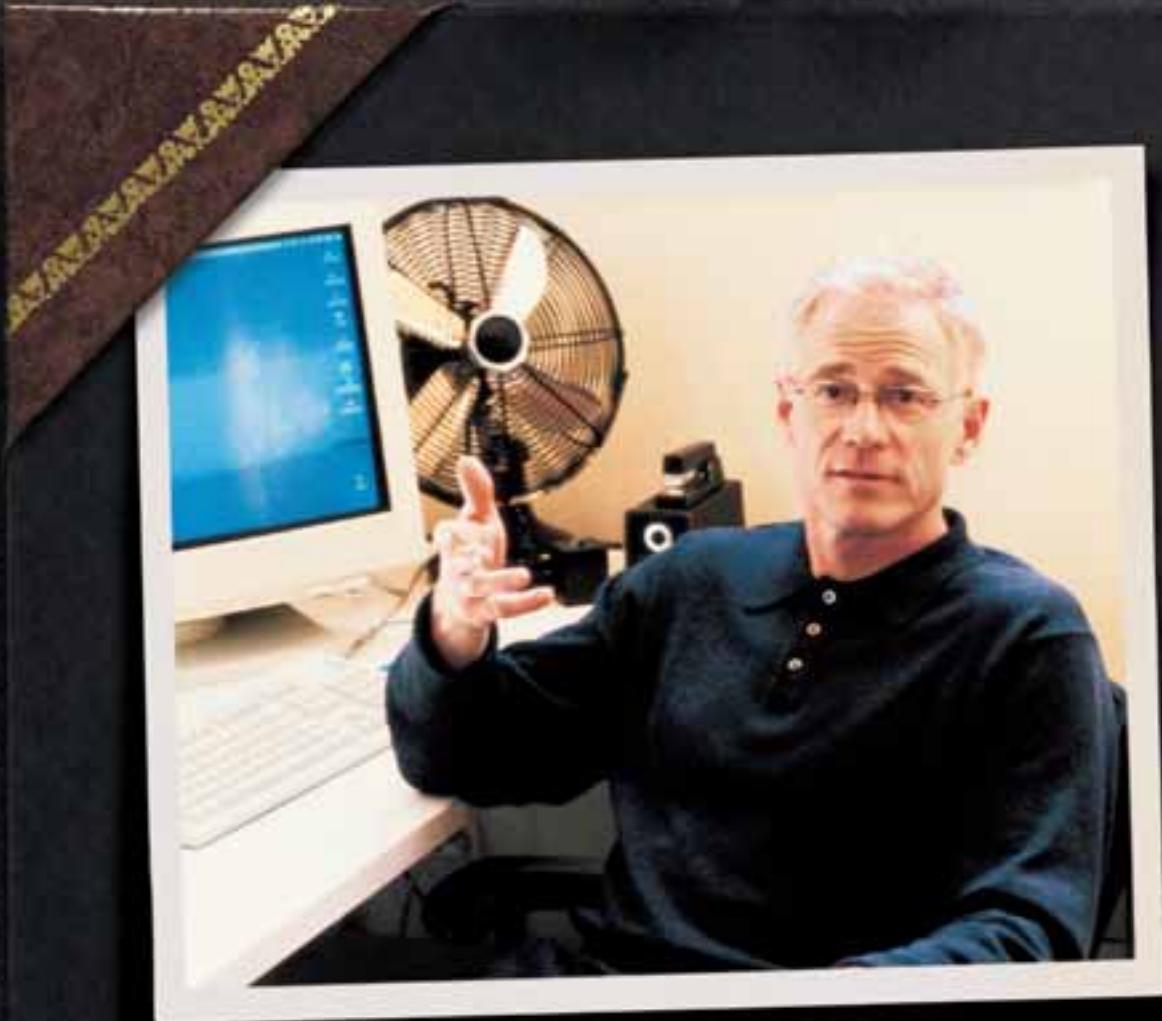


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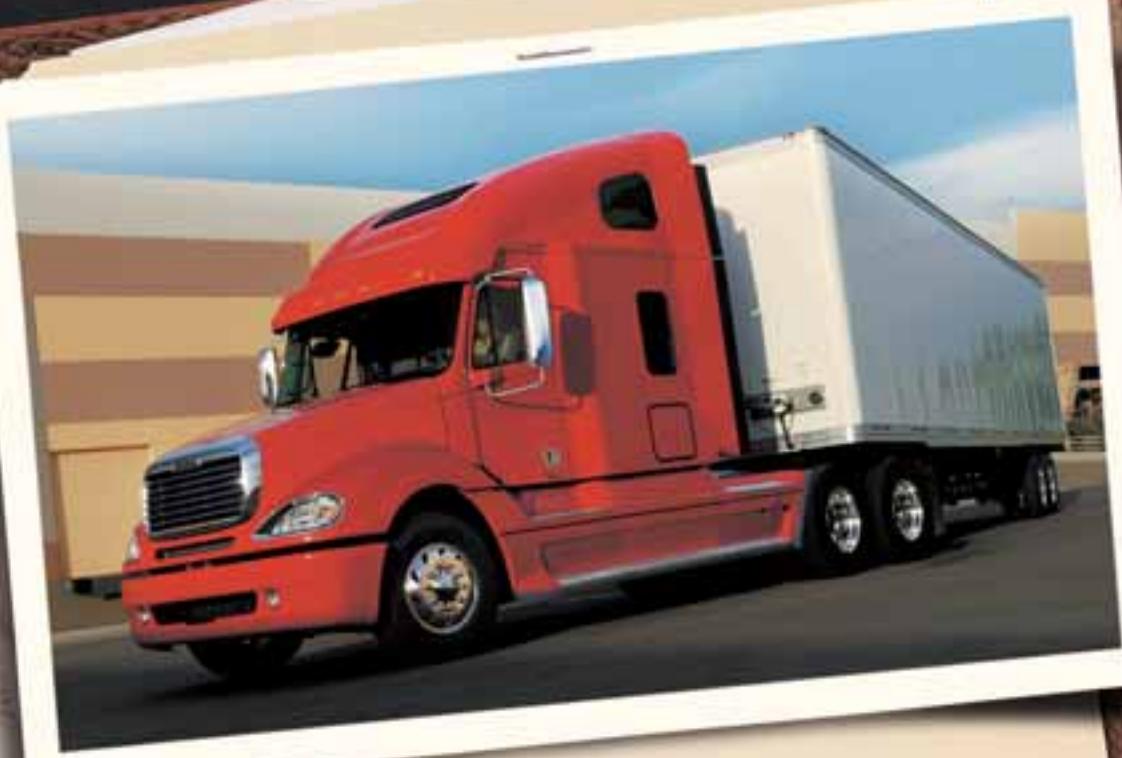
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The Business Magazine of Canada's Trucking Industry

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Pavement. Please.

Re: "Mending Fences in Vancouver," by Pat Jacobsen, Letters, Sept. '06.

Policy is what you do, not what you say you do. TransLink's self-congratulatory and self-professed commitment to decrease traffic congestion in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) of British Columbia by investing in roads and bridges does not withstand scrutiny.

Here are the facts that TransLink has failed to publicize:

Since its inception in 1999 and 2005, an average of only 4.5 percent of TransLink's annual budget has been devoted to road-improvement projects.

During that same period, it collected an annual average of 38.2 percent of its revenues from road users in the form of parking and fuel taxes.

Between 1994 and 2004, daily vehicular trips in the GVRD increased by almost 700,000. Given the lack of investment in additional highway capacity, these trips would only add to traffic congestion that is obvious to all but TransLink officials.

TransLink will be investing \$236 million for eight major road projects by 2007 and cites the Golden Ears Bridge as representing road-system improvements of almost \$1 billion. However, while it's projected to spend 11 percent of its budget on roads, TransLink will be collecting

about 44 percent from road users. Moreover, claiming the Golden Ears Bridge is disingenuous since this facility is slated to be completely paid for by tolls.

Most egregiously, TransLink is projecting that its debt load will rise 162 percent between 2006 and 2013, the vast majority of which can be attributed to large public transit projects. How sincere does TransLink's commitment to road and bridges infrastructure sound now?

Paul R. Landry,
President and CEO, BCTA,
Langley, B.C.

A Cardigan's Warmth

Re: "Wayne's Real World," by Peter Carter, Sept. '06.

I've just read about "how we could learn a thing or two from the folks in Cardigan," and I'm here to say that nothing could be truer than this statement.

A number of years ago I had the privilege of visiting this area of P.E.I. and found the folks there the friendliest I've ever met. So much so I purchased a cottage just outside of Cardigan and plan on retiring there in the future. Just a look in the local newspaper will show



Wayne Johnston

the outpouring of support for local charities, people, and events.

I've had the opportunity to attend some of these functions only to be overwhelmed with the caring these people show towards each other as well as towards the "from away" bunch. I've lived in London, Ont. all my life and think that it's a great city, but the speed at which people live, and the caring they show in P.E.I. can't be beat.

Robert Ward,
Voyageur Express
London, Ont.

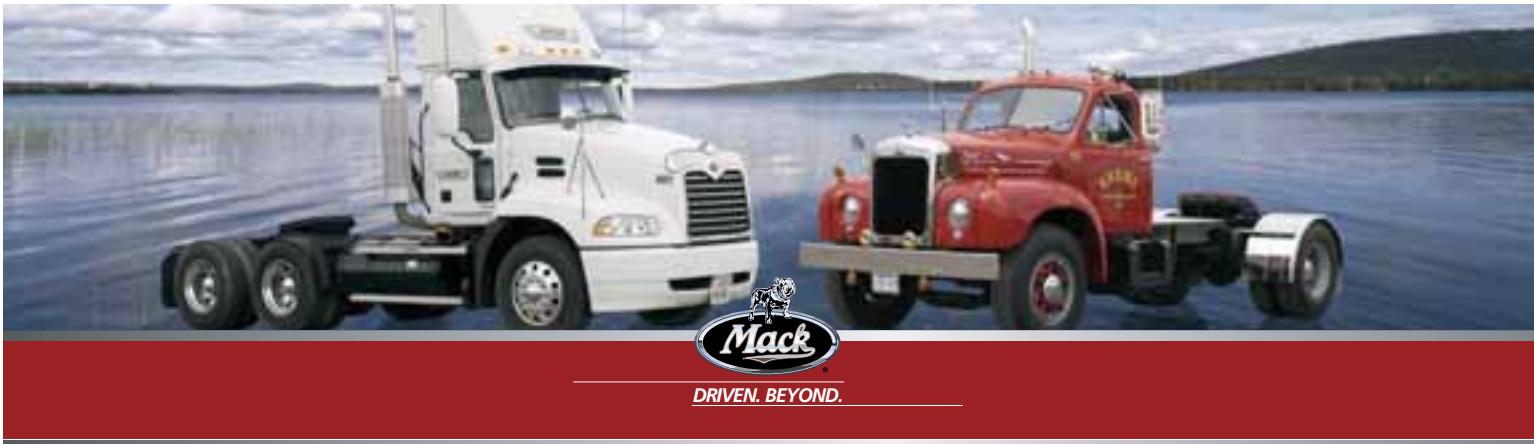
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By Rolf Lockwood

Scary Stuff

The Laval bridge tragedy is not an isolated, mysterious case. Our roads are in deep trouble.

When a bridge collapsed in Montreal's Laval suburb at the end of September, killing five people and injuring several others, I should think a shiver went down the spine of every senior transportation official in the country. If not, I'd like to know why. Elected or otherwise, whether they're municipal, provincial, or federal servants of the people, they ought to be thinking hard about the roads and bridges they manage. And how they manage them.

If ever there was a wake-up call about the sorry state of our highway infrastructure, the Laval tragedy is it.

I'm not the only one saying that, certainly not the only one thinking it, but we really must step up the pressure. The sad thing—the immensely frustrating thing—is that we've been saying this for ages. But the message seems to fall on deaf ears. All of us in trucking recognize how important our highways and bridges are, obviously, but I really don't think the folks in charge do. It's not as if we haven't had other wake-up calls over the years.

On the face of it, you can't blame the Laval bridge failure on complacency, common though the affliction is. It appears, in fact, if we're to believe some recent reports, that cost-cutting at the time of its construction may be at least partly to blame. Disputes between the Quebec government and the builder over money may well have led to construction shortcuts.

As my grandfather used to say about 10 times a day, "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing right." He was right, of course.

Was that sage advice followed 40 years ago when the Laval bridge was built? Maybe not.

And if you look at other Quebec roads and bridges, especially those in and around Montreal, you have to wonder about the prospect of other such catastrophes. Driving into that great city along Highway 20 is an adventure at best. The road surface is shockingly bad.

Quebec isn't alone in failing to maintain its transportation infrastructure. Certainly not. In my own adopted home town of Toronto, I sometimes feel as if I'm taking my life in my hands when I drive on or below the elevated Gardiner Expressway. As was happening in Laval, bits of concrete fall off the Gardiner all the time, and attention is most definitely paid to it. But it's bandaid stuff, no better. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if a part of it collapses some day soon. Could be tomorrow morning at rush hour. Think about that one.

Go anywhere else in the country—anywhere at all—and you'll find the same story.

Way back in 1998, the Council of Ministers of Transportation

estimated that investment needs on the National Highway System were over \$17 billion. Since that time, the NHS has actually been extended and costs have increased. They do that, you know, and remorselessly. The less you spend on maintenance, the more it costs later because the deterioration happens at a faster rate.

"If the current level of infrastructure under-investment is allowed to continue in Canada, the deficit could balloon to \$1 trillion in 60 years," says the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships.

Now both that dollar figure and the time frame attached to it are a little hard for mortal imaginations like mine to conceive.

As my grandfather used to say about 10 times a day, "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing right." He was right, of course.

Too big, too far out. Besides which, in 60 years I'll be really old and probably not driving too much, and anyway Laval proves convincingly that the need is right now.

But what we get is meetings and consultations and position papers and grand speeches and pretty much nothing much else. Sure, investments have been made here and there, some of them substantial, but we probably spend more on beer than on roads and bridges.

I've seen reference to a recent study of 35 Ontario towns and cities, for example, which reported that they needed to spend more than \$700 million on road reconstruction. Actual spending? Well, it amounted to just \$255 million. That's a pretty big shortfall. And the brutal truth is that we have already used something like 79 percent of our infrastructure's life expectancy.

I note that the federal government, which is famously absent from transportation infrastructure investment, has a fiscal surplus these days. And I seem to remember that between their haul and the provinces, they rake in rather a lot of money in fuel taxes and other road-related charges—about a third more than they pour back in collectively—so what gives?

The financial challenge is certainly not small, but I think it demands some creative thinking that we haven't seen yet from any source.

The problem, I fear, is that this is a huge intellectual challenge and nobody is really up to it. Simple as that. Scary as that. ▲

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

Dispatch

BY MARCO BEGHETTO

Fresh Obsessed

A new U.S. agriculture border fee has caught Canadian truckers off-guard. That's because they'll have to pay up whether they're hauling cauliflower or computers.

It sounds like a cash grab to me—plain and simple.” That’s what Canadian Food Exporters Association President Susan Powell thinks about the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) recent announcement to begin collecting an additional \$105 dollars a year, per truck, to cross the border.

She isn’t the only one. While most food commodity shippers may eventually have the bill passed on to them, it’s truckers that’ll have to part with the extra cash when they roll up to the border later this month. And although it’s an agriculture-based rule—designed to pay for additional inspections to guard against pests and bio-terror risk in food and agriculture products—all carriers that cross the border, regardless of what they’re hauling, will be required to pay up.

Starting Nov. 24, 2006, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

removes any prior exemptions for imported fruits and vegetables grown in Canada from inspection, as well as user fees for commercial vehicles entering from north of the 49th.

Unless an 11th-hour decision to reform or post-

pone the rule is made by American politicians, all truckers will have to fork over \$5.25 US per crossing, or \$105 for an annual decal—and that would be on top of the current border crossing fee charged by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The good news, however, is that the two U.S. agencies have agreed to dovetail the administrative process for both fees as a way to mitigate inevitable confusion and delays that would result from two separate systems. As *Today's Trucking* went to press, the Canadian Trucking Alliance’s (CTA) Ron Lennox told us officials have agreed to integrate the USDA inspection fee with the existing CBP border-crossing charge (CBP has posted instructions at www.cbp.gov on how to amalgamate the fees). In other words, carriers

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:
USDA is using truckers to get the cash to pay for more inspections.



Truck News

Gordon Hellowell



will now have to pay \$205 to CBP to get their transponder.

"Certainly, carriers are not happy about their border crossing fees more than doubling, but at least they've done the right thing and integrated the fees because it would have been a real mess with one (USDA) decal and one (CBP) transponder," says the CTA's regulatory affairs director.

Still, that's little comfort to truckers who haul auto parts but are forced to subsidize the cost of extra inspections for asparagus loads. Even more frustrated are those carriers and shippers that have already made large investments in security clearance programs like C-TPAT, and FAST, as well as the advance notification rules already in place for both Customs and the Food and Drug Administration. "That's a real sore point," says Lennox. "They've spent a lot of time in the U.S. going to a risk-based process so they can focus their enforcement efforts on areas of high or unknown risk. What [the U.S.] has done here is say 'it doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what you're carrying. You're going to pay the fee no matter what.' That flies in the face of the philosophy behind risk management which they've been

FAREWELL HOLLOWELL

PRESIDENT OF VOLVO-MACK CANADIAN OPERATIONS RETIRES

After more than 30 years in the trucking industry both here and abroad Gordon Hellowell has called it a day. President of the combined operations of Mack Canada and Volvo Trucks Canada since 2003, he retired last month. His successor is Steve Polzer, formerly chief financial officer.

Until last December, Hellowell was also senior vice president for North American dealer development for the two companies, both operating under the Volvo Group umbrella. In fact, he was responsible for the integration of Mack and Volvo in Canada and, before that, in Australia.

Hellowell began his Mack career in 1988 as director of leasing for North America, based in Allentown, Pa. By 1992 he was back in Canada as vice president of sales. Before joining Mack he spent 10 years with Ryder Truck Rental Canada, where he served in a number of finance and sales positions.

A native of England, and a graduate of Percival Whitley College in Halifax, his trucking career began with the management of a brewery's truck fleet there.

Asked what he sees as the biggest industry change over the

years, Hellowell has no hesitation. It's the business savvy of both dealers and carriers. "The dealer network is much more professional now," he tells *Today's Trucking*. "There were many small dealerships way back, many factory stores, but they're all bigger and more sophisticated now. Honestly, things aren't that different in terms of how the basics are managed.

"But the customers are also much more sophisticated now. They're much less confrontational, much less adversarial. They're more interested in being business partners. They realize that an adversarial approach doesn't work any more."

As examples, he cites the relationships that Mack and Volvo enjoy with the TransX Group and Challenger Motor Freight respectively. Both carriers, Hellowell says, have helped their favored manufacturers resolve technical issues instead of butting heads over them. Both sides win when business is done that way, he says.

