

SPEC MY TRUCK

Check out Tuck Wade's rig, page 16.

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PROFILE: For six generations and counting, the Knapheide family has been manufacturing vehicles in Illinois 14

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Service Truck

THE MAGAZINE FOR MOBILE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

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HUMAN RESOURCES

Template for field techs

How to identify mechanics who will excel in the field

DAN ANDERSON

Not every mechanic has the potential to be a stellar field tech. Many mechanics who excel in a shop struggle when assigned to a service truck, while some mechanics who underachieve working 8-to-5 under florescent lights suddenly bloom into cash-generating marvels when they're unleashed to work without walls.

The challenge for service managers is to learn to identify the type of mechanic who flourishes "in the wild."

"A full-time shop mechanic and a full-time field mechanic are two separate individuals," says Jason Van Pelt, with Mechanics Hub, formerly Maizis and Miller Recruitment Specialists based in Toronto, Canada. "That doesn't mean one type of mechanic is better than another. The jobs just require different personalities."

Shop mechanics operate in a relatively protected environment. Service managers and service writers isolate most shop techs from dealing with customers. Special tools are available, parts are only steps away at the parts counter, and it never rains or snows on the machines they're working on, even in the back shop.



Jeff Sparks can remember details of long ago repairs.

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RAW MATERIALS

Marine-grade aluminum produces high-end bodies

Better fuel economy is among the rust-proof material's benefits

MATT JONES

While the use of aluminum has become more and more common in areas where steel had previously dominated, some service body producers are looking towards the next step — marine grade aluminum. This particular alloy provides many benefits and can be used for almost any application.

Historically, aluminum has often been seen as being less viable than steel due to a higher cost. Chuck Gros, director of marketing for Oregon-based Highway Products Inc., says that while his company's products tend to be on the higher end of cost, that's a reflection of the emphasis on customization rather than the material itself.

"Refining aluminum has come a long way — the price is lower than it was 10 years ago," Gros says. "And it has so many benefits — it's lighter than steel; you don't have to worry about the paint; it'll last so much longer."

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Albert Riebeiro of Wilcox Bodies Ltd. stands on the back of an 11-foot all-raised aluminum crane body mounted on a Hino chassis built as a Wilcox demonstrator. Photo courtesy of Wilcox Bodies Ltd.

REAR VIEW

Backup cameras enhance safety

Cameras, which can provide views from various angles, are becoming more common on service trucks

MARK YONTZ

When you consider the hazardous conditions workers frequently have to contend with, creating a safe work environment for service personnel should be a priority for any fleet manager.

One safety-related issue with service trucks is blind spots, which can be problematic for operators wanting clear, unobstructed views of what is happening behind them. This is why backup cameras are now becoming a popular addition to many service truck set-ups.

"The past several years we've seen an increase in the request for backup cameras on the vehicles we build. Over a third of our builds are being equipped with them," says Tom Wibben, sales and service manager at Maintainer Corporation of Iowa Inc., which is based in Sheldon, Iowa.

Wibben indicates that larger fleets are now requiring



What a driver sees on the screen of a backup camera from ASA Electronics LLC. Photo courtesy of ASA Electronics LLC

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NEWS

New MVP firms announced

Three companies achieved Member Verification Program status in the second quarter of 2016 from the National Truck Equipment Association.

According to a recent news release from the NTEA, the new MVP firms are as follows:

- Dealers Truck Equipment Co. Inc. of Willis, Texas;
- Knapheide Truck Equipment Co-Southwest of Buda, Texas; and
- The Fab Shop of Edgewood, Wash.

The NTEA also acknowledged the following companies for renewing their MVP status during the second quarter:

- Axton Fleet Systems of San Antonio, Texas;
- Dejana Truck & Utility Equipment of Greater Philadelphia, Cinnaminson, N.J.;
- Knapheide Truck Equipment-Midsouth, Birmingham, Ala.;
- Monroe Truck Equipment, DePere, Wisc.;
- Monroe Truck Equipment Inc., Louisville, Ky.;
- OJ Watson Co. Inc., Denver, Colo.;
- R/S-Godwin Truck Body LLC, Allen, Ky.;
- Truck Equipment Inc, Des Moines, Iowa; and
- Washington Auto Carriage, Spokane Valley, Wash.

At present, 274 companies have MVP status, which they must renew every three years.



Trade group creates sponsor category

The Independent Equipment Dealers Association has created a new "sponsor level" category for companies affiliated with the association.

The new category acknowledges support from companies not recognized as "independent dealers" under the association's bylaws and which therefore don't qualify for membership. The new sponsor level is designed specifically for original equipment dealers, auction companies, and "industry specific organizations," the release added.

IEDA President Drew VanBrunt said in the release that the association's board of directors "spent a great deal of time and consideration evaluating the benefits of recognizing support from various industry market segments." The decision was "years in the making," he added, expressing confidence that "both current and future members of this exclusive group will benefit from this strategic positioning of the IEDA in the marketplace."

Businesses taking part in the sponsor option will receive such benefits as use of the new IEDA sponsor logo, vendor expo attendance, exclusive group networking opportunities, marketing and sponsorship opportunities, and social media exposure.

Founded in 2002, the IEDA "is a non-profit trade association promoting participation, professionalism and advancement in the independent distribution of heavy equipment," according to the association's website.

More information can be found at <http://iedagroup.com/sponsorlevel/>.



Independent Equipment Dealers Association now offers sponsor level designation for original equipment dealers, auction companies, and "industry specific organizations."



Carla Benn staffs Palfinger North America stand at ConExpo-Con/Agg 2014.

International buyer program status granted to giant Vegas trade show

The 2017 ConExpo-Con/Agg heavy equipment exhibition has received International Buyer Program designation from the U.S. Department of Commerce, says a recent news release from the Association for Equipment Manufacturers, which runs the trade show.

ConExpo chairman Rich Goldsberry, who is president of Bobcat Company and Doosan, said in the release that the trade show, held every three years in Las Vegas, is honored to have achieved the designation again. He noted that 24 percent of attendees in 2014 were from outside the U.S.

"The IBP is a joint government-industry effort that brings thousands of international buyers to the United States for business-to-business matchmaking with U.S. firms exhibiting at major industry trade shows," notes a posting on the website of the International Trade Administration. "Every year, the IBP results in approximately a billion dollars in new business for U.S. companies, and increased international attendance for participating U.S. trade show organizers."

Under the program, the U.S. government helps promote trades through embassies and consulates. The government also recruits official trade delegations to the shows.

The IBP offers export counselling, market analysis and other "hands-on" business assistance to show exhibitors. There is also a "matchmaking" service to connect exhibitors with international buyers.

ConExpo 2017 takes place March 7-11 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

For more information, visit www.conexpoconagg.com.



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MECHANIC'S MUSINGS

Bearing removal techniques debated

DAN ANDERSON

My boss, a journeyman mechanic, and I have an ongoing debate about the most efficient way to remove a bearing from a shaft or housing.

We're not talking about bearings inside a gearcase; we're talking about bearings on a conveyor or external chain drive-shaft.

The boss likes to use an air hammer. He uses chisel and pointed bits in the air hammer to knock out the seals, drive out the balls or rollers, and may use a cut-off wheel on a die grinder to partially cut the races so he use the air hammer to crack and drive out the races.

I prefer to use an acetylene torch to burn through the seals, melt away a couple of the balls and then slice the outer race in two places. I use a pry bar to pry out those halves, then surgically slice the inner race so it falls off the shaft.

He considers my use of the torch "crude," "old-school," and "a fire hazard."

I consider his use of an air hammer dangerous, citing a recent trip to an emergency room by one of our mechanics to have a piece of shattered bearing race removed from near his eye after it destroyed his safety glasses when he used an air hammer to remove a bearing.

A new mechanic, fresh from training under the boss, was in our shop last week, tasked with removing a bearing. He asked my opinion on the best way to do the job, and we discussed the "elegant" method advocated by the boss, compared to getting down-and-dirty with a torch. He decided to follow the boss's preference and disappeared into his bay with air hammer in hand.

After 15 minutes of hammering, he appeared in my bay, held out his arm, carefully plucked a shard of splintered metal from the skin of his forearm, and asked, "Would you show me how to cut a bearing with a torch?"



The author recommends using an acetylene torch instead of an air hammer.

Photo by Robert Carner/iStockphoto.com



NEWS

Put away the cellphone while operating equipment

Don't let your cellphone distract you while operating equipment — even off the road.

That's the gist of a new joint safety alert from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers and the Mine Safety and Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor.

"Turn off your cellphone while operating off-road equipment" is the alert's key message, according to a news release from the AEM.

The alert, which can be downloaded from the MSHA website, can be used in safety talks, handed out to miners and contractors, or posted on bulletin boards, the release said.

"We know in today's connected world that it's more important than ever to remind workers to focus on the job and be alert and aware and mindful of their environment and safety," the news release quoted Mike Pankonin, AEM's senior director of technical and safety services.

The MSHA alert notes that cellphones are involved in 6,000 automobile fatalities each year. The risks of automobile cellphone usage "can be translated into the operation of off-road equipment," the alerts adds. For example, using a cellphone while operating mobile equipment can be up to six times riskier than operating that equipment while intoxicated. Texting a message can take an operator's eyes off the task for five seconds — enough time for a vehicle travelling 55 miles an hour to cover the length of a football field.

"Cellphone usage on the job is a dangerous distraction and can lead to injury or death," the news release quoted Joseph A. Main, U.S. assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. "Using a cellphone while operating mobile equipment takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off your task."

For more information, visit www.msha.gov.



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AEM elects new directors

The Association of Equipment Manufacturers has elected two new directors.

David Koppenhofer, executive director of OEM sales and support, was elected to the AEM's board of directors, said a recent news release from the association. Scott Harris, vice-president of CNH Industrial with Case Construction North America, was elected to the the AEM construction equipment sector board, the release added.

Both positions fill unexpired terms.

Headquartered in Milwaukee, the AEM is an international trade group of off-road equipment manufacturers and suppliers with more than 900 member companies and more than 200 product lines.

The association also has offices in Washington, D.C., and Ottawa, Ont.

For more information, visit www.aem.org.



Scott Harris



David Koppenhofer

Industry poll finds support for infrastructure spending

Almost half of registered voters in the U.S. say the country's infrastructure has gotten worse in the last five years, according to results of a recent poll commissioned by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.

In addition to 46 percent of those polled believing the state of infrastructure had deteriorated, 80 to 90 percent said "roads, bridges and energy grids are in some or extreme need of repairs," said a news release from the AEM.

The organization released the poll Aug. 9, less than three months before voters head to the polls for the U.S. presidential election on Nov. 8.

Seventy-six percent of Democrats, 68 percent of Republicans, and 70 percent of independents said the federal government should do more to improve the nation's infrastructure, the release said.

"Americans across the political spectrum understand the dire state of U.S. infrastructure and believe that the federal government should do more to improve our infrastructure," the release quoted AEM president Dennis Slater. "Voters recognized that increased federal funding for assets such as roads, bridges, and inland waterways will have a positive impact on the economy, and they are looking to the federal government to repair and modernize."

Other key findings of the poll included the following:

- 49 percent said the federal government has the primary responsibility for spending on infrastructure repairs;
- about 70 percent said increasing federal infrastructure spending will benefit the economy; and
- More than 80 percent of respondents named water, solar-powered, and smart infrastructure as the three most important future infrastructure innovations.

Ron De Feo, CEO of Kennametal and chairman of AEM's Infrastructure Vision 2050 initiative, said in the release that the Republican and Democratic presidential nominees have each voiced "strong support" for investing in infrastructure.

"The specific ideas and proposals they offer over the next 90 days will be critically important, and voters should consider them carefully on Election Day," said De Feo, who was previously president and CEO of Terex Corporation.

The online poll of 1,975 registered voters took place June 17-20. Data "were weighted to approximate a target sample of registered voters based on age, race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, and region," said an analysis of the poll on the AEM website. The results had a margin of error of plus or minus two percent.



Ron DeFeo

Executive summit set for Vegas

If you miss the National Truck Equipment Association's annual Executive Leadership Summit in Las Vegas this October, it won't be the end of the world.

Or will it?

Among the presentations at the summit — taking place Oct. 24-26 at the Red Rock Casino & Spa — is the provocatively titled, "The End of the World ... and Opportunities."

Peter Zeihan — described on the summit agenda as "a global energy, demographic and security expert" — will give that apocalyptic talk on Oct. 25 starting at 9:45 a.m. He is scheduled to return that afternoon at 2:30 for "The Future of a Little Bit of Everything," in which it's promised that he will "drill down into some of the specific effects in everything from agriculture to construction to energy to manufacturing."

Other highlights of the summit agenda include the following:

- Economist Michael Brown, vice-president of Wells Fargo Securities LLC, kicks off the program with "Macroeconomic Trends and Forecasts — Effects on the Work Truck Industry" at 8:15 a.m. on Oct. 25.
- Amy Hirsh Robinson, principal of the Interchange Group, talks about "Attracting and Retaining Millennials for Long-Term Success" on Oct. 25 at 1 p.m.
- Tom Barrett of Lean Partners, and Jon Sievert of Henderson Products Inc. present "Lean Works for Truck Equipment Upfitting and Production" at 2:30 p.m. Oct. 25. They will follow that with "Leadership is Critical to Lean Success" at 3:45 p.m. on Oct. 25.
- Steve Latin-Kasper, the NTEA's director of market data and research, will join with Gary Meteer Sr., director of commercial vehicle solutions for IHS Automotive, to provide a "Work Truck Industry Outlook" at 8:15 a.m. on Oct. 26.
- Photographer Dick Durrance, CEO of Ideas and Images Unlimited, will discuss "The Power of Pictures in this Age of Images" on Oct. 26 at 9:30 a.m.

Those who register by Oct. 7 will receive discounted advance registration fees of \$399 for NTEA members and \$599 for non-members. After Oct. 7, the fees rise by \$100. The association also has a group rate for accommodation at the hotel.

For more information, visit www.ntea.com and check under the heading of Industry Events & Training.



Michael Brown of Wells Fargo Securities LLC returns as a speaker at the NTEA's annual Executive Leadership Summit.



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Product announcements: Are you a supplier to the industry? Has your company developed a new product or process? If possible, attach a photograph.

Press releases: These should have something to do with service trucks and mechanics trucks in North America. We

EDITORIAL

Let the Olympic Games inspire more competition

Leading up to the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, a lot of fear was expressed that the Games would be a failure, that Brazil, ravaged by a recession and government corruption, wouldn't be able to pull them off. But the Games themselves — a few well-publicized hiccups aside — were a resounding success. All the medals were awarded, some to athletes who achieved Olympic and world records.

Brazilians proved they could put on a world-class party. We should never have doubted that. They manage to organize a smashing Carnival celebration every year. What were 2016 Summer Games if they weren't one oversized Carnival?

The Games proved once again that human beings are competitive. Sure we heard from a few naysayers who questioned spending so much money on sporting activities for elites when so many in the world are suffering. It's a dilemma for sure. But if we all spent every waking hour in the struggle to battle injustice and poverty, those of us who aren't saints or Mother Teresa would drive ourselves mad. We need to have some fun, some diversions, some competition.

Rather than something to be derided, the Olympics are something that ought to be emulated. For example, the service truck industries might consider holding their own Olympics. Such competitions aren't without precedent. Crane operator rodeos have been held in recent years in conjunction with the International Construction & Utility Equipment Exposition in Louisville, Ky., and at ConExpo-Con/Agg in Las Vegas, Nevada. And the American Trucking Associations have been holding National Truck Driving Championships since 1937 when the occasion was called the National Truck Rodeo.

A mechanics truck rodeo could have variations of those events and many others, to test such skills as welding, winching, diagnosing a broken down tractor, tracing the source of a blown fuse, repairing a radiator hose, filling a diesel exhaust fluid tank, lubricating a corn planter, or pulling and replacing the gearbox on an excavator. There's no limit to the tasks that crafty and knowledgeable competitor organizers could contrive. They could even come up with a decathlon to determine the best overall service truck operator/mechanic.

If competitive swimming can have events at several distances for different strokes, plus medleys and relays, it shouldn't be difficult

to devise a slate of service truck competitions.

Actually, such a rodeo isn't at all far-fetched: The Pacific Northwest Section of the American Water Works Association already holds a Service Truck Rodeo. The next one is scheduled for March 14 at the Spokane Arena. A posting for the 2016 event noted that scratches and dents "are more than welcome."

"The more trucks attending the merrier!" the posting continued. "You have to get to the event some way. Please bring a service truck with you. It is a great way to get ideas to improve our service trucks."

OK. So having a national (or international) competition where mechanics drive their service trucks across a continent to participate might pose logistical hurdles. Let's not quibble about that. Perhaps the mechanics come as they are to the host city and test their skills on unfamiliar equipment. That could be even more of a challenge.

Let's face it, most people love competition — even if many of us hate to lose. But it's not life and death, like war. Even the losers can go home wiser if they open their minds to it. And there's always next year, as Brooklyn Dodgers fans used to say, or the next Olympiad.

What's great about the Olympic Games is that they celebrate excellence, and by extension all the qualities that go into it. Of those, talent is but a tiny part. Hard work, diligence, and a prepared mind are much more important. Those are the qualities much admired and desired in any vocation or walk of life.

Yes, it also helps to have support, from fans or financial benefactors. So mechanics' employers and industry associations would need to get behind such an Olympian endeavour.

Free enterprise is supposed to be all about competition. Enabling service truck operators and mechanics to test their skills against one another would put that notion to the test.

Now, we present this modest proposal with no ideas of how it might be made real. Perhaps we're just caught up in the afterglow of those glorious Olympic Games in Rio. Maybe others with the capacity to realize such a vision were similarly caught up in the Olympic excitement and will feel compelled to take up the torch and inaugurate the Mechanics Truck Olympics.



About our cartoonist

Nelson Dewey has been a prolific cartoonist for over 50 years. If his work looks familiar, maybe you read a lot of car comic books when you were younger.

In the 1960s, '70s and '80s, Dewey was a frequent contributor to those comics, particularly *CARtoons*. He also drew for *Hot Rod Cartoons*, *CYCLEtoons*, *SURFtoons* and *SKItoons*.

To see samples of Dewey's car cartoons, go to his website, www.nelsondewey.com.

New telematics standard approved

The International Organization for Standardization has approved a mixed-fleet telematics standard developed by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers and the Association of Equipment Management Professionals.

The new ISO standard will enable users to gather more original equipment manufacturer data into their fleet management or business software, said a news release this July from the OEM. The new standard will provide easier access, improve the management and analysis of fleet management, and help companies “save time and money on the job site or within their operations,” the release said.

The ISO was expected to post the standard to its website within 60 days, the July 21 release quoted John Somers, AEM’s director of product management – construction, mining, utility. That would put the expected posting date around mid September.

In the meantime, AEM and AEMP are recommending that equipment users take the three following steps to get ready for the standard’s final publication:

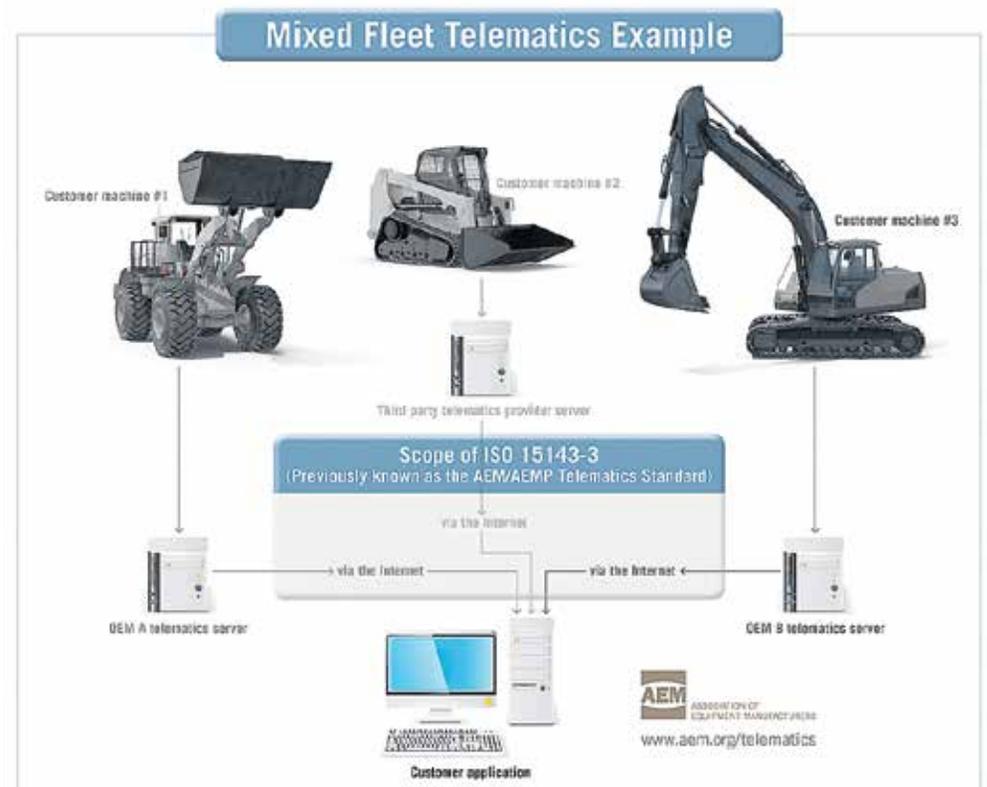
- Check with manufacturers to find out when or if they plan to comply with the standard and offer data through the standard’s application programming interface, or API.
- Check with suppliers of business or fleet management software for their plans “to support integration of the new API to enable retrieval of their machine data.”
- Bookmark the expected landing page for the standard on the ISO website, and check back periodically for updates. The page is at www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=67556.

The ISO mixed-fleet telematics standard will be part of a new section — Part 3: Machine Data — of ISO/DTS 15143 (Earthmoving machinery and mobile road construction machinery – Worksite Data Exchange). While that standard focuses on earthmoving equipment, the data can apply to other machinery types, the AEM release noted. Data points, for example, include location, idle time, distance traveled, operating hours, fuel usage, engine operation times, idle codes, and various diagnostic codes.

Plan includes expanding the standard, which is based on a draft API standard that the two industry groups developed, beyond earthmoving, the release said. The goal was provide a standard that all industry stakeholders — including fleet managers, manufacturers, and equipment users — “can use confidently” in any global market.

“Today’s equipment management professional understands telematics data is having a huge impact on operational efficiencies, maintenance, safety and more,” the release quoted AEMP chairman John Meese, who is senior director of heavy equipment at Waste Management Inc. “This ISO standard is a critical tool for a fleet team to embrace in order to more effectively and efficiently manage their fleet.”

Domenic Ruccolo, a senior vice-president with Deere & Company and a director on AEM’s construction equipment sector board, said in the release that the new standard’s common format “allows end users to access telematics data from any machine in their fleet and aggregate it in one place.” That capability enhances productivity and improves decision-making, he added.



Mixed-fleet telematics standard promises to save time and money on job sites.

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COVER

Template for field techs

continued from cover



Jason Van Pelt says it takes a certain personality to be a field mechanic.

Being your own manager

Field techs, on the other hand, have to be their own service manager, parts person, and sometimes even salesman as well as mechanic. They must be personable enough to deal one-on-one with sometimes clueless machine operators to diagnose what a machine is or isn't doing properly. They must have verbal skills to explain repairs, and the costs of repairs, to machine owners.