The most challenging part of his career? Not a single moment or a single issue, he says, rather a city. Doing business in Montreal—and making money in the

process—is "a challenge." But, he adds, it's probably the most interesting single market in North America as well as being the toughest one.

And a wish for the future? Hellowell answers instantly: "I'd like to see a bigger push from the provinces to deal with technical training and apprenticeships. Ontario and B.C. are pretty good, and Quebec isn't bad, but the rest are sadly lacking."

An in-house survey done two years ago showed that the Mack and Volvo North American dealer network was short by some 4,000 entry-level and fully qualified technicians.

In an effort to service its own needs, the Mack/Volvo combination is about to extend its sponsorship of the technician program at Centennial College in Toronto to include Fanshawe College in London. It's also moving its in-house school in Calgary to the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby. And a similar program will be launched in Quebec City next year.

"This isn't just a wish," Hellowell says. "It's a necessity."

We wish Gordon well in his retirement.



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professing for the last number of years."

The CTA is lobbying Canadian officials to fight the interim rule. At press time, Ottawa issued a response to the U.S. that echoes "what the [CTA] has been saying." (Go to *TodaysTrucking.com* for more on Canada's reaction).

But Lennox admits for now, it's "full steam ahead" with the Nov. 24 deadline.

That doesn't sit well with Mike Racine, an owner-op with Winnipeg Motor Express. "I think it's ridiculous. We already pay enough in taxes and tolls when we're crossing the border. It should be U.S. citizens that pay for this, not truck drivers."

It's fair to say that the

entire trucking industry is an easy front-line target to help USDA collect fees aimed at shippers and receivers, admits Lennox. "We're not the ones mislabeling goods. We don't own the goods. We're there to carry them across the border, but we get the fee," he says. "If there is a problem with stuff entering the U.S. from Canada then shouldn't the Canadian Food

Inspection Agency and their counterparts in the U.S. get together to try to address the problem where the problem lies and not wait until it gets to the border?"

The CFEA's Susan Powell is concerned that some of her members will have to absorb thousands of dollars in annual increases as

transport providers attempt to pass the bill forward. With capacity as tight as it is—especially in the refrigerated sector—Powell says food exporters have little choice but to try to squeeze the extra costs into transportation budgets.

"Many of [our members] can't really increase their prices to their customers right now," she says.

"Depending on how many shipments they have going to the U.S., it can have a really substantial effect."

While the CTA encourages carriers to pass along the monetary cost, many

It should be U.S. citizens that pay for this, not truck drivers.

truckers will no doubt pay for delays at the border caused by truckers caught unaware of the new rule and asked to fumble in their pockets for the extra five bucks to cross.

"One can only imagine the frustration and anger that will occur as drivers wait for CBP staff to count out change," says a CTA letter to

Canadian authorities.

Adds Wayne Williams, a Kincardine, Ont. driver with Mackinnon Transport: "It's bad enough we have to wait as long as we do without having to stop and dig into our pockets as well. The trucking industry pays enough as it is without having to be nickled and dimed."

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November 11-14

Intermodal Expo 2006, Ft. Lauderdale Convention Center, Fla. Presented by the Intermodal Association of North America, this event covers the issues affecting how truck, rail, and marine transportation work together. Contact: 301/982-3400 or click on www.intermodal.org.

November 16-17

Ontario Trucking Association Annual Convention, Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto. The largest provincial trucking association invites carriers to gather to discuss current industry topics and "hot" issues at networking sessions. Special guest speakers, relevant

seminars, and popular entertainers are always top notch at this event. Contact: 416/249-7401 or go to www.ontruck.org.

November 20-22

5th Annual Health & Safety Conference and Trade Fair, The Westin Hotel, Edmonton. The Health and Safety Conference Society of Alberta is a not-for-profit association, consisting of health, workplace safety and employer associations, professional societies, and other strategic partners. Contact: 403/275-7785 or click on www.hsconference.com.

November 28-29

2nd Supply Chain Directions Summit, San Francisco, Calif. This event looks at overcoming major supply-chain problems like congestion, capacity, and the driver shortage. Speakers will share real life case studies on inventory management, warehousing, and RFID. Contact: Julia Savage at 800/814 3459 ext 215 or go to www.eyefortransport.com.

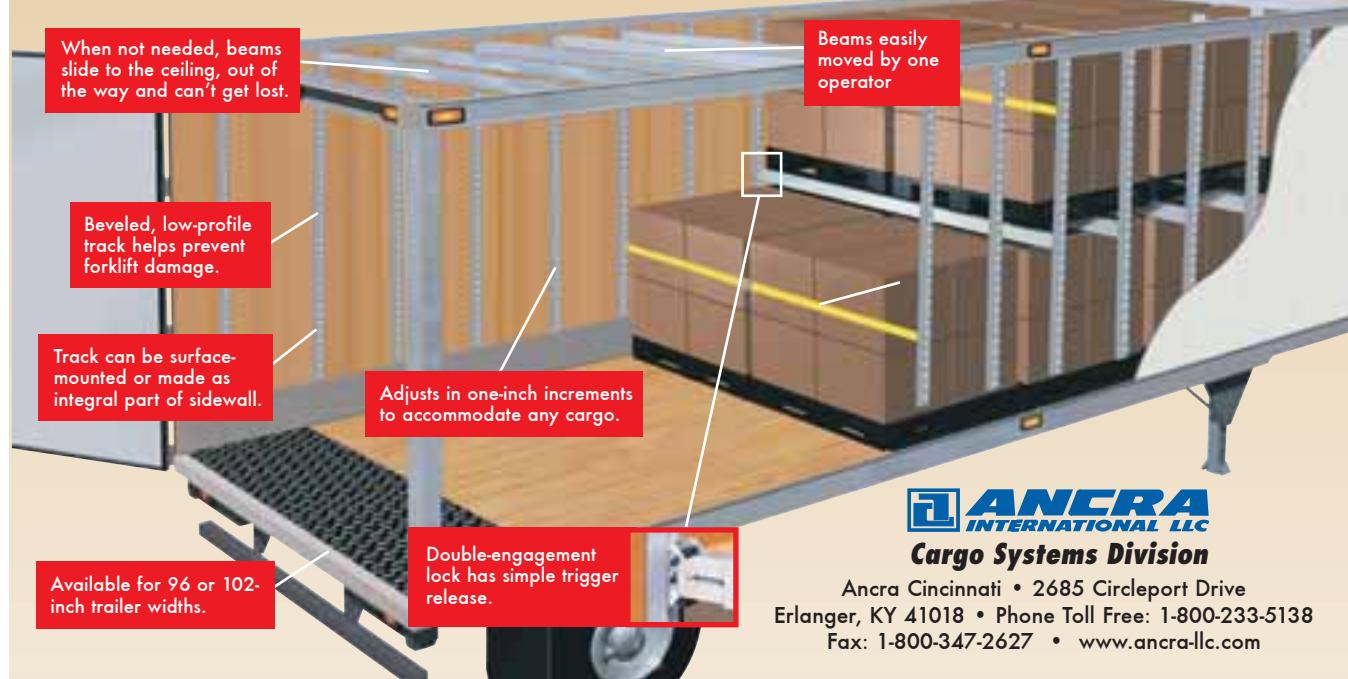
December 4-6

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Dispatches

Bridge Collapse

Truckers Dodge Blame for Tragedy

At around 11:25 a.m. on Saturday Sept. 30th, driver Dave Ferrara called 911 when in front of his eyes a one-meter-long piece of concrete fell suddenly from the Concorde overpass in Laval, Que.

when the Souvenir overpass, which was under construction a few kilometres away from Concorde, fell down.

After pictures of the latest scene made their way across the country, commentators wasted little time in blaming heavy trucks for the deterioration of Quebec roads and, illogically, for tragedies such as this.

lights. Also, there are several streets forbidden to trucks around that area," he says. "What we see there are pickup and delivery trucks like the ones used by furniture and appliance stores."

An investigation commission headed by the former Quebec Premier Pierre-Marc Johnson will try to pinpoint the exact cause of the



TRAGIC COLLAPSE: Last month's tragic overpass collapse that killed five people in Laval is sad, but trucks had nothing to do with it, says QTA.

At 11:39, the Quebec Ministry of Transportation (MTQ) sent a media alert, and 16 minutes later, a MTQ inspector was on site to clean the debris. At 12:32, the 38-year-old overpass collapsed, injuring six people and killing five motorists in two cars crushed to knee level under the thousand-ton chunk of concrete and asphalt.

The state of Quebec roadways has been the subject of concern for several years. This was not the first time an overpass collapsed in Laval. In 2000, a man was killed

"Damages caused by one loaded truck is equivalent to 30,000 to 40,000 cars," the Quebec Minister of Transport's pavements laboratory said in a statement.

Marc Cadieux, President and General Manager of the Quebec Trucking Association, says those accusations make no sense, considering the Concorde overpass is not even located at a strategic road link for heavy trucks. "The Concorde overpass is on highway 19, which is absolutely not interesting for heavy trucks with its numerous stops and street

collapse. Several structures in the province in similar shape are expected to close.

Across the country, various transport ministries dispatched bridge engineers to ensure major overpasses and viaducts were safe and sound. In Charlottetown, for example, the general manager of the Confederation Bridge announced there is no erosion with that structure. In Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., the International Bridge Authority assured the public that crossing was also in good condition.

Meanwhile, officials have been quick to rope off structures that show any signs of damage. In Portage, Man. the province declared that a major railroad overpass will be torn down and replaced.

The Quebec trucking industry, says Cadieux, has made significant efforts to reduce weight of loads on the roads.

Since 1971, loads have been reduced by 3 percent for a 5-axle tractor-trailer configuration; and between 8 and 20 percent during thaw periods.

"Loads are not higher in Quebec than in the rest of Canada," Cadieux says. Instead of accusing trucks, he says citizens should be asking politicians why the provincial road network has been neglected for decades.

"Just look at the Turcot exchanger that is literally held with chicken wire," says Cadieux, "or the Metropolitaine highway that has been reinforced with steel plates."

The Quebec Ministry of Transport admits about 2,200 roads and overpasses (about 45 percent) are in bad shape and in need of repair. In 2004-2005, only 71 of these structures were fixed.

— with files from
Steve Bouchard

Tire Production

Rubber Around During Strike

The impact on trucking resulting from a massive strike at most of Goodyear's North American plants is minimal, say many of the tiremaker's truck-and-trailer accounts.

About 14,000 Goodyear workers walked off the job at 16 plants last month after the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and the company hit a stalemate in contract talks.

At press time, the strike had entered its seventh day, slowing production all over the continent, including Canadian plants in Toronto, Collingwood, and Owen Sound, Ont.

The tiremaker has been trying to cut spending to offset rising raw material costs and competition from cheaper, overseas manufacturers.

"We simply cannot accept a contract that knowingly creates a competitive disadvantage versus our foreign-owned competition and increases our cost disadvantage versus imports," Jim Allen, Goodyear's chief negotiator, said in a statement.

Weeks before the strike, Goodyear began stockpiling tires for key customers and preparing for management and replacement workers keeping assembly lines moving.

That helped mitigate the impact for both vehicle manufacturers and the countless trucking carriers that haul parts and components for them. GM, for example, said at the time it had 30 days worth of tires stored for many of its plants.

Wabash, Goodyear's largest client for trailer tires, stated it had similar commitments from Goodyear on their existing tire stock, and the trailer maker also ordered a safety supply from two other leading tire manufacturers.

heard on the Street

■ OBAC has tied the knot, figuratively speaking, with a major U.S. owner-op group. The **OWNER-OPERATOR'S BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA** is officially hooking up with the **U.S. OWNER OPERATOR INDEPENDENT DRIVERS ASSOCIATION (OOIDA)**—a 140,000-trucker lobbying group based in Grain Valley, Mo.

OBAC executive director **Joanne Ritchie** said the two groups felt the affiliation would be a natural fit after working together over the last year on the controversial speed limiter issue. While each organization will maintain its autonomy, Ritchie says there will be opportunities to share resources that will benefit both groups. "We'll certainly benefit from their years of experience," says Ritchie. "We'll also benefit through economies of scale—we'll have access to their communication network, and we're going to do some joint marketing."

Wabash says it has secured enough reserve tire stock to support at least ten weeks of uninterrupted production.

On the other side of the fifth wheel, many truck-makers have made an effort to diversify their tire supply base in recent years.

A spokesperson for Navistar, which produces International brand trucks, told *TodaysTrucking.com* that the company expects it has enough tire supply to ride out a long-term labor conflict.

Part of the reason, says Tim Touhy, is that International made Hankook Tire America standard on 4000 and CF series vehicles, lessening the truckmaker's dependence on a single supply line. Less

than 50 percent of the tires bought by International come from Goodyear today.

Volvo recently made Bridgestone Firestone its rubber standard in North America, replacing Goodyear. Bridgestone is also the main supplier for Paccar.

Freightliner, currently Goodyear's largest commercial vehicles customer, did not return calls from *Today's Trucking*.

Transportation market analysts Bear Stearns in New York suggest that class-8 production may slow if a supply chain disruption ensues, but the firm agrees OEMs should be able to continue assembling pre-bought trucks using "placeholder" tires. If there's an extended

■ The Canadian truck industry lost a familiar and friendly face in September with the passing of **Terry Lane**, a longtime manager with **EATON TRUCK COMPONENTS** in Mississauga, Ont. Terry began his career as parts manager with Eaton Truck Components 28 years ago. Over the years, Terry earned the respect of both his customers and his colleagues. He leaves behind his wife Joan and their three daughters.

■ **TOTALLINE TRANSPORT** president **Uwe Petroschke** joined about 1,000 Toronto socialists at the recent Wildflower charity event at the Brickworks in Toronto. The gala event, of which Totalline was the lead sponsor, raised around \$100,000 in support



Uwe Petroschke

of Mooreland's Community Services—a century-old Toronto charity in aid of inner city children. "We wanted to do something that would benefit children and we were looking at charities around the world when I realized there were kids right here at home that need help," says Petroschke.

strike, retreading suppliers might see some modest benefit, say the consultants.

Meanwhile, Goodyear rival Bridgestone Firestone could be facing a similar showdown with the Steelworkers, as the two sides are reportedly also in tense negotiations.

Controversy

Star-Spangled Speed Limiters

There's no need for speed south of the border either, say some of the largest for-hire carriers in the U.S. who are following the footsteps of Canadian fleet owners in urging government to legislate mandatory use of speed limiters on all trucks.

American carriers are

Dispatches

now on the speed limiter bandwagon as Schneider National—along with eight other carriers, including J.B. Hunt Transport Inc., CR England Inc., Covenant Transport Inc., and Dart Transit Company—have joined public-safety-interest group Road Safe America in petitioning the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to mandate electronic speed governors set at no more than 68 mph.

Last year, the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) was the first trucking lobby group to propose speed limiters on trucks. The group—which argues speed limited at 105 km/h would reduce accidents, save fuel, and cut emissions—pledged at the time it would export its idea

across North America.

The alliance has been marketing the plan on environmental grounds lately, and should be encouraged by recent progress in Ontario and Quebec where speed limiter proposals have been making their way up legislative ladders.

U.S. supporters point to FMCSA's Large Truck Causation Study, which states "traveling too fast for conditions" was the single most frequently cited factor in large truck crashes where trucks were assigned a critical reason.

"The 80-mph, 80,000 lb.-truck has no place on our highways," said Steve Owings, who co-founded Road Safe America after he lost his 22-year-old son,

Cullum, in a high-speed truck accident. "It is a matter of economic common sense for the companies that put trucks on the road."

As is the case in Canada, U.S. owner-ops and many non-association fleets will have something to say about the plan. Both the Owner-Operator's Business Association of Canada and the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) in the U.S. (see Heard on the Street on previous page on how the two groups officially joined forces) have submitted documents and studies to Canadian authorities that show a wider gap in speed between cars and trucks can increase the likelihood of highway accidents.

Intermodal

Fundy Cargo Ferry Staying Afloat?

The vital Bay of Fundy cargo ferry service has been thrown a lifeline by Ottawa and the province of Nova Scotia to stay afloat—at least for now.

The combined \$6 million in government cash is a short-term solution to maintain the Digby to Saint John cargo ferry sailing while a long-term solution is developed.

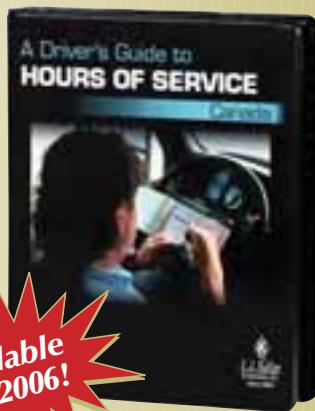
The Princess of Acadia saves roughly seven hours (or 580 km) off the trip from southern Nova Scotia to Saint John and points beyond. Area truck fleets consider the link to be "a part of the highway system."

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Ray Franzen of Ray Franzen Trucking in Digby says it would "be a disaster if the ferry was to go. A single driver couldn't make it down to Boston, you would have to have two drivers per truck. We haul a lot of seafood and lobsters, and if that ferry closed for good, the freight rates would probably have to go up by 30 percent just to break even from the extra fuel and driver costs."

Terry LeBlanc of Yarmouth's Eastside Fisheries agrees, saying that without the ferry it would be a challenge for fleets in the region to deliver fresh products. Alternative roads would increase costs and double delivery time, he said.

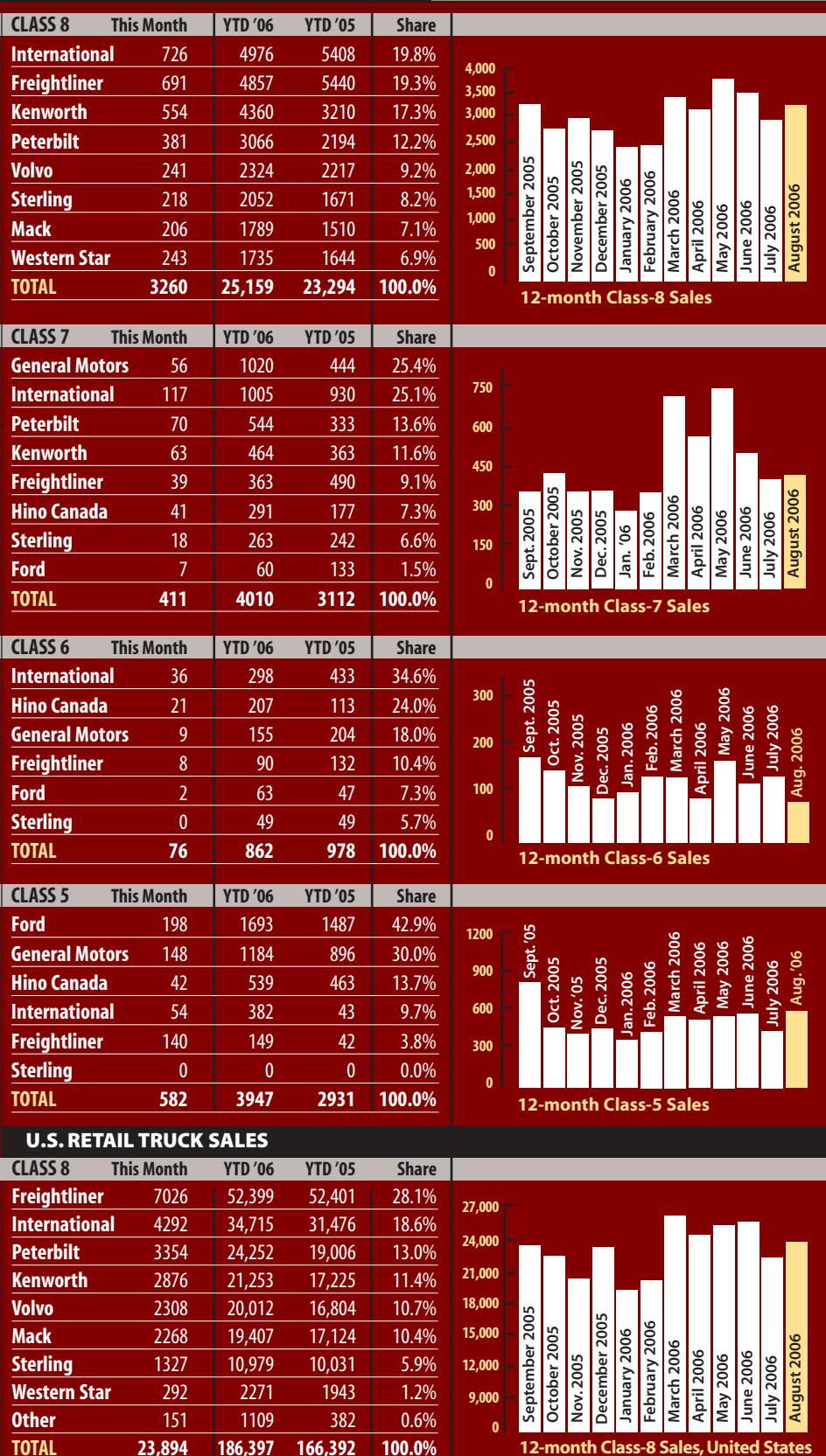
A consultant's report commissioned by the province estimated the economic impact of losing the ferry at \$20 million.

In July, Bay Ferries announced skyrocketing fuel costs, and a drop in tourism and forestry exports, were forcing the company to anchor its service permanently. The Princess of Acadia was scheduled to make its last voyage on Oct. 31.

Shippers and truckers have insisted the ferry should be a guaranteed service, like Marine Atlantic (the service's former operator), because it is part of the national transportation system. "We've lost two ferries ever since Bay Ferries took over around here, and now they're trying to get rid of this one," says Franzen. "It's not a good situation." ▲

truck sales index

August 2006



Online Resources: For more truck sales stats, go to todaystrucking.com

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

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The Almost Perfect Driver

driver's side *Why 45 years with no accidents or tickets and a perfect driving test isn't quite good enough. By Jim Park*

Mike C. is one of a growing number of prematurely retired Ontario truck drivers. Mike's got over 45 years experience with 31 years pulling B-Trains for a large chemical producer in that province. He's never had an accident and he can't remember his last ticket but Mike lost his ability to earn a living when he failed the driver's test required of all commercial drivers in Ontario upon reaching age 65.

A while back, Mike had started his own business hauling produce for local growers, and by all accounts had a good business going. That's gone now, too. He can't service his customers without a license. His client had to call another carrier who sent in an American driver. Not only has Ontario's Ministry of Transport (MTO) run a perfectly safe and responsible driver out to pasture, it drove a solid small business down the drain and opened the door to competition from south of the border—where incidentally, drivers aren't even required to do an air brake test to earn a license. And the U.S. CDL is a license for life.

Rumor has it that the same day Mike got booted out of the industry, MTO examiners elsewhere in the province handed out a few new Class A licenses to people who took their driving test in a pickup truck pulling a horse trailer.

But I digress.
Mike has never taken a

driver's test. He's had his Class A since they were called chauffeur's permits. Still, he prepared for the big day by studying and asking for pointers on the test from other drivers who'd been through it.

He scored perfect—that's 100 percent—on all the written tests. He scored perfect on the practical air brake test, and scored perfectly—not a single black mark—on the driving test. He failed because he neglected to turn on the defroster fan, neglected to blow the horn when backing up to couple the trailer, and rather than using individual left and right turn signals, he used his four-ways to check the turns signals during the pre-trip portion of the test.

Mike's shortcomings, according to ministry spokesman Bob Nichols, constitute "major errors," and any two missed or incorrect items on certain portions of the test constitute a failure.

Who the hell are we kidding here?

My father, a captain with Air Canada for nearly 40 years, says even airline pilots are given more latitude in their annual testing.

He can recall only one pilot he knows failing a ministry check ride. "He put the airplane down [in a simulator] on the wrong side of the beacon, winding up in the airport parking lot rather than on the runway," Dad tells me.

That's what I'd call a major error and I'm relieved the

ministry grounded the guy, but what if he'd forgotten to mention an item or two on the pre-flight check list? Dad says the pilot and the examiner would have reviewed the oversight at the time, and the issue would have been forgotten.

As for those sphincters at the driver examination centers ... Mike did the pre-trip

is done for safety reasons—the driver has not demonstrated skills required to maintain that class of license."

"The worst of it is," says Mike, "There are dozens of older drivers, who for the humiliation of having failed the test, won't retry it or protest the exam. They wind up at the Legion playing pool



portion of the test before the driving portion, so he'd already failed before he left the parking lot. If the examiner had planned to allow Mike to redeem himself on the driving portion, certainly a 100-percent pass should put him in better standing?

He wasn't even allowed to drive his truck home from the exam centre. His license was downgraded to a 'D' on the spot.

Said Nichols, "Applicants holding a class 'A' that fail the required road test for renewal, are immediately downgraded to the highest class for which renewal testing is not required. The license change

and drinking beer. They retire quietly in shame and the industry loses another veteran driver."

Mike says he's studying for another try at the test.

I guess there's some good in all this; MTO is licensing horse trailer drivers at a great rate, so there will be plenty of young inexperienced drivers coming into the system who'll work for way less than guys like Mike are prepared to accept. That'll help keep rates down. ▲

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



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INSIDE:

- 26 7 tips for selling your company
- 29 How to breed new drivers



FIRM OFFERS: Selling your company is more than a matter of money.

Pick Me! Pick Me!

sales Want to sell your trucking company? Here's how to be taken seriously. By Stephen Petit

For brothers Mike and Martin Wade, the ticket to prosperity started with a pink slip. In 1989, they were managing the trucking operation for a Manitoba fertilizer producer and the company divested its fleet. Out of work, the brothers borrowed money and bought four of their former employer's bulk trailers and day-cab tractors. Today, their company has 38 power units, a fleet of bulk trailers, 60 employees, and annual revenue "in the high \$30-million range," Mike says.

But Mike and Martin, who asked that their real names be withheld, are facing some decisions. Mike is 51 and wants financial security for retirement. Martin, 49, got treated for bladder cancer last summer. They have no succession plans and the heavy workload has the pair wondering whether they own the business or the business owns them.

They know that a handful of large, publicly traded companies—Transforce, Contrans, Trimac, Mullen—are snapping

up smaller trucking operations. Then there are private sales that never make the papers. Mike and Martin see a sale as their best exit strategy and as a way to lower costs and add capital that can help the company grow.

Last summer, Mike and Martin took their closest advisors on a fishing trip in Saskatchewan. "We got together with our accountant, corporate lawyer, and three friends who always have been a good sounding board for us," Mike says. They packed three years' worth of financial statements into their gear bags intending "to check our EBITDA, kick around some earnings multipliers, and get a ballpark value on the company."

The group discussed selling the business. Is it what Mike and Martin really

SEVEN AREAS TO FOCUS ON:

1 **CLEAN UP YOUR BOOKS.** Give your business (and yourself) a financial gut-check. Stop running personal expenses through the company. Get family members who are non-essential to the business off the books. Make your financial statements as transparent as possible. Remember, your prospective buyer employs analysts whose only job is to review financial statements.

Invest in audited financial statements. Your suitor is probably publicly traded or has private investors and needs to audit his financials. You can save time if you can produce two years of audited financial statements. Though expensive, audited statements provide clarification and comfort for the buyer.

2 APPRAISE YOUR ASSETS. If you sold everything tomorrow—the trucks, the trailers, the buildings, the land—what could you get for it? Have your commercial assets appraised, or at least review the activity at the local auction house and find out what your stuff is really worth.

3 **RECOGNIZE CUSTOMER VALUE.** Prepare a list of your core accounts, including how long each has been a customer, who the key contacts are, and the nature of your relationship with them. Do you have a broad, diverse list of customers? Which do you consider to be major accounts, and what percentage of sales does each represent? Are you doing anything unusual to retain them (deep discounts, specialized equipment, etc.)? One trucking company owner compiled a brief video of his top customers describing how tightly integrated his trucking company has become with their get-to-market strategies.

4 **COMPILE UTILIZATION REPORTS.** Produce as much hard data as you can, including empty and loaded miles, deadheads, and revenue per mile.

5 **LIST YOUR DRIVERS, OWNER-OPERATORS.** Identify everyone including age, tenure with company, and any special endorsements. Make sure your files are complete,

including accident and violation disclosures, abstracts, results from annual fitness reviews, and reports of any corrective disciplinary action. Verify the independent status of any leased drivers and owner-operators. Include a signed independent-contractor agreement, maintenance and fuel receipts, tax records, truck financing contracts, business cards, even copies of the owner-operators' invoices from other trucking companies he does work for.

6 **BUILD YOUR SAFETY PROFILE.** Your safety profile and insurance-company loss reports tell how well you manage risk and compliance. Your buyer will want to be assured that your operation presents no undue liability to his company.

Invest in a rigorous compliance program and facility audit (or a mock audit) as far in advance of putting the company on the market as possible. Pay particular attention to hours of service violations (which may indicate poor management and frayed driver-dispatcher relations) and equipment out-of-service conditions (sub-par equipment maintenance). Review the inspections, accidents, moving violations, and other enforcement actions that affect your carri-

Only this many trucks come with a 5-

66

67

68

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er safety profile. If there's a problem with the information—either it's wrong or could be easily misinterpreted—you want to address it right away.

Any prospective buyer will see your insurance costs as an opportunity for savings because he probably has better leverage with his underwriters. Accept that and use your safety records to prove that your company would be a good fit for his portfolio.

7 HIRE A BUSINESS BROKER. A buyer has no passion for this little jewel you're trying to sell beyond what he sees in the prospectus. It's no big deal for him to lay off Merle in the admin pool. He's going to change your insurance program, ending your 20-year relationship with your local broker/friend from high school. And you—on a two-year management contract—will be there to watch it happen.

A good business broker will prepare you for this before it happens. Ask around—your lawyer might know of a broker, and the big accounting firms have entire divisions devoted to the practice. The point is, one of the hardest parts about selling your business will be seeing somebody put a price on all that love, sweat, and tears you put into the business. Don't be afraid to get help.

want? How much money would they need to retire? Are they willing to stay on for a few more years and manage the business? The financial statements sat stacked on a table in their cabin. No one wanted to see them. "We were disappointed," Mike says. "We thought multiples and financials mattered."

They do. But in terms of making a business valuation, financial statements are wide open to interpretation. Sellers tend to focus on annual earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization, (EBITDA) because most company valuations are expressed as a multiple of earnings. Banks and other organizations regularly report multiples to establish benchmarks for evaluating other transactions. When you hear that your competitor sold his business for three times EBITDA (or whatever), it's natural to think that your company is worth approximately as much—even though you've never seen the company's books or stepped foot inside its offices.

For most buyers, EBITDA is a starting point for determining a more important number: free cash flow. Free cash flow is a

function of profit and it points to your company's potential to make money. The buyer probably will take your EBITDA and subtract the minimum amount of new capital expenditures required each year. The result indicates how much cash the company generates after covering its operating costs and expenses, but before paying what it owes in taxes and interest and before deducting depreciation and amortization.

No matter what dollar-figure you hang on your for-sale sign, a prospective buyer is going to conduct his own assessment of your financial records, define how your operation would contribute to his company's success, and gauge how quickly a deal could be closed.

Of those three items, the one you have the most control over is speed.

In a buyer's market, the prospect of a speedy transaction can set your company apart from hundreds of others. When someone says, "I'm interested, please email me a prospectus," and you get back to them that afternoon with a concise, complete package, it says you're serious.

Reaching that point, requires months—perhaps a year—of intense work. ▲

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70

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100,000 Drivers

recruitment *That's how many we need. Here's how you can help find them.* By Jeff Roberts, MBA

Everyone knows we're facing a serious shortage of qualified drivers. No one questions that, and neither does anyone question the fact that the demographics of the current driver pool—the oldest workforce in Canada with the fewest new entrants—point to an ongoing problem.

It's accepted as reasonable that Canada will need 100,000 new drivers over the next three years.

My question is, where are they going to come from?

Let's assume the ideal new driver is between 25 and 39 years old, Statistics Canada tells us we have 6.8 million people to choose from.

To meet Canada's requirements of 100,000 new drivers, one out of every 68 people in the target age group must become a truck driver. This assumes that equal numbers of men and women would make that choice.

If we assume that 85 percent of the new drivers will be male, then one out of every 40 men in the target group must become a truck driver.

Just for the heck of it, filter out those whose criminal records or drug/alcohol dependencies might exclude them from international service. Our 1-in-40 target might be closer to 1-in-35. So think about how you get one out of every 35 men between the ages of 25 and 39 to quit what they are doing to become truck drivers.

If pitching our message to 6.8 million people—hoping for a 1-in-35 take-up—isn't challenge enough, consider the difficulties in persuading them to procure appropriate training so they'll meet industry requirements and standards when they enter the workforce.

Of all the stumbling blocks to recruiting new drivers, the lack of consistency among training programs and the insurance companies' insistence that new drivers have



three years' service before they qualify as experienced drivers have proven to be among the most difficult to overcome.

While progress has been made in gaining industry acceptance for certain driver-training curricula, namely the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council's (CTHRC) Earning Your Wheels (EYW) program, and the Professional Truck Driver Institute's (PTDI) entry-level driver-training program, these programs come at a cost that is quite beyond the means of many potential candidates.

Tuition at a high-quality school can cost as much as \$13,000 for up to 85 hours of instructor-led non-revenue wheel time. Then the student has to bear the cost of two or three months of non-income-producing time and associated living

expenses (\$5,000 to \$10,000 depending on the individual circumstances)—and there are the additional carrier-borne costs associated with coaching and mentoring the students after graduation.

With few present exceptions, students must pay for these courses themselves. The Canada Student Loan program is not geared to a high-cost, short-duration program. An improved source of financing is needed if the required numbers of drivers are to be trained.

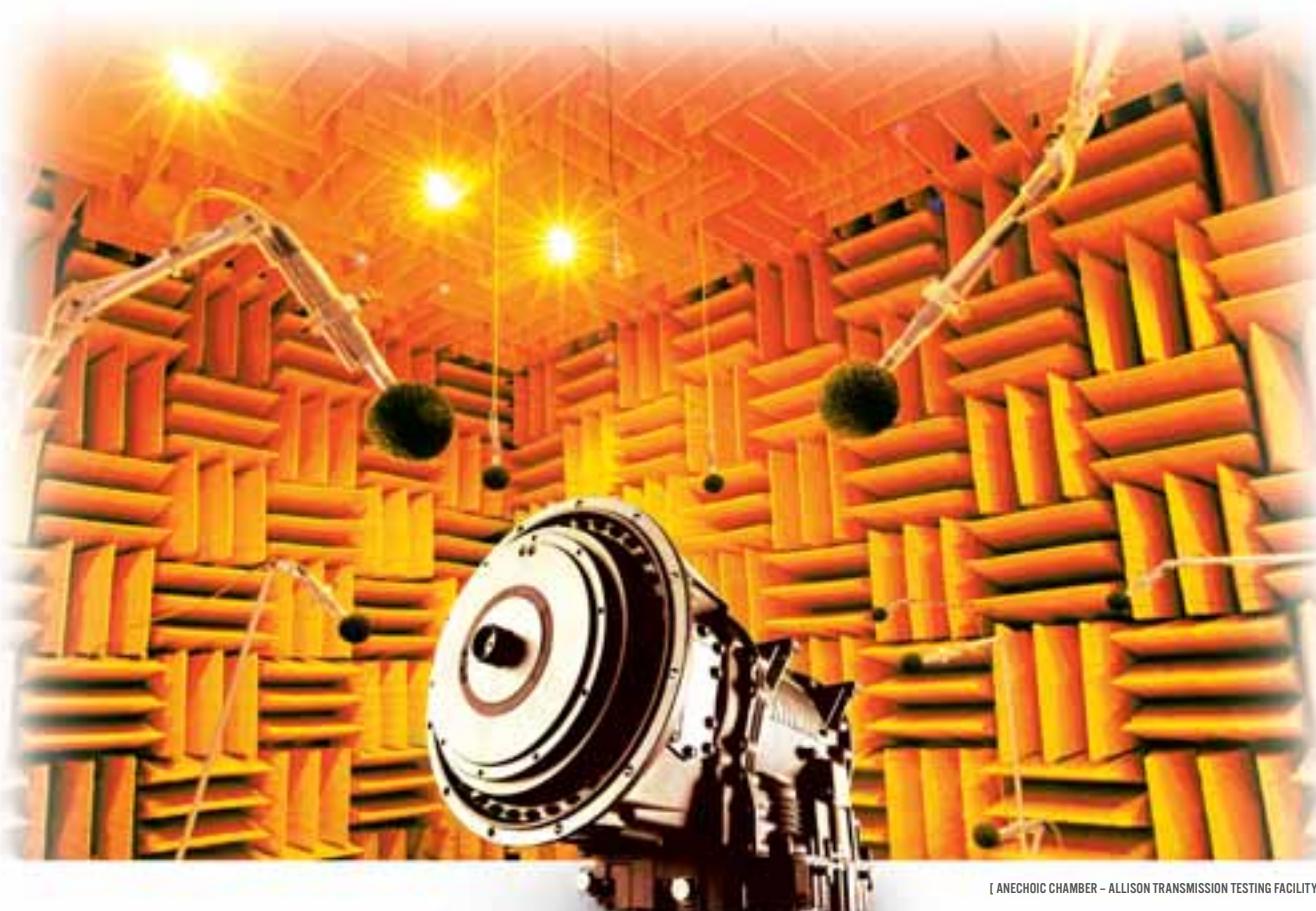
In this light, it might be necessary to revise the demographics to say that our target market is aged 25 to 39 with \$15,000 to \$20,000 in savings.