Once they're finished dealing with people, they must be top-rank mechanics able to work under sometimes miserable weather conditions in remote locations to make repairs on-par with what a shop-based tech could do under a roof and on a concrete floor. Then they have to go home and explain to their spouse why it was more important to fix a greasy backhoe rather than attend their daughter's final soccer game of the season.

There is no template for identifying superstar field mechanics. But there are personalities, behaviors and patterns that seem to be common among successful "free-range" mechanics:

Physical size. Many successful field techs are big guys, and for good reason.

"I'm around 6-foot, 2-inches tall and 220 pounds, and it's still hard on my body, working with big machinery and big tools," says Randy Bostic, an independent service tech based in St. Clairsville, Ohio. "I wouldn't want to be any smaller."

But there are a fair number of greyhound mechanics who excel at field repairs, helped by their smaller build that allows

them to wriggle into small confines in big machines. Industry-wise, there seems to be an intuitive tendency for really big guys to gravitate toward working on D-8 Cats and other large-frame equipment, while smaller guys find success making field repairs to skid steers and smaller equipment.

It's all about personality

Personality, part 1. Great field techs were often either excellent students in school — or nightmares for their teachers. It takes creative intelligence to work on-the-fly, especially with the explosion of electronic technology in modern heavy equipment. But never overlook the kid who couldn't sit still in class, who was vibrating out of his seat with excess energy. More than a few hyper-active kids who learned to channel their energy into machinery repairs have excelled as field service mechanics.

Bostic, who was a top-percentile student in high school and college classes, admits he is "intense."

"I've been told I'm a scary guy to work around," Bostic says. "I'm always pushing, always moving. I rarely eat lunch or take breaks, unless you count taking a swig of water from a jug. Very few guys like working with me. Not because I'm grumpy, but because once my feet hit the ground on a jobsite, I don't stop till it's fixed."

Personality, part 2. "A good field service tech has to be a people person," says Van Pelt. "It's the little things — eye contact, shaking hands, being able to communicate easily—that lubricate the dialogue in trying to diagnose problems, explain options and working through the repairs. (Field techs) are the face of your company when they're in the field. There are great mechanics in the shop who are geniuses with machines, but who aren't comfortable talking with customers. A good field tech has to be as good with people as he is with machines."

Personality, part 3. Remarkable memories and uncanny perception are common among successful field mechanics. Bostic can easily recite the contents of every drawer of every toolbox on his mammoth service truck, as well as the part numbers and location of many of the spare parts he has crammed into cabinets on his truck. Jeff Sparks, a dealership mechanic based in Perry, Iowa, can recite intricate details of repairs made one time 10 years ago on a machine he never saw again.

"Young guys, all they can do is follow the book, step by step, but us old guys sometimes have run into things before. You get a feeling, a hunch, and you run with it."

— Tom Veronesi,
independent field tech,
Bristol, Conn.



"I figured out I had enough customers so I could go out on my own, and never looked back. Now, I may work 60 hours one week, then take a four-day weekend the next week to be with my family. I had to go independent for the sake of my family."

— Jeff Clark, Jeff Clark Heavy
Equipment Repair, Riverside, Calif.

Experience has its advantages

Tom Veronesi, an independent field tech in Bristol, Conn., says, "Machinery just makes sense to me. Even if I've never worked on a particular machine before, I open 'em up, kind of look 'em over, and all of a sudden I understand how it all works. I can't explain it — it's crazy."

Age. There are young techs fresh out of tech school who do well working in the field. But most mechanics admit it takes time to develop experience that leads to efficiency.

"It takes time to learn to read between the lines of tech manuals," Veronesi says. "Young guys, all they can do is follow the book, step by step, but us old guys sometimes have run into things before. You get a feeling, a hunch, and you run with it."

"I had a job last year where a young factory mechanic spent two days replacing computers and connectors and all sorts of stuff," Veronesi continues. "He had all the wiring ripped out trying to follow the diagnostics on his laptop. The owner eventually got tired and called me. I messed with it for a few minutes, traced some wires, found a blown fuse. Machine started, but I had the experience and knew enough to keep looking for what blew that fuse."

"While I was reinstalling the harnesses (the other mechanic) had torn out, I noticed a spot where the harness protector had rubbed through, shorted the wire and blown the fuse. I was in and out in an hour and 40 minutes. That's the kind of stuff you only learn with experience."

You get what you pay for

Compensation. Combine the unique personalities of top-notch service techs with the demands of customers for their services, and you'd better budget to pay top wages and make accommodations to earn their services. Jeff Clark of Riverside, Calif., now runs his own independent repair service after leaving dealership work so he could spend more time with his family.

"(Dealership demands) got to the point where it was more than my family could handle," says Clark. "The hours were unreal because they had the work to do and it was hard for me to turn down helping the customers. I figured out I had enough customers so I could go out on my own, and never looked back. Now, I may work 60 hours one week, then take a four-day weekend the next week to be with my family. I had to go independent for the sake of my family."

For Eric Anthony, running his own service truck is more profitable than working at a dealership. He started his 38-year career as a mechanic with dealership work in Tacoma, Wash. Circumstances eventually led him to move to Idaho, where lower pay rates encouraged him to start Horse Canyon Services, his one-man mobile repair service.

"Because of the local economy I was going to have to take a serious pay cut if I went to work at a dealership, so I went independent," Anthony says. "I work on trucks, heavy equipment and farm equipment. I started out charging \$48 an hour, and now that I've got my reputation established I'm charging \$80 an hour, and I'm busier than I want to be."

Which ties back in with the personality aspects of the profile of mechanics who excel at working in the field. Good ones are driven, take pride in their work, and have exceptional cognitive skills that may or may not show up on conventional skill tests. They are independent, often ornery, usually stubborn and famous for being a challenge to manage.

As one service manager muttered after trying to "manage" one of his premier service truck techs over the phone: "I'd kill him, but then I don't know what I'd do without him."

Dan Anderson is a part-time freelance writer and full-time heavy equipment mechanic based in Bouton, Iowa.



Randy Bostic says size matters.





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WEIGH IN

How to avoid overweight fines

Scale company expert offers advice for service truck operators

KEVIN HILL | SPECIAL TO SERVICE TRUCK MAGAZINE

Being slapped with a fine for an overweight vehicle is one of the biggest worries for a truck operator.

Such a fine — usually calculated according to the weight that is in excess per axle limit — not only creates a bad image and reputation for a company but also negatively affects its bottom line. These charges can exceed several thousand dollars. And subsequent violations can result in the vehicle being impounded.

Thus, it is easier and better to prevent an overweight situation than to have to deal with the repercussions. You will do well to put in place precautions and strict measures to avoid overweight fines.

Although the advantages of a mechanics truck are clear, selecting the body of the truck can be challenging. You need to take into consideration a number of factors that include the chassis. The truck you choose must have sufficient gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) that will maintain road legality when the payload is taken into account. If you are working with a mechanics truck that has lubrications capabilities, ensure that the product tanks are full. Calculation of proper weight distribution is crucial to preparation of a mechanics truck.

The following are a few tips on how to avoid overweight truck fines:

- Train drivers on the importance of calculating their fuel weight. While it is common to account for fuel when you are measuring the weight of your load, the importance of this procedure cannot be emphasized enough. For trucks that are going on a long route, be sure to calculate the amount of fuel that is burned off between the truck shops. You may also need to calculate the amount needed to take on in between. Making a few more stops to refuel is far better than paying a fine for having a little extra fuel on board.
 - Ensure your equipment is well-maintained at all times. Always make sure your weighing scale and the truck are in good working condition. This goes a long way in preventing errors, damage, and accidents. Thus, you may consider doing routing safety and maintenance checks on your vehicle as well as having your weighing equipment calibrated by a professional regularly.
 - Consider buying your own truck scales. Investing in your own truck scales gives you an upper hand in that you will be better informed about the weight of your truck, letting you make the appropriate decision on a new load. It also means that you will not blindly accept the client's word on the weight of the load as you can see it for yourself first hand. Drivers will have the information they need before they set out as opposed to having to rely on the scales at the government-run stops.
 - Have a plan for your route in advance. Planning your route will help you save money and time while staying clear of unnecessary trouble. Among the things that you must plan for are scales to check your weight, truck stops, and fuel stops. This helps in predicting your delivery periods as well as working around poor road conditions and bad weather.
 - Be sure to secure your loads properly. Double-check your freight and truck before you set out. This ensures that the load is secure and evenly distributed. You may use containers, ties, and tarps to prevent the cargo from loosening or causing a hazard. Ultimately, be sure to follow safety instruction to the latter.
 - Find information on overweight permits. If your nature of work requires that you go beyond the acceptable weight limit, you will do well to equip yourself with information about this from the local government. Some locales allow you to obtain a permit to operate an overweight truck. Even then, this usually works best for regional companies.
- Overweight fines can be costly to your business in many ways. Therefore, by investing in truck scales and taking other factors discussed above into consideration, you can be sure to pull into the weigh station confidently. Ensure that you train each driver to account for the weight of the fuel they are carrying. Ultimately, you will do well to consider getting an overweight permit if you are often ferrying unacceptable weight or have been fined several times within the same area.



Planning your route will help you save money and time while staying clear of unnecessary trouble.
Photo by Trudy Wilkerson/iStockphoto.com

Kevin Hill heads up the marketing efforts and provides technical expertise to Quality Scales Unlimited in Byron, Calif.



Slim down your truck to avoid repercussions

Insights offered on preventing potentially deadly consequences of packing too much into a service truck

ANDY DELIVRON | SPECIAL TO SERVICE TRUCK MAGAZINE

Are you a criminal? Depending on the state you live in, you might be — if your service trucks leave your shop overweight.

I was informed recently of a fatal head-on collision between a pickup truck and a commercial motor vehicle. While the pickup truck had crossed a yellow line, and the driver of the commercial vehicle didn't appear to be at fault, accident investigators began looking for signs of negligence. Was the commercial vehicle overweight? Was its log book out of date or not properly filled out? Were registration and inspections up to date?

Chances are your company has "big pockets," as they say in the world of litigation. A company would typically have insurance liability coverage of up to \$5 million while many other vehicles on the road carry minimal coverage. A grieving widow, unable to believe her departed spouse could be at fault, wants justice. And her lawyers have convinced her they can get it for her.

I talk to many operators of mechanics service trucks and almost all of them admit they have trucks that leave the shop overloaded. That is not what a fleet manager, chief executive officer, or chief financial officer wants to hear.

"If you are working with a mechanics truck that has lubrications capabilities, ensure that the product tanks are full."

Take a clean inventory

The problem is fixable but it requires effort and investing a few dollars.

When was your service truck last cleaned out? Clean that truck from top to bottom and inventory every item on it, including tools. In doing so, find a scale and weigh all that stuff.

Check your sales invoices for the last 12 months and decide which items aren't turning over and making you money. You don't stock your store shelves with items that don't turn over. Why would you keep such items on your service trucks?

Once you have weighed your inventory, weigh your truck with its fuel tank full. Get the weight limits for the front and rear axles by examining the manufacturer's sticker on the door post.

CAT Scale Company has more than 1,675 locations in the U.S. and Canada where you can weigh your truck. (Go to catscale.com to find a scale locator.)

Does the empty weight plus the weight of your tools and parts exceed the vehicle's gross vehicle weight rating, or GVWR? If so, you have a problem.

Something has to go and it does not go back on the truck! I don't care what the mechanic says. As a manager or owner you are responsible.

Double check the weight

One more thing: once you load the truck, make sure you don't exceed the front or rear axle rating; so weigh it one more time and recheck the manufacturer's ratings.

The following are a few reasons why that is important:

- Failing to do so puts the truck's stability at risk; take a corner a little fast and your truck might roll.
- An imbalance of axle weights can compromise road-handling capability.
- In an emergency situation, the stopping distance can increase substantially.
- Steering and suspension components wear faster on an overloaded vehicle and can fail.
- Your good Department of Transportation safety rating will be compromised because of overload fines and component failures.

· Worse yet, you may be responsible for killing someone because of an overloaded truck.

The good news is that solutions exist that can keep you in the the same class and vehicle rating that you are currently using.

For example, my company — Pride Bodies Ltd. of Cambridge, Ont. — recently assembled a work-ready Ford F550 Standard Cab XL 4x4 of 19,500-pound GVWR with an all-aluminum 11-foot mechanics body equipped with a mechanics work bench bumper. The package features two sliding drawer tool boxes and bolt bins, 300 amps of welding power, 45 cubic feet per minute of compressed air, and an auxiliary power to handle a 25,000 foot-pound Cobra service crane. Fully equipped, the truck has a legal payload of 5,360 pounds to carry personnel, fuel, tools, and parts. A Ford F550 with an aluminum cab will improve that by 350 pounds.

If need be, get a bigger truck

Now, if you can't meet your hauling requirements without overloading the truck, then it is time to choose a larger chassis. Remember, an operator can drive a truck of up to 26,000 pounds GVWR without needing a commercial driver's licence or being subject to mandatory drug testing.

Careful selection of vehicles and equipment can also save fuel and extend the life of your truck and equipment.

Isn't it time for your company to re-examine your truck payloads and policies before it's too late?

Andy deLivron is manager of U.S. sales for Pride Bodies Ltd. He is based in Pottersville, N.Y.



Andy deLivron promotes the benefits of ensuring that service trucks meet weight restrictions.



Display shows that weights of the front and rear axles on this service truck are well below the gross vehicle weight rating.

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COVER

Marine-grade aluminum produces high-end bodies

continued from cover

In an aluminum service truck, spilled paint or soil can simply be rinsed out afterwards without concern for rusting. The alloy also rates higher in terms of safety performance over steel, being able to absorb double the crash energy and thereby causing less injury to passengers. Heavier trucks also require more experienced drivers with higher-class licences, while a lighter truck is easier to handle and will stop quicker.

It bends but won't crack

"Marine grade aluminum is just another name for the hardness of the aluminum grade," says Albert Ribeiro, sales and marketing manager for Ontario's Wilcox Bodies Ltd. "We use it because it's very bendable but it doesn't crack. We use it in all our service bodies and utility bodies and crane bodies as well. Probably 90 percent of our bodies are now made out of aluminum instead of steel or fiberglass."

Ribeiro says that using aluminum presents a roughly 30 percent reduction in fuel consumption over steel or fiberglass. That reduced weight also means lower maintenance costs — less wear and tear on the suspension system, brakes and tires. Aluminum components are also corrosive resistant.

"Another thing that you can do with an aluminum body is you can put it on a lighter truck instead of going to a heavier, more expensive truck," says Ribeiro. "A lot of companies are trying to keep trucks under a certain gross vehicle weight so you don't have to use a log book. Once you pass a certain weight, the driver has to keep a log book, which is a lot of work and expense for a company as well."

"Anything you can think of we'll do it. It's a matter of how much you want to spend."

- Chuck Gros, director of marketing, Highway Products Inc.



A custom-built marine-grade aluminum service body with an extensive array of drawers and compartments is an example of Highway Products Inc.'s work. Photo courtesy of Highway Products Inc.

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COVER

Both Wilcox and Highway Products' businesses are based heavily on customization – building a service body that is exactly to the specifications of the customer.

Ribeiro says that 75 percent of Wilcox's business comes from custom orders. The company, which has been in existence for more than 50 years, has an engineer on their team who helps to design and to certify items to be installed onto the service bodies, such as cranes or towing packages.

Computer design enables precision

"You have to follow the laws and regulations," says Ribeiro. "Our design team here uses CAD (computer-aided design) drawings. We recently started doing all 3D models as well — you can really do a lot more with that. Those 3D models are programmed into our laser and presses so they can start producing the products with very precise bins and allowances and hole locations."

Highway Products, Gros says, will entertain any custom job — "it's a matter of how much you want to spend." The company has produced everything from one-off service bodies designed for the specific needs of various oil companies to military vehicles and prototypes for other companies. Most of their customers, however, are service truck operators who simply want a very high-end product. Often, they will purchase a new truck and then bring it to Highway Products for customization.

"They pick every option on there and then they get us to bolt on everything that we can possibly find," says Gros. "LED lights, custom powder coating or paint to match. Custom fuel tanks, water tanks, LED lights inside the compartments, all kinds of custom drawers and things, cameras all the way around. People who work at night have LED lights so they can make it day time any time. Anything you can think of we'll do it."

Ribeiro says that aluminum construction has traditionally been more popular in cooler climates such as Canada, due to rusting problems with steel. However, aluminum is becoming more and more accepted in the place of steel.

"If Ford is all of a sudden using aluminum on their pick-ups, they've discovered something we knew already," says Ribeiro. "Aluminum works."

Matt Jones is a freelance writer based in Fredericton, N.B.



"A lot of companies are trying to keep trucks under a certain gross vehicle weight so you don't have to use a log book."

**— Albert Ribeiro,
sales and marketing manager,
Wilcox Bodies Ltd.**

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PROFILE

Company keeps on building in its 17th decade in business

For six generations and counting, the Knapheide family has been manufacturing vehicles in Illinois

ERIN GOLDEN

When Herman Heinrich Knapheide rolled into Quincy, Ill., and established a wagon-building business, the United States was still more than a decade away from the Civil War — and nearly 50 years from the invention of the automobile.

It was 1848, when settlers were heading west by the thousands. Knapheide, a German immigrant, knew there was a clear market for well-built wagons, and in time established himself and his company as a trusted manufacturer. What he couldn't have known then, however, was that his name — and his family — would still be manufacturing vehicles in Quincy some 168 years later.

Now one of the best-known names in the service truck industry, the Knapheide Manufacturing Company has spent a century and a half adapting and evolving — and then doing it again and again — to survive and thrive in changing times. From its headquarters in Quincy, the company has moved on from wagons to wagon bodies for Model T Fords and to modern service trucks.

Six generations on, the company is still growing. Harold W. (Bo) Knapheide IV, senior vice-president of distributor and fleet operations — and the youngest generation to help guide the company — said that's because years of tradition build an unusual kind of strength.

"There's a lot of passion in our company and a lot of pride," he said. "When you have that, you and your people can do amazing things."

Network expands beyond Illinois

From its position in the heart of the United States, the Knapheide family quickly began to build a network to distribute its products far beyond Illinois and the Midwest. By the turn of the 20th century, when the company was in the hands of the second generation — Henry E. Knapheide — it was becoming a modern, world-known presence. It had a catalog boasting 30 models of wagons and distributed to buyers in places as far as South America and Africa.

As the country began to develop its roads — and the powered vehicles to go on them — the Knapheides recognized that they'd have to keep up. Under a third generation (Harold W. Knapheide,) the company began manufacturing Model T service bodies. In the depths of the Great Depression, the company adapted again, focusing on truck repairs when few people were buying.

Over the next several decades, the company refocused itself on manufacturing, and by the 1970s (under a fourth generation) Knapheide had carved out a position as the largest farm truck body manufacturer in the country.

Progress, however, was never simple. A major flood in the 1970s, the farm-market crash of the 1980s, and a second flood emergency in 1993 — which swamped an entire production facility — amounted to considerable setbacks.

"When the family farm went away, that was a real crisis for the country," said Jim Bockenfeld, the company's vice-president of sales. "Hap Knapheide had the foresight that the small family farm might not be around by the time the 1990s rolls around."

Looking back, Bo Knapheide said that with enough perspectives, a company and its leaders develop a critical kind of perspective.

"When you look back on our history, every hard period we went through was followed by really good things happening," he said. "When things get tough, we always just get better."

Multiple generations and counting

The sixth-generation Knapheide started working for the company early, as one might expect. With the guidance of his father, Harold W. (Knap) Knapheide III, Bo Knapheide learned all the trades of the business: welding, working in the loading dock, doing mounting and installation.

Working alongside the company's employees, he discovered that he wasn't the only one with a long family line at Knapheide.

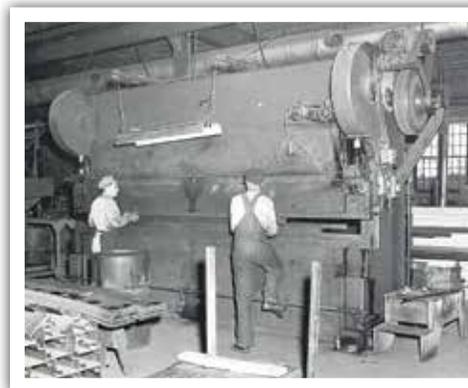
"We have many people who are multiple generations, many people who have cousins that work in there, sons that work in there, and that's really special," he said.

Company leaders from outside the Knapheide family said there's a reason people stick around. The company is a major employer in town, providing good, steady jobs. Quincy, a city of about 45,000 people, has been around for 175 years, which means that Knapheide has been there for almost all of Quincy's history. The company is a longtime contributor to

Historic photos courtesy of the Knapheide Manufacturing Company

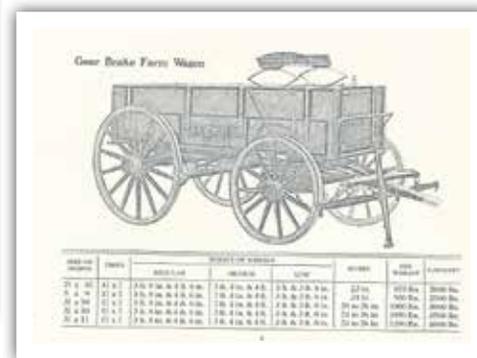


Knapheide employees pose for a photo outside the factory in the 1950s.



Workers operate a press brake at the Knapheide plant in the 1950s.

Catalog from the early 1990s promotes Knapheide's products of the period.



"When you look back on our history, every hard period we went through was followed by really good things happening. When things get tough, we always just get better."

— **Bo Knapheide,**
senior vice-president
of distributor and fleet
operations, **The Knapheide
Manufacturing Company**



Knapheide employee prepares to apply paint in the 1970s.



Harold W. Knapheide (right), the third generation president of the company, confers with his son, Harold W. Jr. (Bud), who joined the family business in 1938.



"A lot of the distribution outlets that we have are independent, family-owned businesses, much like Knapheide. There's a common structure and relationship, no question about that."

**— Jim Bockenfeld,
vice-president of
sales, The Knapheide
Manufacturing Company**

community programs, both in donations of time and money.

But employees said there's also something to the idea of a company that considers its workers part of the family.

Bockenfeld, started out as a regional sales manager nearly three decades ago. In his years with Knapheide, he said, he's seen the company protect workers and look to the future when times were toughest — as in the recession that hit the country in recent years.

"Back in 2009 and 2010, when (others) in the industry were pulling their reigns in, we went out and launched a whole new product line of industrial products, work-ready mechanics trucks, lube trucks, water trucks," he said.

The company also benefited by building a distribution network that mirrored its own structure: places run by families, with long traditions and an understanding of Knapheide's products and history.

"A lot of the distribution outlets that we have are independent, family-owned businesses, much like Knapheide," Bockenfeld said. "There's a common structure and relationship, no question about that."

Business and staff numbers booming

Today, Knapheide builds a wide-ranging product line, from traditional service bodies to platform bodies, fuel lube trucks, water trucks and forestry bodies. It provides the vehicles and bodies used by electricians, farmers, miners, utility crews and pest-control businesses.

Nearly all the manufacturing is still done in Quincy, though the company has a diverse and growing distribution network elsewhere. Since Knapheide is a privately held company, it doesn't share sales numbers. But Bockenfeld said recent years have been booming, as the company has considerably expanded its staff.

According to Mandar Dighe, Knapheide's vice-president of marketing, the company's staff now numbers around 1,200 people in 18 locations.