If there are 100,000 such people in Canada looking to change careers it'll take more than the driving schools to flush them out. The only viable solution is for the industry to take a coordinated approach.

Organizations such as CTHRC, the provincial trucking associations, and others need to support a broad-based marketing campaign and to seek improved financing options—possibly an extension of the Canada Student Loan program tailored to the trucking industry, or an industry-backed financing pool made available to students.

The demand for the graduates exists, and industry-approved training courses exist. Now it's up to the trucking industry as a whole to make a coordinated effort to recruit the new drivers and provide financing to help them complete their training. It is unlikely that the driver shortage is going to solve itself. ▲

Jeff Roberts is an MBA management consultant and president of AKR Performance Ltd. in Castlegar, B.C. Discussions between Jeff and his brother Andy—the tireless industry advocate and owner of Mountain Transport, Inc., in Castlegar—regarding the impact of our driver shortage and the perils of waiting for the problem to solve itself, prompted this essay.



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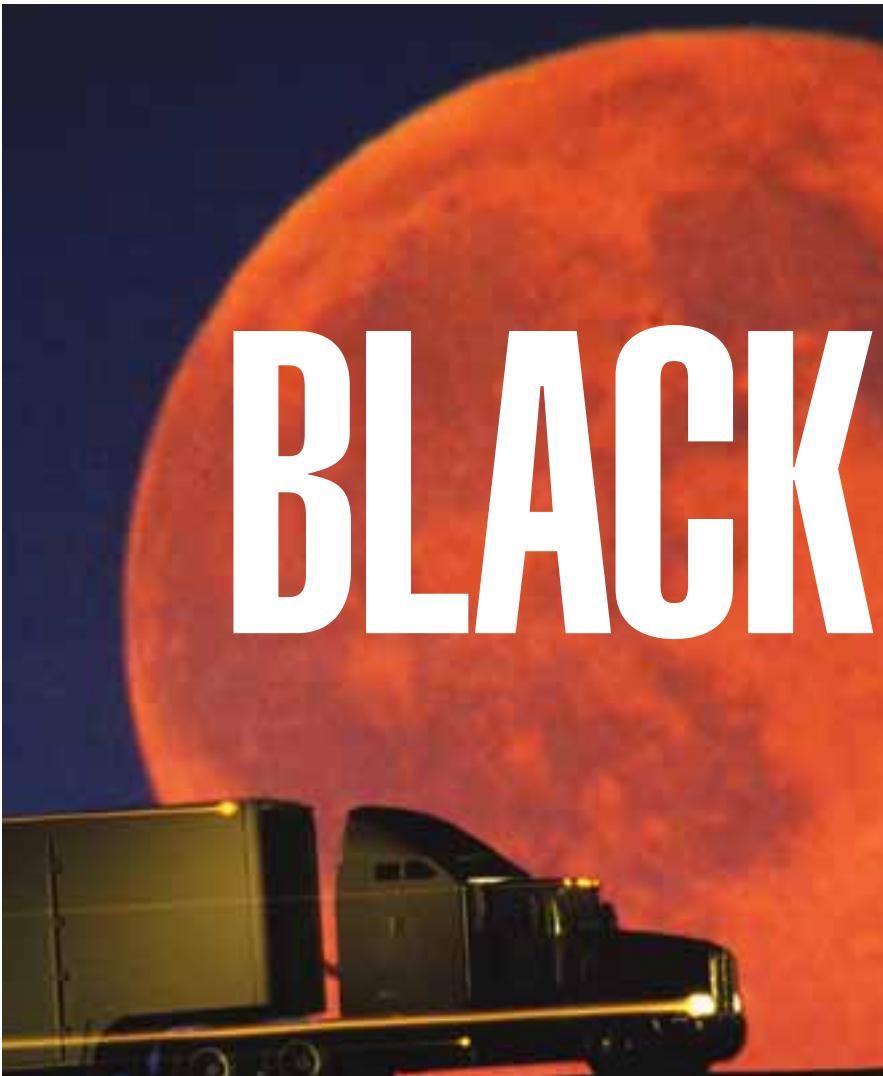
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BLACK BOXES

Inside and Out

ELECTRONIC ON-BOARD RECORDERS

are supposed to boost productivity. On the other hand, what's a driver to do when the box forces him to shut down a few klicks away from home? The rules are coming. Are you prepared?

BY MARCO BEGHETTO AND JIM PARK

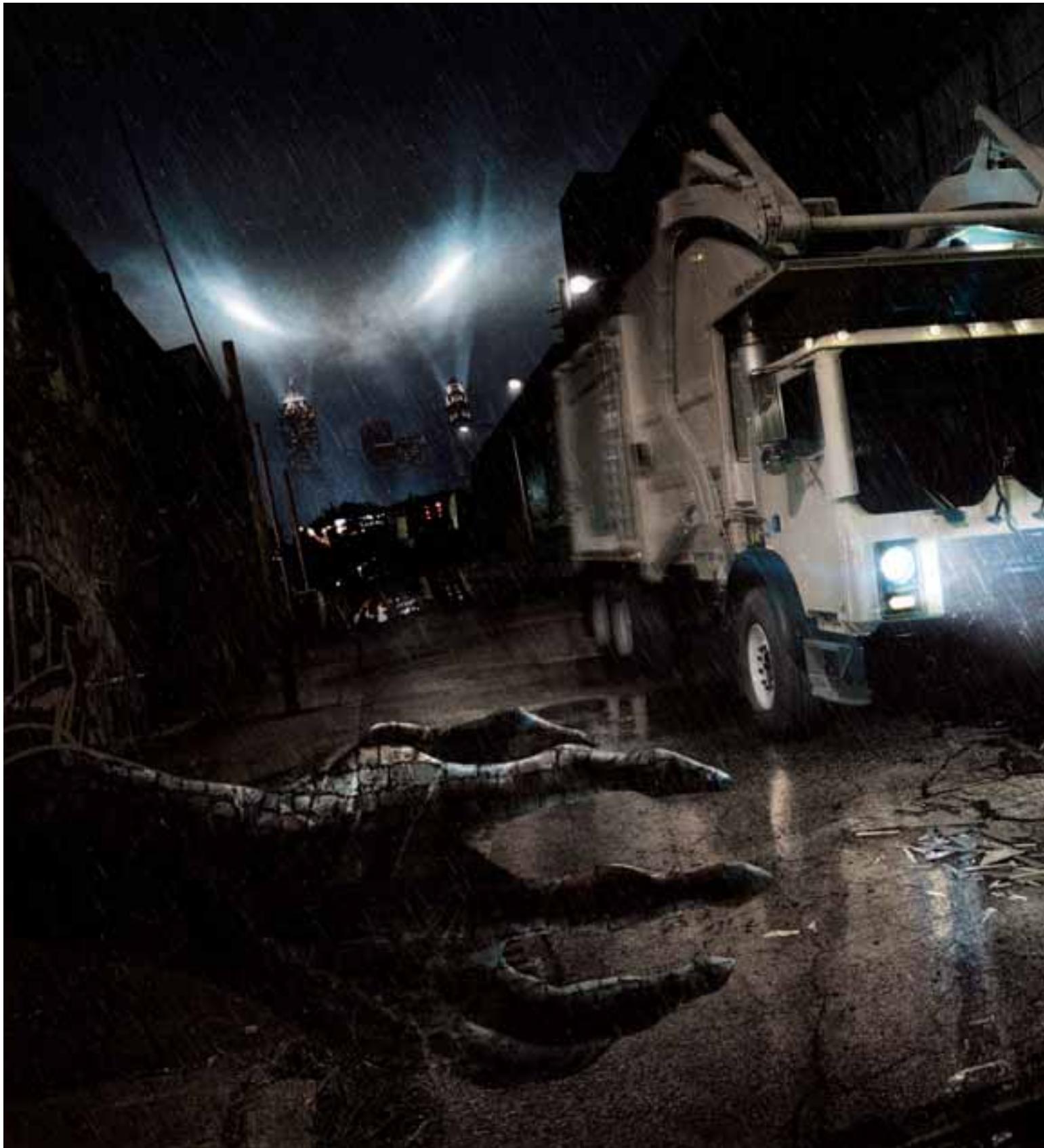
EOBR

Cinderella's big break came when her carriage—previously a pumpkin, transformed to her benefit by a fairy godmother—returned to its original state precisely at the stroke of midnight. Cinderella got the handsome prince as a consequence. Some North American truck drivers may not fare so well when the clock runs out on them, however.

Time management proved to be critical in that fairy tale, and in real life it could become an even more delicate issue, when electronic on-board recorders (EOBRs) are introduced in North America.

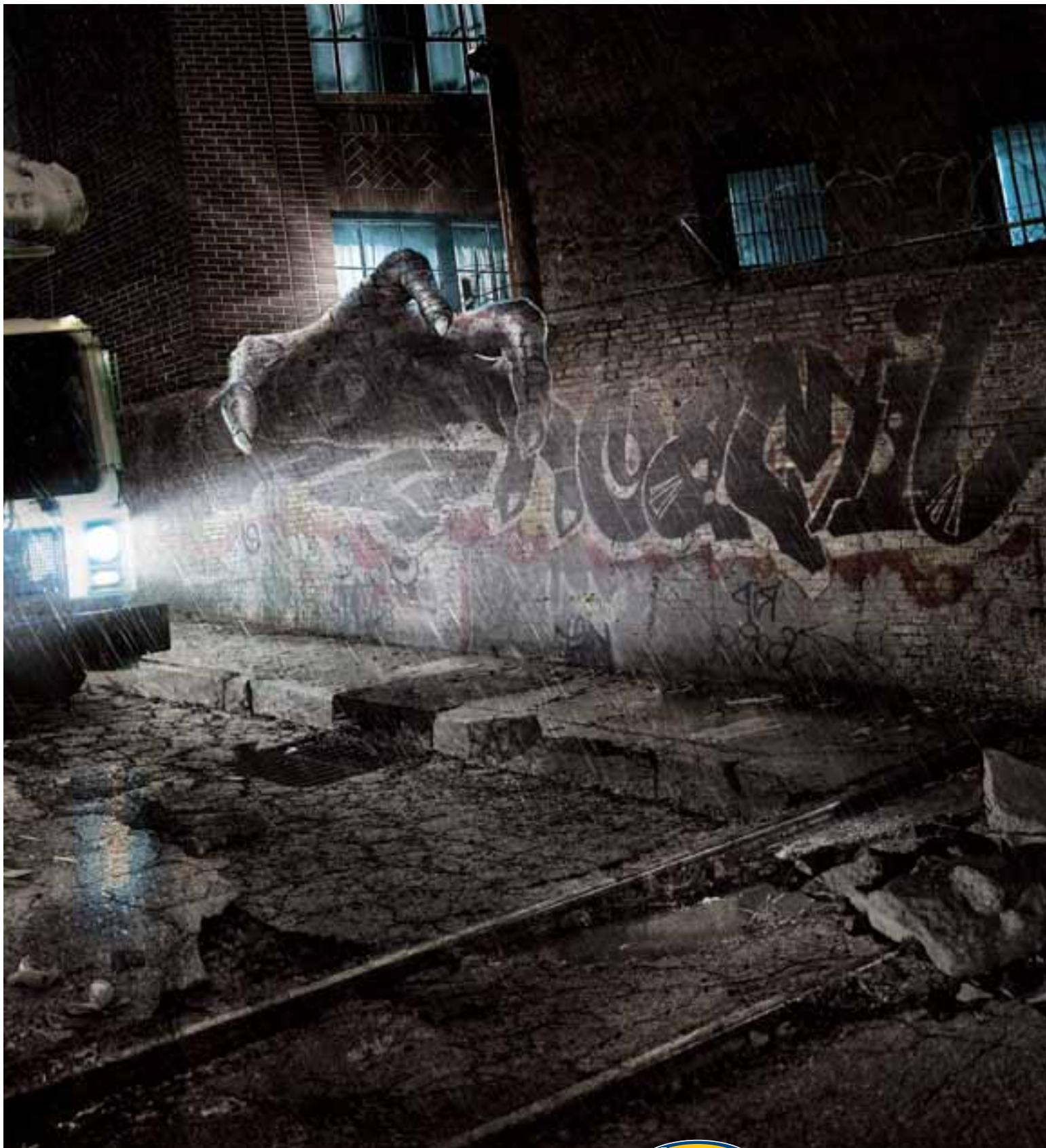
That day could be fast approaching. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) in Washington is expected to publish a proposed rule on EOBRs sometime this Fall—perhaps this month—and Transport Canada has been studying the technology with an eye toward drawing up a made-in-Canada version to complement the forthcoming American regulation.

FMCSA has been working on an EOBR rule since a U.S. court sided with a coalition of special-interest groups in throwing out the FMCSA's rewritten hours-of-service (HOS) rules that came into affect in 2004. The court instructed the agency to rewrite parts of the regulation (which it did and released last year), but also to



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consider more seriously an EOBR reg, which was not included in the 2004 HOS rule. Unless further delayed, truckers should soon get a glimpse of the sort of gadgets Big Brother has in mind to track their allowable driving hours.

What technology—and how exactly it would be used at roadside or audit enforcement—hasn't been fully established yet. And there's no guarantee this upcoming proposed rule will offer any clearer picture. But if discussion papers based on comments from carriers, owner-ops, enforcement, and suppliers are any indication, the comment period is sure to produce heated debate.

FMCSA has allowed the voluntary use of EOBRs to track drivers' HOS since 1988. Werner Enterprises of Omaha, Neb., was the first U.S. carrier to go officially paperless when FMCSA granted the carrier an exemption in September 2004. Many other fleets already monitor driver hours for their own purposes through existing on-board or satellite/cellular-based tracking systems.

In Canada, the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) has been calling for some sort of EOBR regulation for several years. CTA CEO David Bradley, who stresses his members are in favor of EOBRs "with conditions", says electronic logs would level the playing field between carriers that comply with current hours-of-service regs and those that think they can get an edge by breaking them.

"Competition should be based on service and price where price includes the cost of compliance," he says. "The way to monitor compliance would be through technology. The inspector on the side of the road is, in our view, not an efficient way of monitoring compliance."

Even more direct is current CTA Chairman Claude Robert of Robert Transport: "Paper logs are a joke," says the always outspoken Robert. "[EOBRs] will harmonize the operations for everybody because it will make it harder to cheat than paper logs. A driver who must take eight

hours of rest will not have the choice but to stop because the movement of the vehicle is recorded.”

But sometimes “cheating”—at least the way a hard-wired time-management device might automatically define the term—isn’t done to get a backdoor advantage, but a way to cautiously massage the

grey areas that common sense suggests should exist in all rules of life. What's a driver to do when the EOBR forces him to shut 'er down a few klicks away from the wife and kids?

"We're not talking about cheating to get more work done, we're dealing with the driver's home life," says one southwestern



A CLEAR SIGNAL: "Paper logs are a joke," according to Claude Robert.

EOBR

Ontario-based general-freight carrier. "I can't see drivers being at all tolerant of being forced to lay over an hour from home, and we're certainly not going to set up a taxi service to bring them in when they run out of hours."

In a recent HOS survey conducted by this magazine's sister publication, *highwaySTAR*, nearly 77.7 percent of respondents admitted they adjusted their logbooks to compensate for wasted and unproductive hours by an average of 10.8 hours per week—nearly a full day's work by U.S. HOS standards.

That suggests that drivers would see a reduction in driving hours if the time limits were enforced by the minute, as could be the case with an EOBR.

As Wayne Kowalyshyn, director of operations at Saskatoon's Ridsdale Transport, points out, black boxes—as EOBRs are otherwise nicknamed—will have an impact on his drivers.

"While I don't condone the practice of using more than one logbook, I do think this will push the thumb down on drivers even further," he says. "Drivers will soon be

questioning why they bother coming to work. They'll say, 'here's one more thing I've got to deal with. I'm not making any money now, and if I make a small mistake, that permanent record will ensure that I face prosecution."

On the other hand, Wayne Lamontagne, president of Cobra Trucking in Duncan, B.C., sees an upside to that permanent record. "It will solve all the false accusations we now face. They'll prove we're running legal. It'll remove the black cloud that's been hanging over this industry for years,"

Nearly 77.7 percent of respondents admitted they adjusted their logbooks to compensate for wasted and unproductive hours by an average of 10.8 hours per week.

says Lamontagne, who believes EOBRs will help get rates back to where they should be by making it difficult for fly-by-night carriers to promise unrealistic service.

The opinions of owner-ops and drivers, like so many other issues, vary widely. A

recent study conducted by the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) seems to contradict non-user perceptions that EOBRs would negatively impact driver morale and retention. A surprising 76 percent of users said EOBRs improved driver morale, and 19 percent said they improved driver retention.

Joanne Ritchie of OBAC (the Owner-Operator's Business Association of Canada) is taking a "wait and see approach" to the technology. Before she'll support EOBRs, she wants assurances

from carriers that driver earnings aren't going to suffer.

"In many cases, drivers are paid along a distance line. If they're limited by a time line, something has to give," she says. "Take the example of a driver crossing the



Ambassador Bridge [at the Windsor-Detroit border] at a bad time. It's not unusual to spend two to three hours inching along in traffic. A mileage-based driver might earn \$1.50 for a couple of hours of work, and since the EOBR would log that time as driving, there'd be a corresponding reduction in driving hours that day, possibly compromising a delivery appointment. Who is going to eat that loss?

"I want to see rates increased and safety improved too," she continues. "But tighter monitoring of a broken system by any means—whether paper or electronic—is ludicrous. Why not just work harder to fix the system?"

But helping to "fix the system"—where it needs fixing—is precisely what EOBR technology will help achieve, says CTA's Bradley.

"The (HOS) regulation is not perfect, clearly. But we won't really know how many flaws are in the rule until it's truly enforced and then, only then, can we go back to government and explain what needs [correcting]," he says. "We can say 'we're all complying and it's not working. Look at what it's done to productivity.'

This is how you make the regulations more realistic ... because [currently] freight is being delivered anyway."

Dick Reiser, executive vice-president and general counsel for Werner Enterprises, told *Today's Trucking* that they've had the system in place since 1998, and when the company flipped the switch in 2004—going exclusively and legally paperless—they had already made all the necessary adjustments to how they operated.

"Sure, we had to make changes in the operation," he notes. "But our productivity has improved through the use of better communication and scheduling. We can capture and manage information that allows us to reroute trucks, schedule switches, etc. Whatever it takes to make the fleet run more smoothly."

Bradley says EOBRs could be the catalyst that forces a change in shippers' attitudes about truck delays and extending delivery windows, and on the other side, assist carriers themselves in being more responsible in scheduling.

"I often wonder if some of the schedules shippers set are because they really need to

do it that way or just because they can since the industry will still jump to do [the work] and then sit hours to unload the freight," he says. "If EOBRs bring more discipline all around, then that's a good thing."