"What's kind of neat about Knapheide right now, having experienced the growth, is just walking around the place and seeing all the new hires, the bright young people," Dighe said. "It's really satisfying."

He said part of the reason the company has remained both successful and a draw for new workers is because of its interest in being ready for the next big thing — even when it's years away.

The company has learned that giving distributors more variety provides



During the 2016 Work Truck Show, Steve Freimanis of Kansas City finds a spot for his signature on the end of a Knapheide service body that all employees of the company have been encouraged to sign. Photo by Keith Norbury

more of an incentive to make brisk sales.

"The more variety they can order from us, the quicker they can justify having a delivery truck come out," he said. "Service bodies with platforms, hauler bodies and pickup toppers and dump bodies are things we've gotten into beyond a single product line."

Dighe said the company has also worked hard to focus its message, from its slogan ("never settle") to its branding.

"The big thing that drives our local markets, whether it's in Dallas or Portland, Oregon, is that our logo is consistent across the entire Knapheide enterprise," he said. "And the fact that it includes 'since 1848' really includes people who don't know anything about our company. There's just a natural story that comes out of that."

Next generation in the wings

Now, the challenge facing Knapheide is about the next part of the story. While Bo Knapheide's three children are still all under the age of 11, he said he's certain the family tradition will live on.

"Henry's four, and he doesn't know it yet, but when he turns five he'll start welding," he joked.

Dighe said it's clear the company will need to continue to prepare for ups and downs by diversifying its products and expertise. Plus, he said, it can never be content to rest on past successes, no matter how many years Knapheide gets under its work belt.

"One of the biggest challenges internally is getting past the 'this is how we've always done it,'" Dighe said. "When we think about it and say: 'We never settle,' we're never going to settle for just accepting how it was done."

Erin Golden is a journalist in Minnesota.





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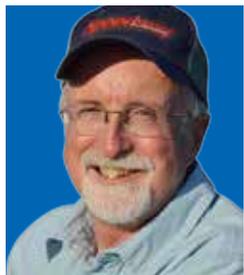
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BY DAN ANDERSON

SPEC MY TRUCK

Photos by Eilert Ofstead

Show And Go

Tuck Wade's low-profile service truck was built to look good and work hard

Don't let the fancy, custom "wrap" fool you. Tuck Wade's service truck has the curb appeal of a custom hot rod but the "get 'er done" heart and soul of a rock truck at a quarry that toils 24/7.

"I'm big on appearance because companies don't want somebody showing up to work on their \$100,000 machine in a truck that's covered with mud and looks like ****," says the plain-spoken owner of Tuck's Garage in Akron, Ohio. "I bought the truck used, the service body was used when I got it, the welder is used, the air compressor is used, and I make a lot of my own specialty tools to save money. But everything works, and I'm not afraid to tackle just about any diesel truck or heavy equipment job."

The 1999 C6500 GMC single-axle truck with a Cat 3126 engine and six-speed manual transmission began life with an 18-foot-long van box on its back. Wade replaced the van box with a used, 12-foot-long Reading service body, positioning the body on the chassis to leave a gap between the cab and service body. He installed his welder/generator and a gas-powered generator in the gap.

"I'm five-foot, eight-inches tall, and I wanted to be able to walk up and turn them on and off without climbing around on the truck," says Wade. The "vintage" Miller Bobcat 250 welder/generator is "an oldie but a goodie," he laughs.

"I can't really tell you without digging through my paperwork what (brand) the air compressor is, but I guarantee it's American made. I bought it used, too, but it puts out 175 psi all day long and meets my needs."

Even though he often powers one-inch drive impact guns with his compressed air system, Wade is satisfied with the 3/8-inch internal diameter Flexilla air hose he uses.

"A lot of guys use quarter-inch fittings with their 3/8-inch hoses, and that restricts air flow," he says. "I use 3/8-inch fittings to get full flow, and get plenty of power out of my one-inch-drive air tools. One thing I do that's a little different is that I use Parker couplers on all my air hoses. They have a little valve in each coupler so you can close off air flow at that coupler. When you're running 175 psi in the system it makes it a ton easier when you can hook up to the tool without pressure at the coupler."

The low profile of Wade's service body, with the welder/generator and air compressor mounted at frame height, is accentuated by the lack of a crane.

"Any job site with equipment big enough to require a crane for repairs usually has a backhoe or something they'll let me use for heavy lifting," he says. "It saved me thousands of dollars to not install a crane and it gave me room on the truck for more tools."

"I bought the truck used, the service body was used when I got it, the welder is used, the air compressor is used, and I make a lot of my own specialty tools to save money. But everything works, and I'm not afraid to tackle just about any diesel truck or heavy equipment job."

— Tuck Wade, Akron, Ohio

Many mechanics would have said, "...to carry more tools and parts," but Wade prefers to pack tools onto his truck rather than parts.

"I work on so many different kinds of equipment, it's impossible to stock extra parts I might need," he says. "Most of the time I know what parts I'll need when I go on a call and take them with me. A lot of the times I'm working for companies with specialized paving or construction equipment, and they keep a pretty good inventory of maintenance and repair parts themselves."

While the heart and soul of Wade's truck are his battle-battered tools and accessories, the exterior gleams every time it leaves his shop.

"I'm not into chrome, but I like a sharp truck," he admits. "The wrap is dedicated to my 10-year-old son, Keegan. It shows a bunch of puzzle pieces fitting together, with the phrase 'Autism Speaks' and the word 'Listen' underneath it. The puzzle pieces are about the way autistic people have to struggle to put together the pieces that are so easy for the rest of us."

Wade also uses the wrap to advertise the various services his shop offers, as well as the companies of several friends. Sort of like sponsorships on race cars, except for free.

"It's a respect-thing I do out of friendship," he says. "I've got the logo for a friend's paint and detail shop on the truck, the logo of the guy who did the graphics, and there's a big Snap-on logo on there, too 'cause I like to stay on the good side of the Snap-on tool guy."

While Wade's truck gleams like a finished product, he concedes the truck is a work in progress.

"It will never be finished," he says. "I'm getting ready to put an eight-foot-long (Weatherguard) Pack Rat tool box on the passenger side so I can carry a hydraulic hose crimper and its accessories, and I want to switch one of the diesel fuel tanks over to gasoline and use it to run the welder and air compressor engines. There's always something a guy can do to make a service truck better."



The 1995 GMC has a six-speed manual transmission.

Tuck Wade and his children — son Taggart (left), his twin sister Keeley, and elder son Keegan — gather his around service truck.



Truck has a Cat 3126 engine under the hood.



Wade likes to keep the Snap-on guy happy.



Clamps and other odds and ends.



Drawers hold fittings, fuses, pins and other supplies.

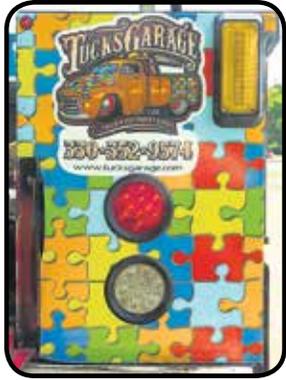
Dan Anderson is a part-time freelance writer and full-time heavy equipment mechanic with more than 20 years of experience working out of service trucks. He is based in Bouton, Iowa.



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Puzzle wrap symbolizes the struggles of people with autism, like Wade's son Keegan.



Wade's truck has a used but updated 12-foot Reading service body.



Light bar also bears the puzzle motif.



Miller Bobcat 250 welder/generator is "an oldie but a goodie," bought used and refurbished.



A RatPack full-width drawer ahead of the generator carries long pry bars and big hammers.



Used American-made compressor puts out 175 psi "all day long."



Truck has a low profile, with a theme of easy access from all sides.



Hose clamps are stored according to size, and hydraulic fittings are tidy in a storage box.



Wrenches and drivers are neatly sorted in tool chest.



Wade plans to add more Weatherguard Rat Pack drawers to his truck.

NEWS

Tire service training offered through service-body maker

Industry association training takes place at Iowa firm's headquarters

MARK YONTZ

Across all industry sectors, it is not uncommon for successful businesses to explain how one of the keys to taking care of customers is to provide on-going, professional training for their own employees.

This principle certainly applies to the service truck industry, which is why various learning opportunities are usually available for service technicians every year. When it comes to tire-related training, though, the Tire Industry Association is a clear leader.

Based in Bowie, Md., the TIA provides training and certification opportunities for both entry-level, and experienced tire technicians via DVD/workbook programs, as well as through TIA Online University. Subject matter for these trainings include best practices for the servicing of automotive, commercial, farm, earthmover, and industrial tires.

The association has also begun offering training opportunities at various sites around the country after many people expressed interest in more hands-on, in-person options.

One of the TIA's onsite options is the Basic Farm Tire Service class, a 200-level, minimum-skills training and certificate program. This year's class took place at the home of Stellar Industries Inc., a well-known manufacturer of tire service trucks and service cranes. Classes were scheduled for June 14-16, July 12-14, and Aug. 16-18 at the company's headquarters in Garner, Iowa.

"The program outlines and explains the guidelines for servicing farm, agricultural, and construction tire and wheel assemblies," explains Christine Hoogenboom, TIA's director of training. "It includes step-by-step procedures for demounting, mounting, and inflating single, dual, and three-piece assemblies in addition to service truck operation and liquid ballast installation and removal."

Hoogenboom said the TIA started offering hands-on classes in 2014, but this is the first year the farm tire service training were held at Stellar Industries. Past hosts have included Becker Tire in Great Bend, Kansas; Unisan in Gothenburg, Neb.; and Tandem Tire in Maquoketa, Iowa.

"The end user is the tire technician who services farm tires, but for these hands-on classes we sometimes get a manager, or even an owner who wants to get this knowledge firsthand so they can pass it along to their technicians when they return to the shop," Hoogenboom says.



Service truck crane lifts farm equipment tire during a 2014 training session.
Photo courtesy of Tire Industry Association



Stellar Industries crane handles tire during a training workshop.

Each participant receives a certificate of completion after successfully demonstrating the required skills and completing a 70-question exam.

Company offers "ideal location" for training

Even though Stellar Industries is a first-time host for these trainings, the company has been a longtime supporter of the TIA. Stellar employees have also assisted with other service-related classes throughout the United States and Canada. And the company recognizes the value in playing a key role in these instructional sessions.

"We've had positive feedback from our customers and other tire service techs. The training gives attendees an opportunity to learn how to do the service the proper and safe way, rather than trying to muddle through it on their own," says Donna Popp-Bruesewitz, communications manager for Stellar Industries.

Popp-Bruesewitz says the popularity of Stellar trucks among tire service technicians is a draw. The company also provides an ideal location, as well as the tools, equipment, and classroom setting needed to conduct a successful training in a controlled environment, she adds.

"We felt like we could help out the TIA by offering our facility, both conference rooms, audio/visual equipment, and the service truck, as well as plenty of room to run both portions," offers Popp-Bruesewitz. "This also gives participants an opportunity to see where their service trucks are manufactured."

For more details on TIA, visit www.tireindustry.org.

Mark Yontz is a freelance writer from Urbandale, Iowa.



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FLEET MANAGEMENT

The Right Stuff

Optimizing, not downsizing, should be goal of fleet rightsizing, says industry consultant

KEITH NORBURY

“Rightsizing” a fleet is more involved than simply getting rid of vehicles even if the expression itself is often a euphemism for “downsizing,” says consultant Paul Lauria.

A more appropriate definition of “rightsizing” would be “optimizing,” Lauria explained during a detailed presentation at the most recent International Construction & Utility Equipment Conference in Louisville, Ky.

In his more than 30 years as a consultant, Lauria has observed that rightsizing studies become more prevalent after a recession.

“And my experience is when the economy is bad organizations tend to focus on tactical challenges and opportunities particularly around cost reduction, and that’s where rightsizing is of particular interest,” said Lauria, who is the president of Mercury Associates Inc., which is headquartered in Rockville, Md.

However, when the economy is going well — as it has for the past several years — companies focus more on strategic challenges and opportunities, such as acquiring a new fleet management system, rather than looking for cost savings.

Right size can mean bigger

Optimizing can even result in a larger fleet. For example, Lauria cited a recent study he did for a client that recommended eliminating 300 to 400 vehicles from the fleet but also called for adding 450 new ones.

“Because they were spending about \$12 million a year reimbursing employees to operate their personal vehicles on behalf of the employer,” Lauria said. “And for 451 of those employees it would be cheaper to provide them with a company vehicle than to reimburse them at the IRS mileage reimbursement rate.”

A variation of the optimization definition entails optimizing the fleet’s composition — what Lauria calls “right typing.”

“For example, are we using SUVs where a passenger sedan would suffice?” Lauria said.

An even stickier question is who in an organization should be responsible for making those decisions, Lauria pointed out. Should it be the fleet management or the fleet users?

“The answer to this question is not clear cut,” he said.



Consultant Paul Lauria explores the meaning of fleet rightsizing.

Fleet managers see larger picture

Among the benefits of putting fleet managers in charge is that they possess “knowledge of and expertise in asset allocation, and fleet utilization management principles, techniques and industry trends and best practices,” Lauria said.

In larger organizations especially, a fleet manager would be expected to have more expertise in allocating, monitoring and reporting on fleet assets than the manager of any individual business unit would have, Lauria said.

“So fleet managers have the ability, presumably, to develop and apply enterprise wide information,” he said. Fleet management can also serve as “a single focal point of accountability,” he said. Rather than poll individual fleet users, it makes more sense for senior management to obtain enterprise-wide fleet information from a single source. A drawback to that approach, however, is that fleet managers wouldn’t be expected to



Who should be responsible for fleet rightsizing can often be as clear as mud.

have the in-depth knowledge of fleet users about how equipment and vehicles are used.

“Fleet managers are generally not accountable for how well the organizational units that they serve perform their missions,” Lauria said.

It’s also important to recognize an “inherent conflict” between fleet management’s roles as service provider and regulator. In Lauria’s view, fleet management is “first and foremost” a service delivery activity for the business units that need fleet assets to fulfill their missions.

Fleet users know fine details

Placing the responsibility on fleet users also has its pros and cons.

Among the benefits is that fleet users have in-depth knowledge of operating requirements and practices.

“Who better knows what types of resources they need to fulfill their mission than the organizational units that are utilizing those resources day in and day out?” Lauria said.

Among the drawbacks, though, is that when it comes to taking advantage of economies of scale in a large organization, the individual business units simply lack the necessary expertise.

“We don’t expect one business manager to necessarily be aware that there’s a bunch of under utilized equipment in another part of the company that might cost effectively meet a need that they have for a new program or a new project,” Lauria said.

His experience has also taught him that fleet users aren’t always objective in their resource requirements. “I haven’t encountered too many fleet user organizations where it was presented with they thought that they had too much equipment in their fleets, too

many vehicles. Most of them feel like they can never have enough, and that’s understandable,” Lauria said.

Define who’s responsible

Given all the pros and cons, Lauria said, it makes sense that an organization should formally define who is responsible for fleet rightsizing — something that not many organizations do. These responsibilities should be shared between fleet users and managers but that in general the processes should defer to the wishes of the latter.

When Lauria began his consulting career three decades ago, a typical fleet manager would have come up through the ranks, likely starting on the shop floor, and would have acquired a lot of knowledge about the composition of the fleet. But any kind of data-driven management didn’t exist because of the lack of computing. If a company did have a computer, it was probably a mainframe at some remote location that required a cumbersome submission process that returned data weeks later in a stack of confusing documentation.

“The point of this is that 30 years ago a lot of fleet managers got away with what I call the ‘trust me’ approach to fleet management,” Lauria said.

They based decisions on tradition, past practice and subjective judgment and often ran roughshod over the fleet users, he said. The growth of Windows-based computer systems and the wealth of data they provide have enabled other entities within companies to hold other business units to account “for the way they use resources to perform their missions,” he said. “And fleet managers are not the ones that should have that responsibility.”



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FLEET MANAGEMENT

Secrets of a successful fleet rightsizing strategy

Not all vehicles are created or used equally

KEITH NORBURY

An effective rightsizing strategy recognizes that different business units will use similar assets in different ways to fulfill those missions, says consultant Paul Lauria. An effective strategy also recognizes that certain assets are inherently more difficult to manage — such as assets that are used seasonally, variably, or in unpredictable ways, such as in emergency response.

“One of the reasons that a lot of organizations have a lot of fleet assets in their fleets is as a form of insurance because when you need it, you need it,” said Lauria, president of Mercury Associates Inc., during a presentation at the the most recent International Construction & Utility Equipment Conference in Louisville, Ky.

For fire-fighting equipment, for instance, the less it's used the better. But that doesn't mean a municipality should base its fleets of fire trucks or ambulances on the minimum possible level of use, he said. “When you need 'em you have to have 'em.”

Similarly, managing vehicles used in remote locations is both easy and difficult. Easy because there's little to manage. Difficult because of the pressure to justify a low level of use.

It's also difficult to manage costs by sharing vehicles and equipment because employees can become very possessive and territorial, Lauria said. Managing utilization of older assets is difficult too because they break down.

“I have conducted rightsizing studies for organizations that had pretty old fleets and it's not a lot of fun trying to get business units to agree to turn in under-utilized assets when they don't have any confidence that their front-line units are going to be replaced in a reasonably timely manner,” Lauria said.

To buy or not to buy

How a fleet finances, or not, the purchases of vehicles can also be problematic.

“When you purchase vehicles and equipment in your fleet out right with cash, it's very tempting to view the capital costs of that asset as being zero. In other words, a sunk cost,” Lauria said.

That eliminates any economic incentive to scrutinize, let alone improve, the utilization of assets. And that means that companies that purchase vehicles in cash have “bigger opportunities to improve the size and composition of their fleet than organizations that use some kind of a financing method that confronts the users of the vehicles with the cost of the assets availability month after month after month,” Lauria said.

The fallacy of the sunk-cost belief, however, is regardless of the payment method, the cost of the asset occurs throughout the asset's life. “We call it depreciation,” Lauria said. “So the final cost of any asset in your fleet is not known until that asset is no longer in your fleet.”

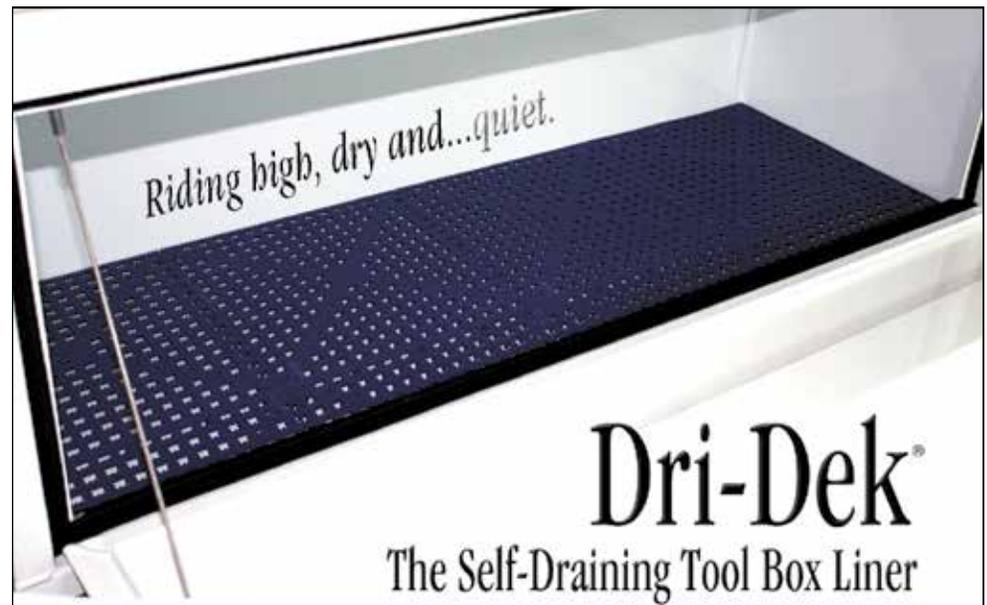
The cost of not removing an under-utilized piece of equipment from a fleet equals the opportunity cost of disposing of it or assigning it elsewhere to fulfill a greater need, Lauria pointed out.

Effective rightsizing also recognizes that it makes more sense to pay attention to expensive or specialized pieces of equipment and less time on pickup trucks, passenger sedans, and even service trucks — “both because of the difference in the cost and traditional accounting of those types of assets,” Lauria said.



“When you purchase vehicles and equipment in your fleet out right with cash, it's very tempting to view the capital costs of that asset as being zero.

— Paul Lauria, president, Mercury Associates Inc.



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FLEET MANAGEMENT

Fleet rightsizing strategies explained

Defining objectives is key, says consultant

KEITH NORBURY

According to industry consultant, Paul Lauria, fleet rightsizing processes, techniques, and strategies include the following:

- fleet utilization management policy,
- asset allocation,
- ongoing monitoring,
- internal cost charge-back systems,
- ad hoc fleet rightsizing studies, and
- fleet modernization and replacement programs.

All of those are intertwined and interrelated, said Lauria, president of Mercury Associates Inc., during a presentation at the most recent International Construction & Utility Equipment Conference in Louisville, Ky.

The objectives of a fleet utilization management policy are to define asset allocation and utilization goals, he said. They can include ensuring asset performance and availability, promoting employee safety and productivity, and minimizing a fleet's total ownership cost.

"I'm a real big believer in defining things," Lauria said, adding that it's important to take the time for an organization to clarify what it's trying to achieve. It's equally important to think about how responsibilities, accountabilities, and authorities are assigned. If an organization grants the authority to the chief financial officer, for example, the organization must recognize how that will affect the size

and composition of the fleet.

Lauria favors employing "structured decision making methods that ensure objective consideration of all appropriate factors, perspectives, and information" and not methods based on past practices or subjective judgment. And the decision-making should be depoliticized by "letting the fleet management decisions be made by the fleet experts in the enterprise."

Identify needs in advance

An effective asset allocation process meanwhile identifies the most cost-effective means to meet an organization's equipment and vehicle needs before those assets are acquired. A good time to validate, or invalidate, the need for a fleet asset is when it is ready to be replaced. However, "in a lot of organizations the fact that you own an asset today is all the justification that you need to get money to replace that asset." Instead, an organization should use that opportunity to evaluate whether it needs a larger, smaller or different replacement altogether or even no replacement at all.

A well-defined and executed asset allocation process saves money and engages fleet users in examining and justifying the costs of assets, Lauria said. On the downside, it doesn't necessarily address the impact of changing operational needs on a fleet. "Obviously your needs change in some parts of the company over time," he said.



A digger derrick, such as this Terex machine being demonstrated at the most recent ICUEE show, is a crucial piece of equipment when a hole has to be drilled.

It is also important to understand not just how much the asset will be used but how it will be used. Not having a digger derrick available for a job is more consequential than not having a passenger vehicle available, for example.

"There are a lot of different ways that we can move from point A to point B. Now, there aren't a lot of alternative ways that we can dig a hole."

A truck laden with materials or tools might not be easily shared if those items cannot be stored somewhere else.

Yet another factor is location: "It's easier to manage the utilization of vehicles where there are concentrations of employees and concentrations of vehicles, where these things are in close proximity to one another as opposed to when they're deployed in remote areas."

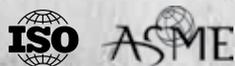
Allocation methods highlighted

To figure out whether to rent or own a vehicle, Lauria recommends using a decision tree.