A FINE LINE

Carriers that already use some form of electronic data tracking system to manage such things as fuel purchasing and IFTA reporting, routing, maintenance scheduling, etc., say they're miles ahead in terms of accuracy and labor costs over their paper-based days. Many also monitor HOS with the systems, but still rely on paper logs for compliance purposes.

With the pending rule change—possibly mandating EOBRs for HOS compliance—carriers are concerned about integrating their current systems into FMCSA's HOS reporting requirements.

"We've made an investment up front and think we have as good as it gets in terms of technology," says Danny Vettoretti, national fleet manager of Frito Lay Canada, whose U.S. parent was one of

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EOBR

the first fleets to adopt GPS-based on-board communications technology to monitor operations, including HOS. "We would definitely have questions if the rule didn't allow for maintaining that device to be used as part of any HOS monitoring."

At the other end of the spectrum, most small operations would have little use for a system as complex as Frito Lay's. The recent ATRI study confirmed that many

carriers—depending on their operations—would have a tough time finding any ROI in such devices, considering the capital costs, training, and ongoing maintenance associated with any system more complex than a basic electronic "black box" or digital tachograph device as is used in Europe.

Although it seems unfair to force small carriers into purchasing technology they don't need, carriers who've proactively

invested in on-board devices make a strong argument when they insist their current systems should act as the base technology for any EOBR requirement—safe for a few hardware and software additions for compliance.

"I would hope that they just spell out what data they need, and simply require it in an electronic format. Then, how you go and do that is up to you," says Vettoretti. "It lets the market decide and the creativity of suppliers and users come into play versus mandating what we all need to use."

The idea of using separate solutions for different sized carriers has been floated, but enforcement has its own set of concerns there. That community is calling for uniformity in basic aspects of the technology, such as how data is collected, displayed, and downloaded. Inspectors worry about drivers using multiple IDs, or logging on to several different devices—as in a slip-seat operation. And they're concerned about the challenges of training inspectors to use and read multiple data recording platforms.

However FMCSA and Transport Canada settle those issues, it's likely an EOBR mandate will further divide the industry.

David Bradley has been vocal in the past about a tug-of-war in trucking. But it's not between big and small carriers—nor rich and poor ones—he says. "It's an economic issue, not political. There's a lot of small companies that are technologically advanced and realize that technology is the only way we're going to be able to improve productivity. There's no other way."

Still, there's a whole class of truckers that aren't necessarily pulling on either end of the rope. They say they're honest businessmen that play by the rules, but know they've survived this long by making adjustments when the market dictates.

Says one carrier, whose HOS compliance is between 95 and 98 percent without EOBR technology: "We audit logs closely, but you sometimes need that little bit of flexibility. That's part of doing business," he says. "You can't tell me a driver automatically becomes unsafe by going 30 minutes over just to make it home."

Automatically unsafe, no. But getting stuck on the side of the highway with a pumpkin on wheels could become an uncomfortably common occurrence. ▲

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This is the first of a series of articles based on a presentation delivered by Rolf Lockwood to delegates at the Canadian Fleet Maintenance Seminar this past May. His subject was the 'Future of Truck Technology to 2025'. It's also the first of two articles on hybrid powertrains.

Does hybrid power have a future? Judging by the amount of research and development activity that can be seen in every truck maker's engineering department, and many, many other places, the answer is a very clear 'yes'. Its appeal is very compelling in some quarters.

Will it necessarily be a combination of electricity and diesel? No. The hybrid world is presently dominated by that setup, but we may see hydraulic/diesel combinations commercialized in a mass way first. Like in 2008. You can get a diesel/electric powertrain in a medium-duty truck now, but it's not yet exactly a databook option. The hydraulic option could be there sooner (see December's issue for more on this).

Will it be affordable? Hmm... tough question. Depends on your perspective. And on how you define "affordable". There are those who think we'd do better retrofitting older trucks with modern, efficient diesels for a lot less money. Or using biodiesel. Estimates for the added cost of a diesel/electric system are all over the map, if you can find someone to offer an opinion—and a number—at all. We've heard \$8,000 for simple systems all the way to \$40,000 and way beyond, so it's clear that for the most part only public or government-subsidized fleets can absorb the cost in the short term. The environmental benefits of any hybrid system are real, some more than others, and they

may be enough to convince some governments that commercial justification is secondary to the prospect of cleaner air for now.

Even with the prospect of 30-to-60 percent fuel savings, you'd have to run quite a few miles to achieve a payback that would satisfy any sensible accountant in a for-profit operation.

The U.S. Energy Policy Act of 2005 does provide tax credits for purchases of medium and heavy-duty hybrid vehicles, ranging from \$1,500 to \$12,000 depending on vehicle weight and the increase in fuel economy relative to a comparable non-hybrid vehicle. That may not be enough. The Canadian federal government is rumored to be following suit, more or less, in the new year.

The exceptions to this subsidy need are fleets like FedEx, UPS, and to a lesser extent our own Purolator. Nobody in our industry is as far down the hybrid road as those fleets are, and their willingness to be there has as much to do with size as anything else. Fleets that big can afford to look ahead and experiment because the potential savings are monstrous. To put this in perspective, a few months ago UPS ordered 50 hybrid electric package trucks from both Freightliner and International, but its total buy for 2006 was to be 4,100 ordinary trucks. A drop in the bucket? No, because with 1,500 alternative-fuel vehicles already on the road—diesel/electric, diesel/hydraulic, all-electric, fuel cell—UPS is far and away the leader in this charge.

As for Europe, where we expect high-tech solutions to be accepted more readily,

HYBRIDS, HYBRIDS EVERYWHERE

The diesel will be around 'til 2025 and maybe beyond, but it's being joined by electric power. Is the marriage a good one? | BY ROLF LOCKWOOD

For both public and private fleets, in fact, the need for subsidies is clear. Where they exist, hybrid trucks will flourish even before economies of scale are such that the price premium drops to reasonable levels. For instance, several U.S. school boards in Iowa, New York, and Washington have recently bought International hybrid diesel/electric school buses that cost \$200,000 apiece when an ordinary bus costs less than \$100,000. They actually only paid the price of that conventional diesel-powered vehicle, the balance being picked up by the states.

the consensus seems to be that without government incentives—and there are presently none on the horizon—the hybrid idea has a long way to go before being commonly accepted.

In fact, Andreas Renschler, head of the DaimlerChrysler Commercial Vehicles group, wonders aloud if biodiesel might be a better option for Europe unless there are government subsidies or public/private partnerships of the sort that have supported alternative-power transit buses in many North American cities.

"I see that biodiesel is a real possibility in the next 10 or 15 years," he told me in a private interview at the recent IAA Commercial Vehicles Show in Germany. Some European Mercedes-Benz customers are using 20-30 percent biodiesel blends of rapeseed oil now, he said. Others are taking up the M-B natural gas option, he added, though usage is not high.

Will hybrid power systems be easily maintainable? Another tough question, and the truth is we're a long way away from knowing the answer. No matter the system in use, there will be new complexities and training demands. And some very high voltage to deal with. That said, the challenge is not likely to be extreme.

Will we see hybrid powertrains in over-the-road trucking? Not in the short term. Maybe not in the medium term either. Hybrids are really about urban transport needs—P&D trucks, courier vans, garbage packers, especially utility trucks. And, of course, both school and transit buses.

WHAT'S A HYBRID?

What exactly do we mean by 'hybrid' vehicle? Simply, it's one that uses two different power sources to make the wheels go

round. But there's more. You can have both 'series' and 'parallel' hybrids.

If both the diesel engine and electric (or hydraulic) motor are connected to the drive wheels at least some of the time you have a 'parallel' system. It maintains conventional drivetrain design, augmenting the diesel's output with the electric motor's. The diesel engine—usually smaller than would normally be spec'd—and a small electric motor together replace a larger conventional

engine. They may both be used to get the truck moving, but once cruise speed has been reached the electric motor is shut down. That leaves the smaller diesel to maintain speed, but of course it will do so more efficiently than a larger engine would. At the same time, the diesel will spin the electric motor, which has become a generator, to recharge the on-board batteries.

In a 'series' hybrid system, on the other hand, there's a generator connected directly

DUAL FUELLED: A test is presently underway involving 24 International utility trucks like this one with a diesel/electric power-train jointly developed by the truck maker and Eaton Corporation. Some 13 U.S. utility fleets are involved, plus Hydro Quebec.



THE TOP 15 PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS DEMANDED BY THESE WOULD-BE BUYERS, PARAPHRASED SLIGHTLY BUT RANKED IN ORDER, ARE:

- 1. Maintain base vehicle dimensions and core capability.**
- 2. No decrease in payload capacity.**
- 3. Meet or exceed baseline truck's reliability, durability, maintainability, repairability.**
- 4. Able to merge with traffic on freeways.**
- 5. Transparent to user from vehicle and lift perspective—same performance as diesel.**
- 6. Significant increase in fuel economy (50 percent) over diesel.**
- 7. Overall life-cycle costs less than or equal to diesel.**
- 8. Meet or exceed 2010 EPA emissions standards.**
- 9. 65 mph top speed.**
- 10. Must provide engine-off hydraulic power for lift and tools for a user-defined period of time.**
- 11. Sufficient bin space and 11-ft clear bed space.**
- 12. Ideal truck will provide at least 3 kW power panel and sufficient power to operate hydraulic lift and tool circuits (approx. 25 kW total system); this capacity will be provided when truck engine operates or for a utility-determined "optional" period with engine off (2-4-6-8 hours of continuous engine-off capability, each utility to make own choice—more time means more batteries).**
- 13. Must be able to tow trailer—10,000 lb weight most common.**
- 14. Adequate ground clearance.**
- 15. Noise levels lower than diesel truck.**

HYBRID UTILITY TRUCK PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS

The Hybrid Truck Users Forum (HTUF) is a very influential user-driven program to help commercialize hybrid technologies in the U.S., though it does have Canadian involvement. Hydro Quebec is a member, for instance. It's operated by California-based WestStart-CALSTART and is supported by the U.S. Army.

HTUF utility fleet members recently came up with a set of key parameters for the common 'bucket' truck, or a telecom/cable service truck, with a GVW of 17,500 to 33,000 lb. Its duty cycle is defined this way: always on call, mostly urban driving, multiple (3+) service calls per day, average time 1-2 hours per call, engine idles to operate hydraulics/lift/tools, and it carries a 30-to-50-ft boom.



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to the diesel engine but the driving is done by the electric motor alone, which drives traction motors at the wheels ends. There's no mechanical link between the engine and the drive axle. The diesel is operated in a constant-speed mode that allows for maximum efficiency. Unlike the parallel system, there's no redundancy—if the electric motor is out, you're stopped.

One of the very biggest advantages of a diesel/electric hybrid is regenerative braking via the electric motor, which can create torque in reverse as well as forward 'gear'. In that mode it's a generator being turned by the rotational force of the driving axle and thus generating electric energy for storage in the battery. At the same time it's slowing the vehicle down with the resistance of the electric motor. Normal brakes are still required, but they're used far less—really only in very hard stops—so brake shoes will receive much less wear, extending their life and reducing maintenance costs.

It's all very efficient, relatively speaking, capturing some of the braking energy that would normally be wasted as heat and saving it for acceleration purposes. Stop-and-go city driving is ideal for such a system—and vice versa—because the cycle of acceleration followed by deceleration brings a high energy-recovery ratio.

THE UTILITY TRUCK

Aside from courier operations, the first mass users of hybrid trucks might well be utility fleets. Development is well advanced, thanks in part to a major pilot test begun a year ago. Organized and spon-



sored by WestStart's Hybrid Truck Users Forum (HTUF—see sidebar), it's been field-testing 24 International utility trucks with a diesel/electric power-train jointly developed by the truck maker and Eaton Corporation. Some 14 fleets are involved, including Hydro Quebec.

The drive system is a parallel hybrid configuration, with the permanent magnet motor mounted directly in front of the transmission, behind the engine and clutch. The engine powers a conventional drivetrain directly or drives the electric motor to create electrical energy that's stored for use as needed. Electric and diesel torque can be 'blended' to improve vehicle performance and to operate the engine in the most fuel-efficient range for a given speed. The truck can also be run with electric power only, and it features regenerative braking. The truck can operate the utility bucket in electric-only mode, with the engine off, significantly contributing to improvements in fuel economy. Not to mention emissions and noise reductions.

Each test truck, along with an additional baseline non-hybrid vehicle, is

ASIAN POWER: Mitsubishi Fuso's Canter diesel/electric class-4 truck will likely be offered in Canada, possibly even in Sterling 360 form, a badge-engineered version of the same truck. It's for sale in Japan now. Mitsubishi Fuso has been designated DaimlerChrysler's worldwide 'Centre of Competence' for hybrid medium-duty truck development.

equipped with International's 'Aware' vehicle intelligence system. It sends continuous information to everyone involved in the test, data that will be invaluable in helping fleet owners understand the impact of hybrid-electric vehicles in their operations. Early tests indicate that fuel use can be cut by 40 to 60 percent.

Utility fleets aren't the only market for a medium-duty truck of this general sort, of course, so this test will help others to make sensible hybrid decisions—applications with frequent start-and-stop operations or significant idle time, for instance, such as food, beverage, and retail delivery. The military is keenly interested too.

"While we will need to test these trucks on a larger scale and over a longer period of time, we continue to see indications that these vehicles are commercially viable and will deliver real value to customers," says Bill Van Amburg, senior vice president at WestStart.

There are many more examples of hybrid power systems than we have space for here, so look for a second installment next month. We'll examine the diesel/hydraulic idea and other variations on the diesel/electric theme, including battery developments. ▲

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BY ROLF LOCKWOOD

This year's 61st version of the huge IAA Commercial Vehicles Show, held in Hannover, Germany over 10 days in September, proved yet again that engineers—not marketing folks—rule the roost over there in a pretty comprehensive way. In presentation after presentation, at display after display, the emphasis was always on technology. The higher, the better.

What follows is a roundup of a few show highlights, not including hybrid power, which is covered in a separate article in this issue (see p. 40).

AT DAIMLERCHRYSLER—the Actros Space-Max concept vehicle was the company's IAA highlight, aimed at driver relaxation and sleeping comfort. The bed is invisible during the day, fully integrated into the back panel, and folds out by an electro-hydraulic mechanism. There's a large power sliding roof, a flat-screen TV, and a roof height of four meters, the legal limit. The 'relaxation' seat, which replaces the normal shotgun seat, would look right in any living room. The Space-Max is based on the Actros 1860 LS with Mercedes

PowerShift, a new generation of automated transmissions, along with a 600-hp engine.

Not incidentally, the launch of the Actros in 1996 also launched huge strides in brake technology. It was the world's first truck with disc brakes all-round as standard equipment plus an electronically controlled braking system, technology that has since become the European standard for long-distance trucks.

See www.daimlerchrysler.com.

AT DAF—PACCAR'S European subsidiary DAF Trucks scored a significant victory at IAA where its flagship vehicle, the XF105, was named the 'International Truck of the Year 2007' as voted by a jury of European truck journalists. Introduced last year and manufactured since January, the XF105 is equipped with the all new 12.9-liter PACCAR-branded engine, developed by DAF. North Americans may see it in Kenworth and Peterbilt trucks in the near future. The inline six is equipped with an SCR

exhaust gas aftertreatment system, meeting both the new Euro 4 and coming-in-2009 Euro 5 emission standards.

DAF also announced at IAA that it would start offering "extra-clean EEV engines" next year (EEV stands for Enhanced Environmental-friendly Vehicles). Interestingly, these engines will go beyond the Euro 5 emissions standard, which is roughly equivalent to our 2007 EPA rules. They'll emit 50 percent less soot than Euro 5 calls for by applying SCR technology (selective catalytic reduction) in combination with a passive particulate filter.

The PACCAR 9.2 liter EEV engine will first be available in buses, later in 2007 for trucks. An EEV version of the 12.9 liter PACCAR MX engine will also be offered, with output ranging from 360 to 510 hp.

Many other European engine makers are also offering Euro 5 diesels now, well ahead of the mandate, and some fleets are buying.

See www.daf.com.

A Few Days in GERMANY



HI-TECH TRUCK: The Mercedes-Benz Actros Safety Truck was loaded with innovative electronic safety enhancements.

▲ **AND THE WINNER IS:**
DAF's XF105 was named the
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2007' as voted by a jury of
European truck journalists.

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A NAVISTAR COMPANY

Code: TODAYSTRUCKING3

AT SIEMENS VDO—Over at the Siemens VDO stand, the company introduced its Driver Attention System as a means of dealing with drowsiness or inattentiveness at the wheel, the cause of one in every four accidents on German roads (it's more like 40 percent over here).

The new warning system uses an infrared digital camera in the dashboard that is barely visible to the driver. It monitors the trucker's face and a software program evaluates the recordings in real time. Based on the driver's viewing direction and blinking patterns—number and duration of eyelid movements—the program can ascertain whether or not the driver is alert and attentive. If the electronics detect signs of drowsiness, the driver is warned at two levels—first by a vibration of the seat and then, if needed, an audible tone of increasing intensity.

Siemens VDO offers other such systems—Night Vision, Blind Spot Detection, Lane Departure Warning, and Adaptive Cruise Control—and the company says the latter two of those systems could be combined with the Driver Attention System in the future. That would enable the vehicle to automatically be kept in its lane and brake in time to avoid colliding with a vehicle in front until the drowsy driver can take back control of the vehicle.

See www.siemensvdo.com.



DIGITAL VIGILANCE:
The Siemens VDO Driver Attention System aims to guard against drowsiness or inattentiveness at the wheel.

AT WABCO—calling it “the world’s first De-Oiling Catalyst for commercial vehicle compressed air systems,” WABCO says its new gizmo helps truck owners cut service costs while increasing service life by converting hydrocarbons into harmless substances. Installed in the pressure line between compressor and air dryer, the catalyst provides cleaner air to the air system and its various devices, such as the air dryer cartridge and brake valves. Simply, it eliminates harmful oil products in compressed air systems by way

of an oxidation process that converts hydrocarbons into water and carbon dioxide.

Nikhil Varty, the company’s vice president in charge of braking products, explains that higher air consumption and more compact system designs have increased pressure levels in air systems in recent years. That



EVEN CLEANER AIR: WABCO’s De-Oiling Catalyst eliminates harmful oil products in compressed air systems by converting hydrocarbons into water and carbon dioxide.

in turn can lead to more oil deposits, higher concentrations of oiling products in the system, and harmful carbon build-up in the pressure line.

By the way, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the launch of anti-lock braking systems for trucks by Mercedes-Benz (now DaimlerChrysler) and WABCO. Seems like yesterday.

See www.wabco-auto.com. ▲



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In Gear

EQUIPMENT NEWS, REVIEWS, AND MAINTENANCE TIPS



UNDER PRESSURE:
Challenger Motor Freight's new maintenance facility automatically checks tire pressure the moment a unit rolls through the door.

Pressure Points

tech tips Quick. How many tires are on that truck sitting outside? Do you know the condition of each one of them? If not, you're probably losing money. By Duff McCutcheon

Looking to get more bang for your rubber buck? Manage your tires. You can put staff on it, ask your supplier for help, or put chips in your tires and just let the data flow on in. But, high- or low-tech solution, the outcome will be the same: better life from your casings, better utilization of the tire, lower lifecycle costs, and even clues to the mechanical condition of the trucks.

Trent Siemens, maintenance manager of Big Freight Systems in Steinbach, Man., makes full use of his relationship with his Bridgestone dealer and retread partners, Kal Tire in Winnipeg. Several years ago, they all sat down to map out a tire strategy for the fleet.

They analyzed the fleet's lanes and decided what tires and treads best fit particular applications and they put together a 20-page best-maintenance practices document that mapped out a cradle-to-retread-to-grave guide to care and handling of the fleet's rubber.

Next, they trained Big Freight technicians on how to follow those practices. They follow up with annual tire audits to gauge how well the maintenance team is following the recommendation and provide an action plan on where they can improve for the next year.

"You have to work closely with your retreader, if you're on a retread program, or your tire supplier," says Siemens. "Bridgestone worked with the technicians and me, and they supplied us with literature and a lot of training tools. Kal Tire assists us with fleet surveys, checking for pressure and tire wear to ensure that our fleet is at an acceptable level."

"When it comes to tire maintenance, there's no magic," says Bridgestone account rep Jim Devlin. "There are three basic steps, and some fleets do them better than others." The first, and arguably most important, step is tire pressure.

"Big Freight is the best at this. They have a preventive maintenance [PM]

INSIDE:

- 55 Volvo's thinking transmission
- 65 Lockwood's products

schedule system where the trucks and trailers go through the shop every two weeks; the air pressure on every tire is checked with a gauge," Devlin says.

They don't rely on drivers to do any more than make every attempt to get the unit through a shop as often as possible. They're asked as well for regular reports on the condition of the tires and to report the first signs of irregular wear. "Early detection is key in saving tires from premature deaths because of, for example, bad alignment," he notes.

To prolong tread life, Big Freight rotates drive tires when tread depths vary by 4/32 from front to back.

The third plank in Big Freight's plan is alignment. "A misaligned vehicle will really accelerate tire wear, not to mention the handling and fuel economy issues," says Siemens. As part of its maintenance program, Siemens relies on drivers to inspect tires for uneven tread wear that point to alignment problems on the vehicle, as well as to report any handling problems.

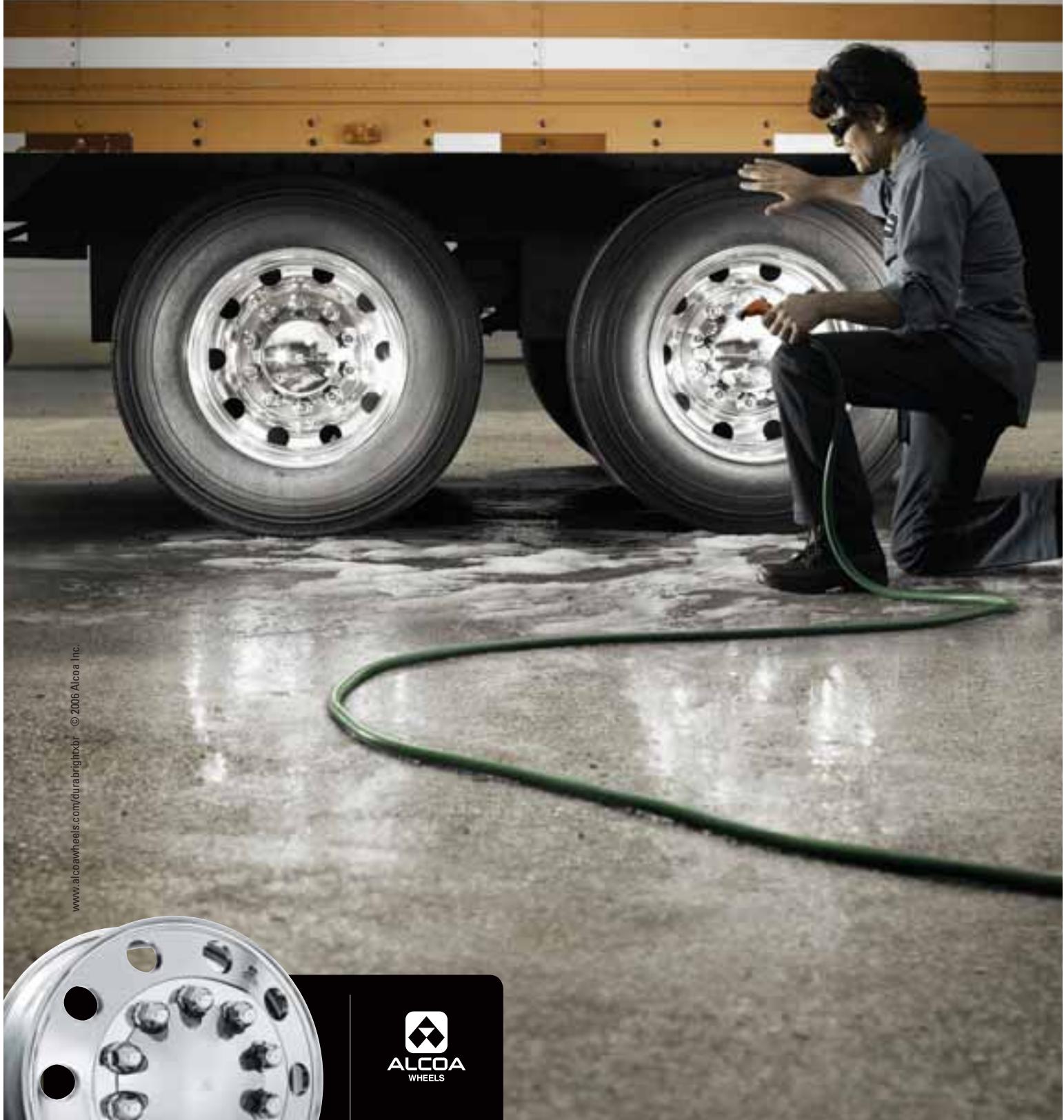
A key feature of Big Freight's partnership with Kal Tire is annual onsite tire audits by the retreader. An inspection team comes around unannounced and spends a day inspecting whatever equipment's in the yard at the time—usually it works out to be around 10 to 25 percent of the fleet's power units and trailers. They check for tire pressure, tread depth, mismatched duals; i.e. a Bridgestone mated with a Michelin—"basically they're inspecting to see if we're meeting our best practices criteria," says Siemens.

"When we've completed the inspection," says Kal Tire's Darrell Spencer, "we go back and compile a document identifying areas of concern, then we create a corrective action program to try and make things better for the next year."

"We rely on the audits to provide trends from the previous year and we react to those," says Siemens. "The previous year is our benchmark. If anything has gone up, those are the areas we focus on for the coming year."

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Big Freight runs retreads to new tires at a ratio of 2:1. Following the tire maintenance program is integral to the company's retread partnership with Kal Tire.

"Good maintenance gives you good casings and good casings will give you a good retread program with the right dealer," says Spencer. "When you bring all those dimensions together, there's your ROI."

Tire management is, admittedly, labor intensive: checking pressures, mounting and dismounting, retorqueing... it takes a lot of work to squeeze those extra dollars out of your tires.

nology "is not as reliable as I'd like it to be," both systems have saved the company a bundle on both fuel economy and retreads.

Dana Spicer's system checks tire pressure on power-up, and after that, every 10 minutes of operation. Any time a low tire is detected, the system directs air to the under-inflated tire until proper inflation pressure is achieved. Meritor's system connects all trailer tires to a controlled air supply to maintain pressure at a constant and proper level. As air pressure decreases, the system automatically routes air to the axle, and on to each tire.



TREADED NEWS: SmarTire sensors mounted inside the tires continuously monitor both air pressure and temperature and relay information to the driver via an in-cab receiver and display unit. When the vehicle starts moving, a centrifugal switch activates the sensors and the initial tire data is immediately transmitted to the receiver using radio frequency technology (RFID). Tire information is read every 12 seconds, and data is sent every four minutes. If the tire pressure changes by 3 psi, the driver is alerted immediately. See www.smartire.com.

In recent years, central tire inflation systems have migrated from the bush roads and the military to the highway, and fleet owners are giving them the nod as a cost-effective way of managing tire pressure.

The Yanke Group has been using the Meritor Tire Inflation System (MTIS) by PSI and Dana Spicer's Tire Inflation and Monitor System (TIMS) since 2001 and currently has the devices installed on more than 1,000 trailer units in the fleet.

While Yanke corporate maintenance manager Alan Klaussen says that the tech-

"Ever since we've started spec'ing the systems on our equipment there's been a huge reduction in the number of tires that we've changed out on the road, tires that a lot of other firms would consider a blowout," says Klaussen. "When I go through our log of road calls, 90 percent are flats. We don't see blowouts anymore. You want a \$30 repair, not a \$1,000 blowout."

"We run 100 percent recaps, and if you run a tire with low air at all, it's going to have an adverse effect on the life of that casing. If you keep them inflated the

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Plus, now you can save even more with the new Alcoa 14-inch wide base wheels. Some fleets have experienced a 3%-7% fuel savings with wide base wheel and tire combinations.*

*Source: Based on the average truck running 100,000 miles per year at 6 miles per gallon and a \$3 per gallon fuel price. NDTC, 2002. Michelin states increased fuel savings of 3% - 7% with wide base wheel and tire combinations, depending on current duals.

Actual fuel savings may vary.

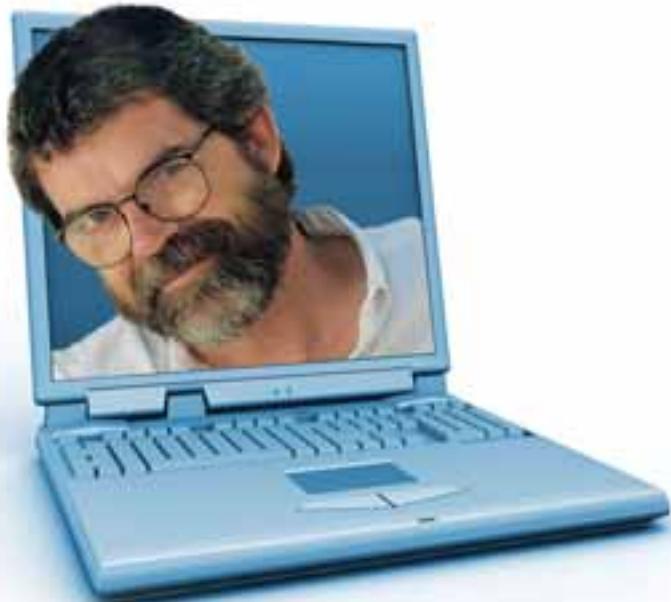


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whole time it's obviously very beneficial. We don't lose caps like we used to."

Klaussen loves the concept and feels the systems are the way of the future, but he adds that he has some performance issues with the systems. "Some rotary joints have become issues, t-fittings have caused leaks, and you could potentially pressurize your hub, causing the wheel seal to go prematurely, or push oil out of your cap."

Still, says Klaussen, the payback for the systems (which run around \$600 per unit) is definitely there. Whether you're running a 1,000 trailer fleet or a single truck, he says, the money saved in fuel economy from properly inflated tires, as well as from longer tire life, is worth the investment.

Challenger Motor Freight takes another approach. The Cambridge, Ont., based hauler lets the tires do the talking.

Michelin's eTire technology is a system of sensor-embedded tires that relay pressure and temperature information to a stationary or hand-held reader located at the company's new state-of-the-art maintenance facility.

Whenever a truck enters the building, a

FOR MORE INFO

Michelin's eTire

www.michelintruck.com

Meritor Tire Inflation System by PSI

www.meritorhvs.com

Dana Spicer Tire Inflation and Monitor System

www.roadranger.com

Cat's Eye

www.linkmfg.com

Airgo

www.tireinflation.com

TireMaax

www.hendrickson-intl.com

SmarTire

www.smartire.com

tire (the sensors can be attached to any brand of truck tire).

The system also reads the operating temperature inside a tire and corrects for "cold equivalent pressure," providing precise readings and accurate pressure adjustments, as if the tire were cold.

"It's said to be around three-percent accurate, which is better than any pressure gauge," says Wayne Scott, Challenger's director of maintenance.

Besides the obvious labor savings, the system allows fleet managers to spot problems early, reducing downtime and minimizing costs. "The real benefits are in fuel economy and tire life," says Scott. "Correct alignment and tire pressure is going to give you two to three percent fuel economy; and with the price of tires these days, if I can save three to five percent in tire life, when you're talking about the amount of miles we do, and two cents a mile, that's a lot of money."

You'll have to spend a little, but a well-spent dollar can save you a bundle in labor costs while increasing tire life and maintaining casing value. So go ahead, make a management decision. ▲

Radio Frequency ID (RFID) tag embedded in the vehicle's bumper identifies the individual truck. As it moves on into the facility, it passes a stationary reader that reads each tire's pressure and temperature information—all relayed by a dime-sized sensor embedded in the sidewall of each



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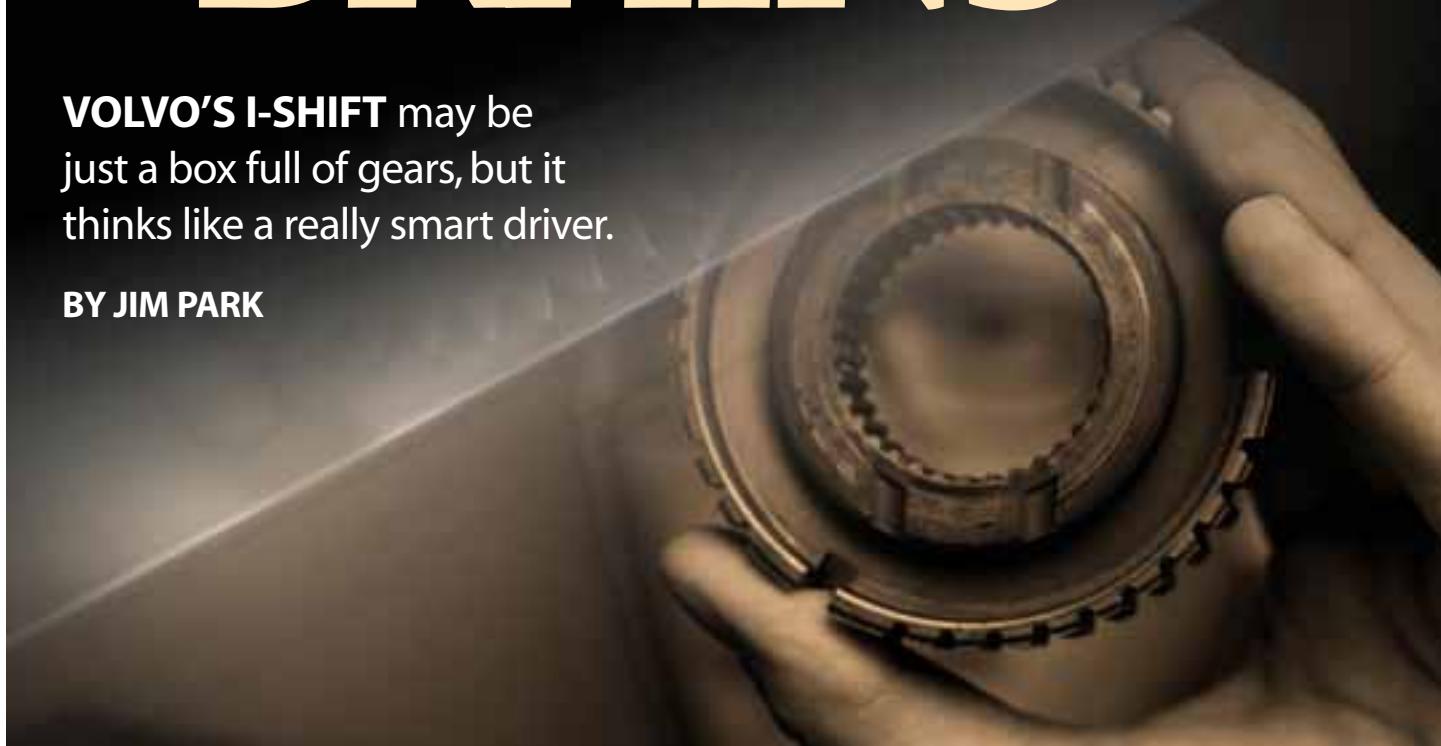
*Average annual costs per trailer. Sources: Goodyear Engineering Data book; Commercial Carrier Journal Survey; Michelin North America; McGriff Tire Company.

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GEARS & BRAINS

VOLVO'S I-SHIFT may be just a box full of gears, but it thinks like a really smart driver.

BY JIM PARK



Volvo's new automated-manual transmission, I-Shift, will blow drivers away. It will do anything you want it to, or it will manage the shifting all on its own—depending on how you choose to drive it. This is a driver's transmission, but it will please the truck owner, too. It's default programmed for economy, but the driver can get performance out of it in a very natural and intuitive way.

Volvo launched I-Shift in late September at an event in Savannah, Ga., where a bunch of motor-noters had the chance to drive it. We were offered a few laps on a closed track to get a feel for it, and that was just enough to whet the appetite.

Two aspects of this transmission really set it apart. First, the transmission's electronics: Volvo optimized the I-Shift for use with the 2007 D11, D13, and D16 engines by programming each of the engine's fuel maps and performance curves into the transmis-

sion. This high level of integration allows the transmission and the engine to calculate optimum output with appropriate gear selection to achieve the best possible combination of fuel economy and performance. In other words, the two perform as one. There's a lot more to this, but we'll get there in a minute.

The second thing that sets this transmission apart is the clutch arrangement. It's a two-pedal set up with a single-plate clutch engaged by an electronically controlled air-over-hydraulic actuator that takes its cues from the throttle pedal position at launch. This feature is particularly helpful when backing. If you just want to inch back, instead of slipping the clutch as you might do in a manual set up, you just feather the throttle pedal. As you press the throttle, the clutch engages very smoothly and away you go—just like in a manual, only better. This one feature improves drivability dramatically. The clutch is used on every shift.



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The HARDWARE

The 12-speed I-Shift is a single countershaft, three-speed gearbox with high and low ranges and a two-speed splitter for each gear. The two reverse gears can be shifted on the fly, giving drivers more flexibility while backing. It's available in direct or overdrive (0.78:1) with an overall ratio of 14.94:1 in direct and 15.04:1 in overdrive configuration. It's a full-manual gearbox with an electronically controlled X-Y shifter mechanism.

The driver interface is a seat-mounted shift knob with a trigger-style selector for manual shifts. There are three driving modes (forward manual (M), forward automatic (E), and reverse (R). The knob toggles between the three positions. There is also an economy/performance selector so the driver can choose how the engine shifts. In 'E' mode, the transmission will select shift points and engine parameters

to maximize fuel economy. In 'P' mode, gradeability is maximized.