An example of such a tree, which he included in his presentation, asks such questions as "Can the asset be rented

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If a business unit wants a certain model of truck, such as a new Altec, the fleet manager often orders it without thinking of leverage purchasing power or standardizing equipment across the organization, says industry consultant Paul Lauria.

locally?" and "Are there or will there be sufficient funds to purchase the asset?"

An alternative method is called a "table of equipment," which he described as a model for standardizing the allocation of commonly used equipment by using such calculations as the ratio of assets to employees.

Lauria said he had been working with a major Canadian utility company on evaluating how it selects and sources line equipment such as cranes, digger derricks, and bucket trucks. It turned out that the company's fleet management organization simply took orders for equipment without even attempting to leverage volume purchasing power or to standardize any fleet equipment.

"If one business unit said, 'Hey we want to try out this new Altec truck with these features, could you order us two of three of them?' — that's simply what the fleet management organization would do," Lauria said.

Using a table of equipment depoliticizes decision making and promotes fleet standardization, which lowers total cost of ownership, according to a slide in Lauria's presentation. However, it generally works only for organizations with "highly regimented" structures, and it can oversimplify the challenges of fleets with diverse needs.

Monitor fleet usage

While a table of equipment is a "one-time development with ongoing refinement," fleet utilization monitoring is ideally a continuous process, although quarterly utilization reports "are probably sufficient," Lauria said.

Such reporting can create peer pressure among unit managers "to actively manage asset usage." But that depends on data accessibility and quality.

It all begins by defining appropriate metrics of asset utilization, Lauria said.

Odometer or engine-hour meter readings are often misleading, for example. A backhoe called to dig and fill a hole during repair of a water main might show only 90 minutes on the engine meter but spend the entire day, mostly idle, at that site.

"A lot of times we have vehicles that are parked on the job site. They're not accumulating miles, the wheels aren't turning, but the vehicles aren't available for use (elsewhere)."

Lauria recommends employing asset utilization guidelines that stratify the assets not only by type but by how they are used in an organization.

"So I'm not a fan of developing an enterprise-wide, company-wide average annual utilization level for cargo vans, for example, or for service trucks, and then trying to make judgments as to the potential opportunities to right size the fleet based on the use of that single metric."

Other data utilization measures include driver logs, dispatching systems, radio frequency identification (RFID) systems, geofencing, and telematics. Lauria noted that interest in telematics has soared, with many large organizations spending millions on the technology without having a clear idea of how they'll use it.

"As a consultant who spends a lot of time analyzing data for the purpose of evaluating fleet management practices, I'm not a big proponent of spending money on information technology when you have no idea what the return on investment is," Lauria said. "But I'm not so naive as to think that companies aren't out there investing in this type of technology and they'll figure it out eventually."

As it stands, though, he isn't yet sold on telematics as a fleet-rightsizing tool. He can see its appeal in Europe, where fuel is far more expensive than in North America. And he notes that it does have applications for driver behavior and vehicle operation. But mostly, telematics is producing terabytes of data that companies aren't putting to use.

Charge backs act as incentives

A technique that does have utility and that many fleets already use is a fleet cost charge-back system. Its objective is to create economic incentives for using and allocating assets efficiently.

"The good cost charge back system draws attention to and requires users to manage the cost of asset availability," Lauria said, reiterating that a vehicle costs money whether its driven one mile or 1,000 miles in a month.

On the downside, the rate design can undermine the incentives. Many utilities, for example, use cost clearing accounts, which he described as an accounting exercise as opposed to an actual itemization of the charges that shows the relationship "between the fixed cost of the vehicle being available and the maintenance, repair and fuel costs."

Centralized budgeting and cost control— as at smaller organizations where a finance director exerts a lot of influence — can also undermine motivation, he said.

Spoonful of sugar helps study go down

An ad hoc rightsizing study should take place about every five years, Lauria said, adding that it will yield immediate cost savings of five to 20 percent.

"These are not fun things to do, particularly from the standpoint of fleet users," Lauria said. "Nobody likes having a consultant or an auditor come in, look over their shoulders and second guess how many vehicles they have in their fleet."

A typical study starts by screening the assets based on their current utilization. The study doesn't spend much time on highly used assets but focuses on those that are under-utilized, "keeping in mind that a low meter reading, low annual mileage, does not necessarily mean low use."

Lauria's company uses web-based surveys to gather information for the studies, which it has performed for fleets of as many as 60,000 vehicles.

"You get a lot of good information from the operators even if you assume that they are predisposed to overstate their need for a vehicle or piece of equipment," Lauria said.

When it comes to rightsizing, he is a proponent of the notion that "a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down." In other words by providing assurances that a benefit of fleet rightsizing is that the organization will commit more money to replace aging assets.

Modernizing reduces costs

A fleet modernization replacement plan aims to "ensure a high degree of asset availability/reliability thereby reducing the number of assets you're required to provide a given level of operational readiness and support," Lauria said. Put another way: if frontline units are more reliable there is less need for backup units.

"It's not just cheaper to maintain and repair a younger fleet," Lauria said. "It's a lot easier to manage the maintenance and repair costs of a younger fleet because those repair costs are much more predictable."

Modernization can cost in the short term, so he recommends developing a replacement plan that includes inventory categories based on such parameters as asset types, purchase prices, and operating characteristics.

A sample baseline replacement plan that he presented showed a huge spike of gross replacement costs in the first year, which reflected that the organiza-

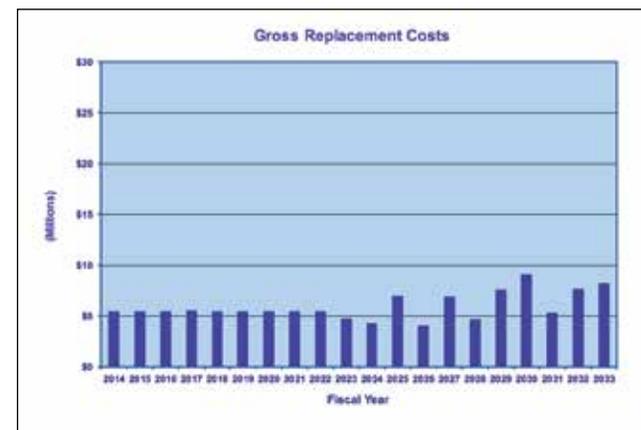
Vehicle Allocation Process: Sample Rent v Own Decision Tree

- Can the asset be rented locally?
 - No: STOP HERE. Buy or borrow.
 - Yes: Continue.
- Are there or will there be sufficient funds to purchase the asset?
 - No: STOP HERE. Rent or borrow.
 - Yes: Continue.
- Can the asset (or an acceptable substitute) be borrowed from another facility whenever it is needed?
 - No: Continue.
 - Yes: STOP HERE. Borrow as needed.
- Does the manager expect to use the asset more than once?
 - No: STOP HERE. Rent.
 - Yes: Continue.
- Does the manager expect to use the asset on a regular basis for more than six months?
 - No: STOP HERE. Rent.
 - Yes: Continue.
- What is the estimated cost of purchasing the asset? A: \$ _____
- What is the expected value of the asset at the end of its useful life? B: \$ _____
- What is the estimated net capital cost of the asset? (A minus B) C: \$ _____
- What is the life expectancy in years of the asset? D: _____ years

MERCURY

UTILITY FLEET CONFERENCE

The decision tree is a tool consultant Paul Lauria recommends for determining whether to rent or buy equipment.



Consultant Paul Lauria recommends a smooth plan for replacing equipment.

tion had an old fleet. The average vehicle age was 9.2 years, about double what Lauria said would be appropriate to minimize total cost of ownership.

"It's hard to manage the utilization of the fleet when such a large percentage of the assets is in need of replacement," Lauria said.

So he developed a "smooth replacement plan" that would eliminate the backlog over several years.

"Because the key to modernizing any fleet is not just demonstrating that you're going to save money," Lauria said. "You have to be able to demonstrate to decision makers that the organization can afford to modernize the fleet."

In conclusion, he said that it's important for an organization to figure out who should and should not own the problem of managing the fleet composition.

"If you want to really optimize the size, composition, (and) utilization of the fleet, it's a given that you have to have effective replacement programs and the cost of doing so needs to be transparent to all stakeholders."



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NEWS

Crane simulator study underway in Georgia

Researchers looking for as many as 500 operators of varying experience

The training effectiveness of crane simulators is the subject of a study that began this summer in Georgia.

Crane Industry Services LLC is conducting the study in conjunction with CM Labs Simulations Inc. of Montreal, and West Georgia Technical College, said a July 6 news release announcing the study.

The research, which started in July, will take 14 months or until 500 operators have participated.

"This study is a first for the crane industry," Debbie Dickinson, CEO of Crane Industry Services, said in the news release. "While crane simulation tools are not new to the construction industry, there is little quantitative research

that determines the value crane simulation offers as part of comprehensive training. We anticipate that the validated study will be used to set specific goals for skill development."

Drew Carruthers, CM Labs' construction product manager, said his company, which makes the Vortex simulators, is "extremely pleased" to be taking part in the initiative.

"It benefits the industry as a whole to understand how we can use simulator-based training to accelerate construction training programs," Carruthers said.

Crane Industry Services — which is based in Waco, Ga., about 50 miles west of Atlanta — currently combines on-line introductory training, instructor-led classroom training, hands-on instruction, and on-the-job training. CIS leaders were among the first in the industry to create interactive and broadcast quality video learning for the industry, the release said.

"The addition of crane simulators into our curriculum is a natural fit and the industry welcomes this use of technology," the release quoted CIS president Cliff Dickinson.

Objectives of the study include the following:

- determining what skills can be achieved when simulators are used as part of training;
- yielding a comparative study of the time required for operators to reach certain skill levels;
- estimating the level of proficiency that can be obtained using concentrated learning and practice;



This is a typical graphic display from a training module to be used as part of the study by Crane Industry Services LLC, CM Labs Simulations Inc., and West Georgia Technical College.

- testing performance evaluation options;
- training entry level operators safely;
- refreshing experienced operator skills; and
- practicing new equipment or lift conditions.

The study subjects include inexperienced, moderately experienced, and very experienced operators. They will be trained on a Vortex rough-terrain mobile crane module.

The research partners are reaching out to employers to provide operators for the study who have the following levels of experience:

- inexperienced operators with less than 99 hours of total operating time, and who've only had classroom instruction on crane safety concepts;
- operators with limited experience of up to 1,000 hours operating time in the previous five years, but whose crane operation exposure is no more than 20 per cent of their on-the-job time (these operators may come from general industry or construction, and they may or may not be certified); and
- full-time crane operators (of over 1,000 hours operating time in the previous five years), but who have had little or no exposure to training simulators. (In most cases, these will be certified crane operators.)

continued on page 25



Operators with all levels of experience will be trained on Vortex simulators during study.



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EVENTS

Dates set for 2018 trade show

With the 2017 edition of the Work Truck Show is still months away, organizers of the annual event are already looking ahead to the 2018 show.

The NTEA — The Association for the Work Truck Industry — recently announced that the 2018 version of the show will return to the Indianapolis Convention Center March 6-9. As in recent years, the event opens with educational sessions and the Green Truck Summit on the first day, with the exhibition hall open on the final three days of the show.



"Rosies" Kelsey Scott (left) and Jamie Thomas greet visitors at the 2016 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis.

Registration for the 2017 Work Truck Show opens in October. The show itself takes place, also at the Indianapolis Convention Center, March 14-17. That's about a week later than usual in order to avoid a conflict with the triennial ConExpo-Con/Agg trade show, which happens March 7-11, 2017 in Las Vegas.

For more updates on the Work Truck Show, visit www.work-truckshow.com.

continued from page 24

The Vortex machine "simulates multi-body dynamics and captures real behavior of cranes, rigging, and loads," the release said. Its simulations are based on actual crane models and use real controls.

The study module, for example, is based on a 40-ton rough-terrain crane with a full boom extension of 102 feet. Feature includes the capability to configure the load moment indicator and set alarms.