The second driver point of contact with I-Shift is a stalk mounted on the steering column that controls the engine brake, and to a certain extent, the transmission. This stalk has three functions: in the 'B' position, it controls the engine brake application (40 percent, 75 percent, and 100 percent), and it will allow you to up- or down-shift to optimize brake output on steeper grades. In the 'A' position it manages brake output automatically, depending on sensed demand.

Or you can select "Idle-drive" mode. This is very cool. When operating in slow-moving traffic, the engine will stay at idle speed, but you can toggle up or down through the gears depending on how fast traffic is moving. The engine adjusts torque output to suit demand so your fuel consumption is kept to a minimum while the drive is as smooth as it could be.



I-Shift

I-SHIFT IS AVAILABLE IN DIRECT OR OVERDRIVE, AND IN TWO TORQUE RANGES. THE HIGH-TORQUE 3112C IS ENGINEERED TO MATE TO THE D16. THE OTHERS ARE SUITED TO BOTH THE D11 AND D13 ENGINES.

| I-Shift Model | AT2512C | AT02512C | AT03112C |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| ENGINE | D11/D13 | D11/D13 | D16 |
| OVERALL RATIO | 14.94:1 | 15.04:1 | 15.04:1 |
| TOP RATIO | Direct 1:1 | O/D 0.78:1 | O/D 0.78:1 |
| WEIGHT lb(kg) | 597 (275) | 597 (275) | 610 (281) |

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| VICTORIA | 97.3 | 2.0 | 70.3 |
| PRINCE GEORGE | 93.4 | -0.8 | 69.1 |
| KAMLOOPS | 94.7 | -0.2 | 70.4 |
| KELOWNA | 94.9 | -1.3 | 70.5 |
| FORT ST. JOHN | 101.9 | | 77.1 |
| YELLOWKNIFE | 109.4 | | 90.1 |
| CALGARY * | 86.7 | -0.9 | 68.7 |
| RED DEER | 86.7 | -2.3 | 68.8 |
| EDMONTON | 82.0 | -2.3 | 64.3 |
| LETHBRIDGE | 88.1 | -1.0 | 70.1 |
| LLOYDMINSTER | 90.7 | 0.3 | 72.5 |
| REGINA * | 87.5 | -0.2 | 63.5 |
| SASKATOON | 91.4 | -0.6 | 67.2 |
| PRINCE ALBERT | 90.2 | -0.7 | 66.1 |
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| BRANDON | 84.4 | -3.0 | 64.1 |
| TORONTO * | 85.6 | 1.2 | 62.5 |
| OTTAWA | 87.8 | -0.8 | 64.6 |
| KINGSTON | 89.3 | 0.8 | 65.9 |
| PETERBOROUGH | 87.6 | -0.7 | 64.3 |
| WINDSOR | 86.3 | -0.2 | 63.1 |
| LONDON | 86.9 | 7.0 | 63.7 |
| SUDBURY | 86.9 | -3.7 | 63.7 |
| SAULT STE MARIE | 91.9 | -1.3 | 68.4 |
| THUNDER BAY | 91.7 | -1.2 | 68.2 |
| NORTH BAY | 87.9 | 0.1 | 64.6 |
| TIMMINS | 96.4 | -0.8 | 72.6 |
| HAMILTON | 87.3 | 0.2 | 64.1 |
| ST. CATHARINES | 86.1 | 0.5 | 62.9 |
| MONTRÉAL * | 94.2 | -0.3 | 62.4 |
| QUÉBEC | 95.4 | -0.2 | 63.5 |
| SHERBROOKE | 94.4 | | 62.6 |
| GASPÉ | 94.9 | 0.5 | 63.1 |
| CHICOUTIMI | 94.1 | -1.0 | 62.4 |
| RIMOUSKI | 94.9 | | 62.4 |
| TROIS RIVIÈRES | 96.4 | 0.5 | 62.4 |
| DRUMMONDVILLE | 92.9 | 0.3 | 62.4 |
| VAL D'OR | 95.9 | -2.3 | 62.4 |
| SAINT JOHN * | 95.5 | -1.1 | 62.9 |
| FREDERICTON | 96.0 | -0.6 | 63.3 |
| MONCTON | 95.9 | -0.7 | 63.3 |
| BATHURST | 97.3 | -3.4 | 64.5 |
| EDMUNDSTON | 98.6 | -1.7 | 65.6 |
| MIRAMICHI | 95.2 | -1.4 | 62.6 |
| CAMPBELLTON | 97.1 | | 64.2 |
| SUSSEX | 94.3 | -1.2 | 61.8 |
| WOODSTOCK | 100.0 | | 66.8 |
| HALIFAX * | 92.3 | 0.0 | 61.6 |
| SYDNEY | 95.1 | | 64.1 |
| YARMOUTH | 95.1 | | 64.1 |
| TRURO | 92.6 | | 61.8 |
| KENTVILLE | 93.0 | -0.4 | 62.2 |
| NEW GLASGOW | 94.8 | | 63.7 |
| CHARLOTTETOWN * | 93.2 | | 64.5 |
| ST. JOHNS * | 101.9 | | 68.9 |
| GANDER | 101.4 | | 68.4 |
| LABRADOR CITY | 107.2 | 0.0 | 73.5 |
| CORNER BROOK | 100.6 | | 67.7 |
| CANADA AVERAGE (V) | 90.0 | -0.1 | 64.8 |

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TRAILERS _____ BUSES _____

OFF ROAD VEHICLES _____

2 ARE ANY OF THESE VEHICLES ...

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

Class 8: 33,001 lbs. GVW & Over Yes No
Class 7: 26,001 to 33,000 GVW Yes No
Class 6: 19,501 to 26,000 GVW Yes No
Class 3,4, or 5: 10,001 to 19,500 GVW Yes No
Class 1 or 2: Under 10,000 lbs. GVW Yes No
B. Refrigerated Yes No

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

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

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

B. Replacement Components, Parts & Supplies

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

C. Fleet Products & Services

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

D. 15 None of the above

The SMARTWARE

The electronics on Volvo engines and I-Shift are highly integrated and combined, they're equipped with a host of sensors that continuously calculate the vehicle's speed, acceleration, torque demand, weight, rolling and air resistance, and road grade. This allows the engine and transmission to calculate and select the optimal power output and gear selection for any driving condition.

This combination of built-in intelligence and data collection helps the transmission determine the appropriate starting gear, when it can successfully skip-shift, and it can even sense when not to shift—such as when climbing a grade.

I-Shift also responds to how you apply the throttle. If you go easy on the pedal, it will shift at low rpm, but if you're hard onto the throttle, it'll take the revs higher for more assertive shifts. It will skip shift if you're gentle on the pedal but push it all the way down. On the other hand, if you're easy on the pedal, it'll shift to a lower rpm, but take only one gear at a time.

In addition, while you're applying throttle, the transmission is sensing engine load as well as—get this—the grade the truck is on. This enables the transmission to determine if the shift will have to be quick with the aid of a bit of engine brake as might be the case shifting on an uphill grade, or it might look for an opportunity to skip-shift if you're rolling downhill, you're lightly loaded, or not working the engine too hard. It's a clever bugger.

The shift points are not hardwired. The engine and transmission sense what's going on outside, and respond accordingly.

I-Shift also features something Volvo calls a 'Kick-down' switch. There's a distinct detent near the bottom of the throttle pedal travel range where you would normally bottom out the throttle. But if you push past that, the transmission will drop a gear and give you high rpm acceleration—much like flooring the throttle pedal in a car with an automatic transmis-

sion—which is quite useful for passing.

Even operating in the automatic mode, the driver can initiate a manual shift by squeezing the shift trigger. In manual mode, arrows on the dash display alert the driver to the available gears, up or down—allowing up to three gears on an upshift if the conditions are favorable, like downhill, lightly loaded with a good tailwind.

Among the more interesting features of I-Shift is a mode called 'Eco-Roll', where the transmission disengages the high-low splitter allowing the truck to coast down modest grades that do not require brake or power—with the engine at idle. Volvo



HOW SWEDE IT IS: I-Shift's North American debut came in several 2007 Volvo tractors, including this VN 780 equipped with a 500 hp /1,850 lb ft 2007 D16.

says Eco-Roll eliminates parasitic drag of about 30 hp by letting the truck roll without any engine compression holding it back (kind of like Georgia-overdrive, but with safeguards) making more efficient use of vehicle momentum.

Eco-Roll re-engages the engine as soon as one of the following happens:

- The speed reaches the engine brake set speed for the cruise control;
- The driver touches the brake;
- The driver touches the engine brake control stalk;
- The driver touches the accelerator; or
- The vehicle speed increases past a pre-set cruise limit.

Driving I-SHIFT

Volvo has done a tremendous job making this transmission/engine combination think and perform very much like a driver naturally responds to many driving situations. Its baseline programming tells it to configure for optimum fuel economy, and when you drive it gently, it shifts at

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low rpm (sensing minimal power demand). If you drive it aggressively, it will shift at higher rpm providing better performance.

During the main part of Volvo's presentation at the track in Savannah, we did laps while a tech guy in the passenger seat described the features of I-Shift. It went through the gears flawlessly, responding to throttle pedal input and shifting accordingly. When I put my foot into it, I was getting 1,800 rpm or better out of each gear and moving ahead rather assertively. It even fired the engine brake to facilitate a quicker shift.

Alternately, when I feathered the pedal, easing it forward, I-Shift was leisurely shifting away at the 1,250-to-1,400 rpm point. Sensing no urgent need to accelerate, it chose not to bother with the engine brake.

GEARJAMMIN'S GONE: The seat-mounted shifter is easy to reach and intuitive. It toggles back and forth to shift between forward and reverse, and manual shifts are made by squeezing a trigger.



When slowing down in 'E' mode—non-aggressively as when exiting a freeway—I-Shift didn't downshift every gear. It let me coast down to speed. If, before coming to a complete stop, I applied throttle, it shifted right into the appropriate gear in no less time than it took me to ease my foot down onto the throttle—it chose a gear that matched the low-end of the rpm band for that gear, meaning I now had a full gear to go through before shifting again.

I tried hard to fool the transmission by accelerating and breaking and accelerating alternately, in easy and aggressive style, and the darn thing found the right gear every time (and the right rpm range to match the way I was applying throttle), no hunting and pecking for a gear. It knew which gear it wanted and went right there.

After the other journalists had boarded

the bus and headed off to the airport, Steve Sturgess (of *roadSTAR* and *Heavy Duty Trucking*) and I piled into a truck for a little bit of real-world driving out on the freeway.

I-Shift's first test came in climbing the on-ramp for the Talmadge Memorial Bridge. From a dead stop at the bottom of the steep curved ramp (10 percent I'd estimate), we climbed up through the gears, the road grade sensor and the engine load

calculator determining correctly that we were in a hard pull and needed speed PDQ. It took each shift up into the 1,800 rpm range, fired the engine brake, and got right back into gear.

I seriously doubt I could have managed that climb as well as I-Shift. As we topped the span and the grade began to level out, the shifting pattern changed; it made the shift at a lower rpm and let the revs fall

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Road Test

unassisted by the engine brake.

Out on the freeway, I-Shift did its thing in a less obvious way, just up and down shifting with road speed changes. I got a taste of the Eco-Roll feature several times as we rolled over various Interstate overpasses. As soon as the engine sensed the downgrade at the far end of the overpass, it kicked out of gear, the engine rpm dropped to idle (700-ish), and we rolled

for quite a way before the transmission shifted back into gear and brought the revs up to match roadspeed. The whole exercise was so smooth, if I hadn't been watching the tach, I might never have known it was happening.

A couple of times during the drive, I made some pretty stiff brake applications, and unlike I-Shift's lazy deceleration style described earlier, it sensed a more urgent

need to slow and engaged the engine brake to help out while dropping a gear automatically to optimize output.

I should mention here that Volvo's new turbocharger design (a Holset electronically controlled variable-geometry affair) has greatly enhanced engine brake performance.

We turned around at a truckstop about 40 miles south of Savannah, but not before going through the exercise of backing in to a parking spot. Here's where the clutch actuation really shone. Where a driver might ride the clutch while backing to control speed, the throttle pedal position signaled the clutch to tighten the engagement or back off, just as your left leg used to do. It went back just as smooth as could be at the speed I wanted to go and I really couldn't sense the clutch engagement. It was as smooth as I've ever done it manually. That's a real plus. ▲

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PROVEN PERFORMANCE COMES TO NORTH AMERICA Q2 2007

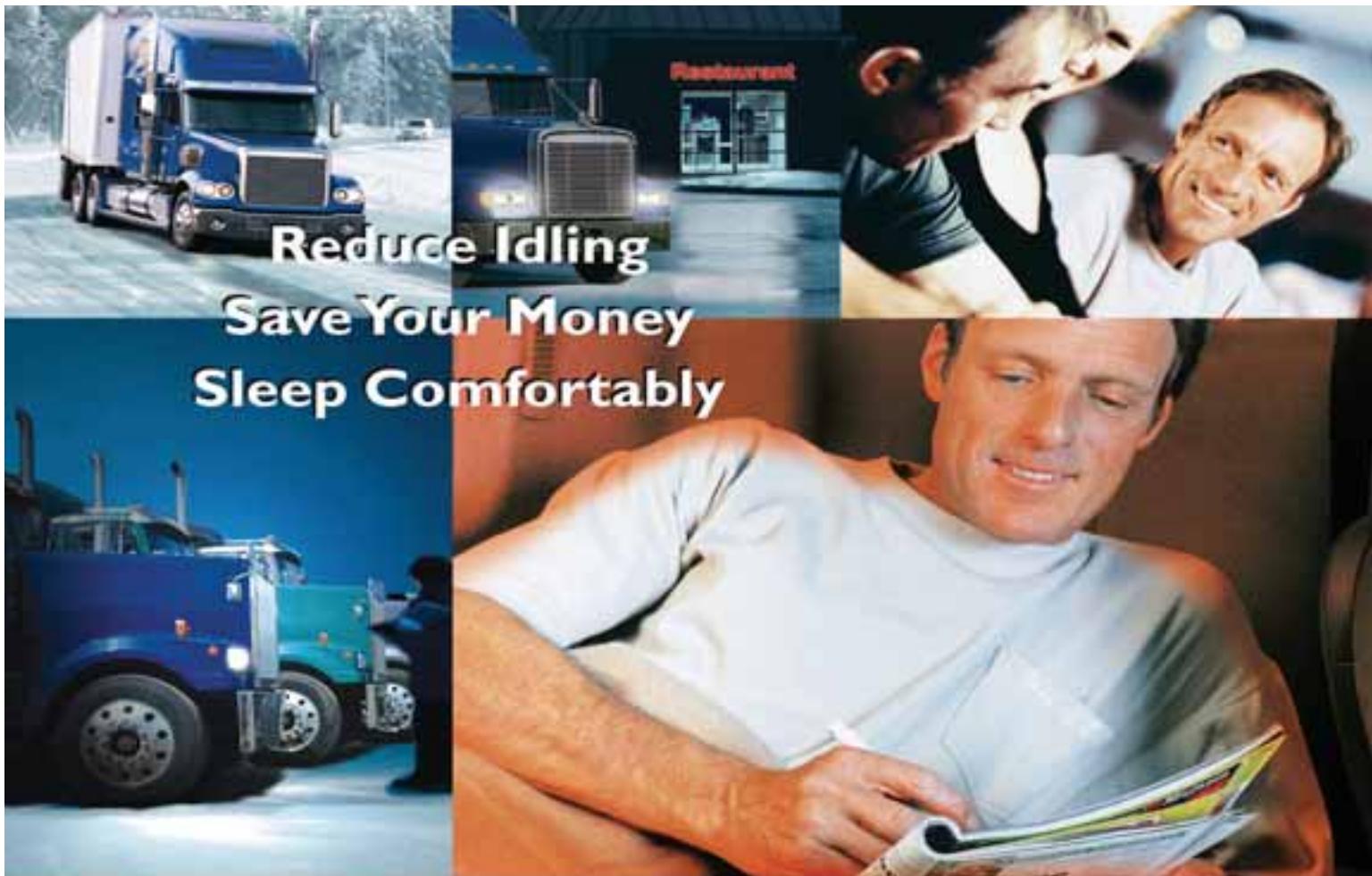
There are more than 80,000 I-Shift transmissions already in service around the world. It's a third-generation design based on a successful European platform that began as a 12-speed, fully synchronized manual box. The synchronizers are absent in the I-Shift, and it has been extensively redesigned for North American service.

I-Shift is as close to a one-size-fits-all transmission as we've seen in North America, and Volvo offers three models with torque ratings engineered to meet or exceed the ratings of the engine they're mated to. Buyers really don't have any mechanical spec'ing options with I-Shift—there's really no need for them. All transmission models are engineered to mate to a specific engine, and customer choice comes in the form of electronic and programming options.

Orders are being taken now for Q2 delivery in all Volvo truck models, including the Volvo VN and Volvo VT highway tractors, and the Volvo VHD vocational truck.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.volvo.com/trucks/na/en-us



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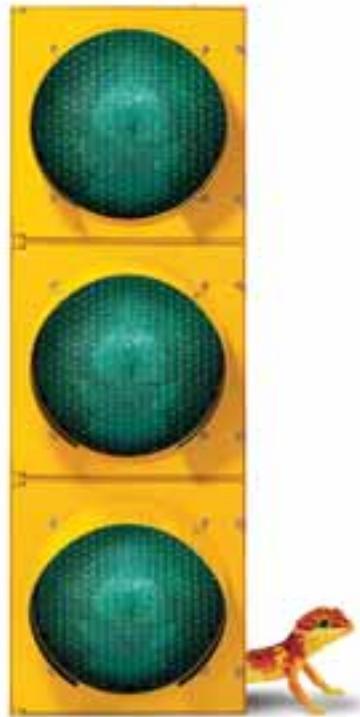
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VERIGO LAUNCHES WIRELESS LOGBOOK

ELECTRONIC DRIVER'S LOG
TRANSMITS DATA.

It's not an on-board data recorder, nor is it a handheld black box. It's a cell phone with a built-in computer that looks much like a Pocket PC or BlackBerry type of device. It accepts manually entered data to track a driver's hours of service electronically. The Verigo wireless log, from Edmonton's Verigo Inc., makes HOS tracking as easy as using a calculator, and much more efficient than the paper method.

To make an entry, the driver taps the screen with a stylus to indicate the time of the duty-status change. As the times are entered, a screen with a standard log grid displays the duty periods in the traditional manner. It requires all the same information as a paper log, and it displays that information on the screen. It will tell you how many hours you've worked in the day, and it tracks the previous seven or 14 days, as well as the hours you have available in Canada or the U.S.

It's completely compatible with the current U.S. rules and current and forthcoming Canadian rules—including the 'North of 60' provisions, and it complies with the Transport Canada and U.S. DOT definition of an electronic log.

Drivers make the entries themselves, and the entries are correctable but a note remains indicating when the correction was made. You can even add an electronic signature to the log. When completed, the logs can be e-mailed to the terminal over the cellular phone network—at a fraction of the cost of satellite data transmission.

If inspected at roadside and asked to produce a paper copy for enforcement, the



driver can e-mail the log directly to the squad car's computer for printing, and the officer can 'sign' the device to establish a chain of custody.

With the Verigo wireless logbook, carriers can manage all log data electronically, receive it by email, archive it as data, and even audit electronically or print the sheets for a paper audit. You can also eliminate the need for redundant data entry into log-audit programs by subscribing to Verigo's data-hosting service. The company can even conduct on-line audits: just choose the drivers, choose the audit period, and a comprehensive audit is e-mailed to your desktop.

Verigo's software requires a Pocket PC phone with the Microsoft Mobility 3 or Mobility 5 operating system, such as the UTStarcom 6600 and 6700, or Audiovox 5050—all supported by Bell Mobility and Telus. Before purchasing a phone other than those listed above, get the sales rep to download and try the software. Trial software is available on the Verigo website.

See www.verigo.ca.

FREIGHTLINER'S STAND-UP M2

STAND-UP RIGHT-HAND DRIVE AVAILABLE

Freightliner now offers stand-up right-hand drive (SURHD) as a factory-warranted option on Business Class M2 106 and 106V trucks. Designed for refuse, recycling, and other specialized medium-duty applications requiring curbside entry and exit, the option comes with a two-year, unlimited-mileage warranty.

The right side of the cab is replaced by an upright unit containing a steering wheel, gauges, and fuel and brake pedals, allowing the driver to operate the vehicle from a standing position.



Freightliner M2

The seated, left-hand portion of the cab is maintained for longer commutes. SURHD is currently offered through Freightliner Trucks dealers as a conversion and is executed by third-party body builders.

See your dealer or visit
www.freightlinertrucks.com.

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now be purchased on CD-ROM in either single-user or multi-user versions.

The new set features both the Recommended Maintenance Practices Manual and Recommended Engineering Practices Manual. Together, the two-volume set features more than 2,200 pages of technical information that represents the consensus and collective wisdom of Council members.

All TMC members will receive a copy of the single-user version of the RP Manual CD-ROM as a member benefit. Others can buy the single-user version (members US\$200; non-members \$267) or the multi-user version for use on multiple workstations (members US\$2500; non-members \$3,333). A traditional, hardcover print version is also available (members US\$200; non-members \$267).

The updated two-volume set includes more than 50 new or revised RP's adopted by TMC as of December 2005. Among them are RP 158, Wiring and Circuit Protection Guidelines for 12-Volt Cab and Sleeper Power Outlets; RP 209D, Tire and Rim Safety Procedures; and RP 238, Troubleshooting Disc Wheel Looseness.

Order by calling 800-ATA-LINE or 703-838-1754 or on-line at tmc.truckline.com.

TOOLBOX DIAGNOSTIC SOFTWARE

MERITOR WABCO'S LATEST VERSION

Meritor WABCO Vehicle Control

Systems has announced the release of its Toolbox software Version 7.01 for the company's electronic products. This latest update's revisions include diagnostic capabilities for two additional functions: electronic stability control diagnostics for tractor ABS, and electronically controlled air suspensions (ECAS) for buses. There are also several new features for the hydraulic power brake (HPB) diagnostics program. A user's manual and documentation on adaptive devices are included as well.

It's a PC-based diagnostics program that provides technicians with a display of both constant and changing information for the system under test (e.g. ECU number and RPMs, respectively); a display of both active and stored system faults, as well as the appropriate repair instructions; and activation of

components to verify system integrity, proper component operation, and installation wiring.

Toolbox is distributed by SPX Service Solutions. Technical support comes from Meritor customer service at 800/535-5560.

Call 800/328-6657 or visit www.wabco-auto.com or www.arvinmeritor.com.

PACCAR PX ENGINES

FOR MEDIUM-DUTY KENWORTHS & PETES

We now have ratings for the new Paccar-branded 2007 engines that we'll see in **Kenworth** and **Peterbilt** medium-duty trucks next year. Those trucks will be 2008 models, by the way. Until around the new year, the 2006 Kenworth T300 and Pete's Model 330, 335, and 340 trucks will be available with Cummins ISB and

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Paccar PX-8

ISC, or
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January 2007 the
only engine choices

will be the new Paccar 6.7L PX-6 and the 8.3L PX-8 engines, which will in fact be '07 versions of the Cummins ISB and ISC. The Cat C7 will no longer be available.

The PX-6, or present ISB, will be available in six ratings ranging from 200 to 325 hp and 520 to 750 lb ft of torque. It has a two year warranty with unlimited miles. The PX-8 engine, the present Cummins ISC, will be offered in seven ratings from 240 to 330 hp and a torque range of 660 to 1000 lb ft, as well as a 360-hp version for emergency vehicles. The PX-8 comes with a two year, 250,000-mile warranty.

In Gear

Both engines are in-line sixes with four valves per cylinder, a high-pressure common-rail fuel system, and a variable-geometry turbocharger.

See your dealer or visit www.kenworth.com or www.peterbilt.com.

LEGACY CLASS 379

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Peterbilt's Model 379 is nearing the end of its 20-year run, but the final 1,000 units produced will be commemorated with a special Legacy Class Edition. It features unique Legacy Class Edition emblems on the grille and both sides of the cab; a custom dash plate inscribed with the production number of the vehicle, from one to 1000; premium UltraRide seats embroidered with the Legacy Class Edition

emblem; the Platinum Oval Package which includes a punched oval-pattern grille and air-cleaner intake screen, polished grille bars, and stainless steel sun visor; the premium Platinum level interior; ConcertClass sound system with Sirius satellite radio; and an in-dash GPS navigation system. The Legacy Class Edition is limited to the extended-hood, 127-in. BBC configuration as a day cab or with the full range of Unibilt sleepers. Peterbilt's new Model 389 will replace the 379 in 2007.

See your dealer or visit www.peterbilt.com.

ALTERNATOR FOR HIGH TEMPS

DELCO REMY'S 36SI HP IS GOOD TO 105°C Addressing concerns about high under-hood temperatures associated with low-emissions engines, **Delco Remy** has introduced the 36SI HP premium brushless alternator. It's said to satisfy rising vehicle electrical system demands with ultra-high power output, increased fuel efficiency, and superior resistance to high operating temperatures. The 36SI HP is rated at 170 amps at highway speed and 100 amps at idle in ambient temperatures of up to 105°C.



The Automated Transmission



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*— Gary Coleman, President, Big Freight Systems, Inc.
Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada*



The 35SI and 36SI product families incorporate the company's premium 'Flex-Lead' bridge design and higher-capacity, press-fit diodes, which are well suited to applications with higher underhood temperatures and increased vibration within the engine compartment. The new bridge design is 40 times more resistant to vibration and offers six times the amount of heat-dissipating surface area than conventional bridge and diode designs.

The 36SI HP features improved electrical efficiency that helps reduce required operating horsepower, resulting in improved engine efficiency and lower fuel cost. It's backed by a free extended warranty of three years/350,000 miles on new service units, and two years/250,000 miles on genuine Delco Remy remanufactured units.

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VOLVO SUPPORTS '07 BUYERS

VOLVO will make Volvo Link Sentry and Volvo Action Service standard for trucks with '07 engines.

All Volvo trucks with '07 engines will come with instant access to technical expertise and round-the-clock service support as standard features. Three years' worth of Volvo Link two-way satellite communications and Volvo Action Service (VAS) 24/7 roadside assistance will be standard on Volvo trucks with 2007 engines, sold from the first quarter of next year.

"This combination puts a Volvo technician in the cab with each driver," says Volvo, "while also putting a wealth of information about truck and driver performance on fleet managers' desktops."

There's an added benefit to Volvo as well, by way of real-time status reports on how the new engines are performing.

Volvo Link is a proprietary satellite communications system. The necessary hardware is integrated into trucks during assembly and uses a network of 30 low-earth-orbit satellites.

Drivers send and receive messages using the

display in the truck's gauge cluster. Messages transmitted from trucks are received by ground stations and are sent to Volvo customer support or fleet terminals via the Internet.

Sentry is a special feature of Volvo Link that reads fault codes involving the truck or engine electronic control units and then transmits that information to Volvo's VAS. It allows VAS to take action before the driver does, if the situation requires it. When a fault code is received from a specific truck, the tech support people review the situation and determine what, if any, corrective action should be taken. Then they'll contact the driver, either by cell phone or through the display in the truck's gauge cluster, to provide recommended actions. Sentry was first introduced in August 2005 for Volvo's flagship, the Volvo VT 880.

Model-year 2008 Volvo trucks come with three years of Sentry and VAS coverage standard. Customers can purchase the services after that period, as can second owners of the vehicles.

See your dealer or www.volvolucks.us.com.

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We're looking for one very special owner-operator.

If you know an owner-operator who is dedicated, professional, and places a high priority on the important things in life – family and community – we'd like to hear about that person. We'll be crowning our third highwaySTAR of the Year next spring in Montreal during Expocam, so start thinking about who you'd like to nominate. The contest is open to all working owner-operators in Canada, which is to say; they still drive the majority of the miles that

are put on the truck, they earn their living from trucking, they reside in Canada and have a Canadian commercial drivers' license.

You may visit our website to fill out a nomination form, www.highwaystarmagazine.com, or check this space next month. We'll have the registration form here as we gear up for the 2007 highwaySTAR of the Year Award. Get your nominations in right away.

"We, along with our valued sponsors – Freightliner Trucks, ArvinMeritor, Espar Heater Systems, Caterpillar, Chevron, Michelin, Kee Transport, and OBAC – believe that owner-operators are a 'driving' force behind Canada's trucking industry. An under-appreciated force at that. So once again we honor one of these dedicated, professional truckers with our 2007 highwaySTAR of the Year Award."

Jim Park, *Editor highwaySTAR*

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WALKER'S ONE-HAND, ONE-WRENCH CLAMP

Tight sealing capability and superior corrosion resistance are must-haves in an exhaust clamp, but **Walker** says its new Mega-Clamp is also much easier to install. It helps maintain proper emissions performance and offers protection against increased noise from leaks in



Walker Mega-Clamp

exhaust system connections, and you can install it with one hand and one wrench. Available in T304 stainless steel and aluminized steel in diameters from 2 to 6 in., each Mega-Clamp features extra-

thick steel bands with reinforced grade-8 bolts for added strength and durability.

See www.walkerheavyduty.com.

PAYSTAR SOUND INSULATION

INTERIOR NOISE DOWN BY 60%

International Truck and Engine says its new sound insulation package can decrease interior sound levels by up to 60 percent. Now in production, it's standard in the PayStar 5900 and an option in both the 5500 and 5600 models. Testing shows that the package reduces interior noise by approximately 3.7 decibels (dBA). A quieter cab can help reduce overall driver stress, help them better understand conversations with co-workers, and even help drivers hear emergency sirens or announcements, says International. The venerable PayStar name was re-launched earlier this year with the company's introduction of a new lightweight mixer.

See your dealer or visit www.internationaldelivers.com.

LED TRAILER DOME LAMP

NEW VERSION OF PHILLIPS' PERMALITE

Phillips Industries now offers an LED version of the Permalite fluorescent dome lamp. It provides up to 100,000 hours of light in the most extreme temperature conditions (from -50° to +180° F). The lamp incorporates a 6-diode in-line pattern, which provides whiter, longer lasting and more consistently diffused light than that of incandescent alternatives, Phillips

says. The new lamp is identical in dimension to the original Permalite and incorporates universal mounting holes for easy installation and/or retrofits. Phillips uses a polycarbonate material for the LED housing, making it light and highly impact-resistant. The lightly frosted polycarbonate lens specific to Phillips dome lamps is said to disperse a softer 'glow' that is easier on the eyes.

See www.phillipsind.com.



Phillips Dome Lamp

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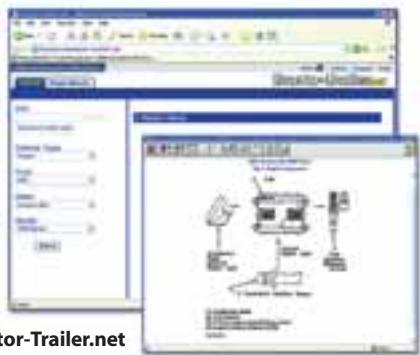
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WEB-BASED SERVICE DATABASE

MITCHELL'S TRACTOR-TRAILER.NET IS A FIRST

A web-based heavy-duty vehicle service and repair information database, Tractor-Trailer.net, is offered by **Mitchell 1**, the veteran provider of technical information. The company says it's the trucking industry's first complete service and repair information source for all heavy-duty tractors, dry vans, and reefers dating back to 1990. It was designed for technicians by technicians.

Updated monthly, Tractor-Trailer.net requires no software installation and includes comprehensive service and repair information, including sub-circuit color wiring diagrams for over 1,100 class 7 and 8 tractors, 1,800 trailers, and 200 reefers. There's coverage of, among others: automatic, manual, and automated manual transmissions; single and



Tractor-Trailer.net

tandem axles; air and ABS brakes; and spring and air suspensions. There are more than 6,000 color wiring diagrams, 100,000 graphic illustrations, and 3,000 unique year/make/model configurations.

To write the database, Mitchell 1 employed a staff of 45 ASE-certified technicians, 23 of them truck-certified, with 13 of those being 'master' truck certified.

See www.mitchell1.com or www.tractor-trailer.net.

INTERMODAL REEFER PROTECTION

THERMO KING'S PROTECTION PACKAGE

Thermo King, responding to what it calls "a growing number of incidents involving damage to refrigeration units," offers an intermodal protection package. It aims to prevent damage to the doors, which happens often, and in extreme

cases, damage to the refrigeration unit that puts it beyond repair.

Constructed from heavy-duty steel, the product has been engineered and analyzed for maximum strength and durability. It offers 180-degree protection, minimizing damage from both frontal and side impacts. The package is also engineered for convenience, fitting all new-look SB



Thermo King units and mounting directly to the SB—not the front trailer wall—to maintain trailer integrity on impact.

It's available as an easy-to-install kit with many preassembled sections, and can be installed without removing the reefer unit from the trailer. The design allows all doors to be opened without removing the cage for full access and serviceability, and the package is easily transferable from one unit to another, says Thermo King.

See your dealer or visit www.thermoking.com.

SCALE FOR STRAIGHT TRUCKS

AIR-WEIGH EXPANDS LINEUP

Air-Weigh says its 5800 Series of on-board scales has been expanded to include new models designed specifically for straight trucks. The new Straight Truck Scale was designed for vehicles with an air-suspension drive axle and a leaf-spring steer axle. Suitable for most straight-truck applications, the scale is a load-management system that's permanently installed in the dash and calibrated to each suspension on the vehicle. With no operator interaction required, the 2-in. display automatically shows the steer and drive weights on one screen. A single button press displays GVW and net payload weights. A 12-volt alarm output is standard and allows connection of an in-dash or exterior light or buzzer to warn of near-legal and then over-legal weight on any axle or by GVW.

See www.air-weigh.com. ▲

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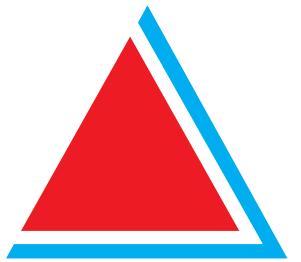


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By Peter Carter

Going For (Great) Treatment

Ever thought of the guys who work for you as customers? Why not?

Don't you hate walking into a store to return something that you lost the receipt for a few months earlier, knowing that you really don't have the right to ask for the time of day much less a cash refund?

On the other hand, is there anything more satisfying than that same feeling followed by a smiling clerk saying, "Sure. We'll refund your money"?

That's exactly what happened to me, a few months back. In a Princess Auto store, not far from the *Today's Trucking* office.

I had purchased a 6.5-hp gasoline engine so my son Mickey and I could build a go-cart. (We're still looking for some plans that require neither an engineering degree nor \$10,000. If you know of any, please send them to peter@todaystrucking.com. Thanks.)

The thing is, before I actually gave the engine to Mick as a gift, it sat in my office for three months. When we finally fired it up, it wouldn't stop leaking gas. So back into the packaging it went, destined for the returns counter.

In the meantime, the receipt disappeared. I wasn't optimistic. The first thing the clerk did when I brought the engine to the counter? Apologize.

"I'm afraid we don't have any more of those in stock, sir," Susan Fountain (I found out her name later) said.

Don't forget. This isn't some neighborhood joint I've been shopping at for years. It's in Canada's biggest city. Susan Fountain had never seen me before.

She gave me a refund. No questions asked.

Then for some reason we started talking about an upcoming trip I was taking with my family—to Poland. She called over her colleague David McIntosh, who'd just returned, and he gave me some advice on buying gifts for the relatives there.

The more I thought about the kid-work-glove treatment I received at the hands of Susan and David, the more I realized that people these days take such service for granted. Like factory a/c in a car.

And while it might be a new concept for some people, that service has been Princess policy pretty well since a man named Harvey Tallman swapped his truck for a foundering wrecking business on Winnipeg's Princess Street back in 1942.

He morphed the wreckers into a mail-order business, and in the '70s, his sons took it over and opened the first retail store in '77. They now have 27 shops across Canada. The biggest, volume-wise, is in Edmonton; the newest in Kingston, Ont.

And every one of the front doors is under a sign that says "The unique world of Princess Auto."



Unique's hardly strong enough. Princess Auto is not an auto-parts store, though they do have great tools and the like. You want compressors? Hydraulics? Pressure washers? Clamps? Wrenches? Welding gear? Princess has it.

My favorite section of the store is the Surplus Shelves, a smorgasbord of wholly unpredictable gadgets and stuff.

"It's like, somebody'll say, 'look, I can deliver this trailer of hammer handles but you'll have to take this stuff, too,'" Marcus Le Nabat (it rhymes with le rabbit) a Princess Auto advertising manager, told me. So you'll find, for instance, after-market headrests. Or sausage-stuffing machines. Or 99-cent gloves.

The stores are entertaining. The customer service is stellar.

Says Le Nabat, who works out of the Winnipeg head office: "The philosophy is to go out of your way to do the right thing for your customer and your customer is whoever you're serving at the moment."

"If a team member [they call employees team members] comes into my office and tells me about a problem, he's my customer at that moment."

And, the Royal Service Promise is that no sale is final until you're satisfied.

"We've had a widow come in whose husband passed away 10 years ago; she found a Princess Auto package and didn't even know what's in it; she returned it, and she got her money."

I know Mickey won't be satisfied until we get that go-cart up and running, but rest assured I'm more than satisfied with my dealings with Princess.

Finally, I'm curious. Do your workers treat whomever they're dealing with at the moment as a customer? Not a bad idea. ▲

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



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