"We hope this research will be used to set industry standards for simulation training and to assist employers in measuring the value of simulation as part of training," Dickinson said.

Crane Industry Services recently took possession of three Vortex simulators that are housed in CIS's trademarked Centered on Safety Training Center on West Georgia Technical College's Murphy campus in Waco.

For information on participating in the study, call 770-783-9292 or email info@CenteredonSafety.com.

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COVER

Backup cameras enhance safety

continued from cover

these cameras on many of their vehicles. He says the addition of backup cameras is primarily due to safety concerns, but other benefits, like enhancing driver visibility while hooking-up to a trailer hitch, are also a plus.

"We're also seeing customers request backup sensors as an added safety feature; and many of the chassis OEMs now have backup cameras available as an option when ordering a new chassis," Wibben says.

Wibben explains that it typically costs \$500 to \$1,000 to install a backup camera, which he says have "greatly improved" when it comes to picture and range. However, he notes there can be installation challenges on some vehicles, especially those equipped with rear-mounted cranes and other equipment that can limit camera positioning. Nonetheless, he expects the market for backup cameras will continue to grow.

Costs dropping as benefits rise

"The cost versus the added benefit has become less of an obstacle in recent years, especially with backup camera equipment coming down in price," Wibben says.

The price of any add-on to a service truck is something fleet managers need to consider, but Al Kuhlman, an assistant product manager at Garner, Iowa-based

Red circle shows the location of a backup camera on the rear bumper of a Maintainer mechanics truck.



The red circle in this photo shows an alternative placement for a backup camera on a service truck.



Photos courtesy of Maintainer Corporation of Iowa Inc.

Stellar Industries Inc., says one cannot overlook the correlation between price and quality.

"As with anything, there are additional costs and you get what you pay for. The cost of a camera can be prohibitive if the individual operator is experienced and doesn't necessarily feel the need to have a backup camera system," explains Kuhlman, who says a system can cost \$1,000 or more. "However, we're seeing backup cameras become standard in fleet packages. It's like an added insurance policy for the fleet manager."

Kuhlman also points out that adding a backup camera can be challenging due to space limitations at the rear of many service trucks. For maximum use and the

best sightlines, he recommends cameras be placed as close to the center of the truck as possible, as well as close to the hitch. Though the ideal placement isn't always possible thanks to how trucks are configured, there are some other things he thinks customers should also consider.

"I tell customers to look at aspects like camera clarity and monitor aspect ratio. If they are going to be driving in reverse a lot, then a higher quality system is best for them. Also, a customer can choose between monitor mounts ... they can go with a rear-view mirror replacement, with the monitor integrated into it, or they can use a pedestal mount that would be attached to the dash," Kuhlman explains.

Kuhlman estimates backup cameras are installed on about a quarter of the service

withstand differing weather conditions, like rain, snow, and dust, and have conformal coated circuit boards to protect internal circuitry," says Joseph Camacho, the company's commercial vehicle OEM sales manager.

Camacho notes many industries have been using backup and rear cameras for a years, but he expects use of this technology will increase because more emphasis is now being placed on safety.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration "is phasing in new safety regulations, so companies that were not already taking advantage of the technology will soon need to in order to comply," Camacho says.

Cost is always an important consideration for any service vehicle add-on, but Camacho says the cost of a backup camera

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"The past several years we've seen an increase in the request for backup cameras on the vehicles we build. Over a third of our builds are being equipped with them."

— Tom Wibben, sales and service manager, Maintainer Corporation of Iowa Inc.

trucks Stellar builds and says they are more of an "add-on item" at the time of the service body installation onto the chassis, as opposed to the chassis being delivered with a camera already installed. Regardless, he anticipates many more future installations.

More backup cameras anticipated

"I foresee growth in backup camera utilization. There is already legislation that mandates backup camera systems being factory installed in all chassis that weigh less than 10,000 pound, which is to be implemented by May of 2018," Kuhlman says. "My feeling is this type of legislation will also migrate into larger trucks as we move into the future. Backup cameras are not a trend, but are going to be a standard product in the years to come."

This is good news to companies like ASA Electronics LLC, an Elkhart, Ind.-based manufacturer of electronic entertainment and safety products, including the Voyager brand of rear and side camera safety systems.

"A good camera system should provide a crystal clear picture representation and performance in low-light conditions, like night-time viewing, as well as the ability to

is mostly dependent on the type of system and features desired. However, he says companies using the technology are realizing the value and return on investment the systems can provide.

"There aren't many limitations when it comes to backup camera systems, as new technology is being introduced all the time," Camacho says. "The challenge, which is more of an opportunity, is helping match customers to the type of technology that best fits their need."

Cameras used in a variety of ways

Given the number of different industries currently using backup cameras, the marketplace is filled with companies working to develop systems for all types of environments. One of the leaders in the manufacture of high-end cameras is Orloco Inc., whose North American headquarters is in Jasper, Ga. The company manufactures durable, industrial-grade cameras that are sold to 16 different markets in 74 countries worldwide. Orloco is especially known for its compact, "eyeball" cameras, which have multiple uses on all types of vehicles.

"Many cameras can be used in a variety of ways on a truck, so we don't talk about



Display of Voyager backup camera from ASA Electronics LLC captures traffic. Photo courtesy of ASA Electronics LLC



Backup camera is mounted on the dash of a Stellar Industries Inc. service truck. Photo courtesy of Stellar Industries Inc.



Up close view of ASA Electronics LLC backup camera. Photo courtesy of ASA Electronics LLC

“There aren’t many limitations when it comes to backup camera systems, as new technology is being introduced all the time,” Camacho says. “The challenge, which is more of an opportunity, is helping match customers to the type of technology that best fits their need.”

— Joseph Camacho, commercial vehicle OEM sales manager, ASA Electronics LLC

backup cameras only,” says Kurt Dekker, Orlaco’s chief business development officer, who says 75 percent of their work is developing custom products, mostly for OEMs. “How a camera is used depends on the application, because every truck and job site have different requirements.”

Orlaco also specializes in developing new products to meet the demands of an ever-changing marketplace. For example, the company introducing a “corner eye” camera that Dekker says will provide an “enormous improvement in safety” thanks to its 270-degree, 100 percent live camera view.

In fact, Dekker predicts technology will eventually make all vehicle mirrors obsolete, as panning cameras will offer drivers clear, real-

time views of all angles in all types of conditions (day and night) via interior-mounted monitors. This scenario may be a few years away, but he believes you should be discerning when shopping for a backup camera system, as a connection between price and quality definitely exists.

“You want something to work in all types of conditions and you don’t want delays in the picture, which is why all of our cameras are 100 percent live,” Dekker says. “Don’t just buy a camera for your truck. Buy a solution for your truck and make the right choice based on the angles used.”

Mark Yontz is a freelance writer from Urbandale, Iowa.



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NEWS

U.S. attendees invited to Vancouver conference

“College day” featured during CTEA conference, Oct. 24-26

People in the service truck industries in the U.S. are more than welcome to come to Vancouver, B.C., this fall for the annual manufacturers’ conference of the Canadian Transportation Equipment Association.

Non-members are also welcome to register for the 53rd annual conference, which takes place Oct. 24-26 at Vancouver’s Four Seasons Hotel, said the association’s executive director Don Moore.

About a 10th of the CTEA’s members are American companies, Moore estimated. The association — which represents truck body, trailers makers and related companies — is considered to be the Canadian equivalent of the National Truck Equipment Association, a.k.a. the NTEA. The CTEA recently relocated its office to Windsor, Ont., just across the river from Detroit and about a 40-mile drive from the NTEA headquarters in Farmington Hills, Mich.

A highlight of this October’s CTEA conference is a “college day” on Wednesday, Oct. 25 at the B.C. Institute of Technology’s marine and heavy equipment campus on the Fraser River’s Annacis Island. The 142,000 square foot facility, which opened in September 2014, houses training programs for diesel, transport trailer, and



A tour of Vancouver’s harbor will be among the highlights of the 53rd annual Canadian Transportation Equipment Association conference.

heavy-duty mechanics and related disciplines, according to the BCIT website.

“It is really something just to see let alone the fact we’ll have some hands-on presentations,” Moore said.

Conference attendees will be bused out to the campus, have lunch, explore the facilities, and then return to the hotel. That evening, they’ll embark on a cruise of Vancouver harbor.

Other highlights on the conference schedule include the following:

- Michael Burt, an economist with the Conference Board of Canada, will discuss the impact of low commodity prices on

the Canadian economy.

- Jo-Annie Fortin, who competed in synchronized swimming at the 2012 London Olympic Games, will talk about ways to engage and motivate employees.
- Brian Pleet of the Business Development Bank of Canada, and Bryan Hughes of Export Development Canada will review tools available for developing export markets.
- Chassis makers — including Peterbilt, Isuzu, Navistar, and Western Star — will provide updates on their product offerings. Those sessions will also take place at BCIT.

The conference opens with a town hall meeting on the afternoon of Monday, Oct. 24, following by a table-top trade show in the evening. That will be accompanied by expanded food and beverage offerings.

Also on the conference program are a trailer forum, air-brakes systems seminar, and sessions on commercial vehicle safety systems, trailer load equalization, and truck load equalization. Details on presenters for those sessions weren’t available at press time.

“There’s a few things we still have to firm up,” Moore said in early August, although he didn’t expect any major changes to the program.

He does, however, expect this year’s conference to draw more than the approximately 150 people who attended the 2015 event, which was held in the somewhat remote Quebec town of La Malbaie, about 90 miles north of Quebec City.

Vancouver in contrast is a cosmopolitan metropolis with “a lot of local eateries” and other places to visit on the Tuesday night



Michael Burt

of the conference and that will “allow the opportunity for maybe even a little bit of business to happen,” Moore said.

Registration is \$650 for CTEA members and \$750 for non-members. That doesn’t include hotel accommodation. While

attendees are free to book rooms wherever they like, the CTEA has reserved a block of rooms at the Four Seasons.

“We certainly prefer that you stay at the Four Seasons,” Moore said. “And we’ve got a pretty good rate for downtown Vancouver. I think it’s \$180 (Canadian). Getting something for under \$200 (Canadian) is a challenge for downtown Vancouver.”

With the Canadian dollar still hovering around 75 cents U.S., that represents even more of a bargain for any U.S. visitors wishing to attend.

For more information about the conference, visit the CTEA website, www.ctea.ca.



Don Moore

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Company names new president

Service body maker Reading Truck Group LLC has a new president.

Tom Reynolds, formerly with Methode Electronics Corporation, was announced as Reading's new boss in a June 6 news release from J.B. Poindexter & Co Inc., Reading's parent firm.

Reynolds assumed his new post July 18, succeeding Brian Nadel, who had asked to step down "to pursue a more entrepreneurial career path," the release quoted John Poindexter, CEO and chairman of the Houston, Texas-based parent company, which acquired Reading in October 2015.

"While we are sorry to see Brian go, we respect his wishes," Poindexter added, while also noting that Nadel would be active in the leadership transition.

Reynolds said he was pleased to be given the opportunity to lead Reading and be part of its "talented team."

At Methode, which had 2015 revenues of \$881 million, Reynolds had "a long and very successful career" as chief operating officer and senior vice-president. The company placed sixth on Forbes magazine's 2014 Best Companies under \$1 billion in sales for financial performance, and 15th on the 2015 Fortune magazine list of fastest growing companies, the news release noted.

Reynolds had previously worked with Chevrolet Engineering at General Motors and as part of the Saturn start-up team. He has a master's of business administration degree and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan.

Based in Reading, Pa., Reading Truck Group has experienced "significant growth" in the last four years in revenues, profit, and employment, Poindexter noted while giving credit to Nadel's leadership for Reading "meeting its goals to deliver the anticipated value" to Poindexter following the acquisition. 



Brian Nadel



Tom Reynolds

Crane careers promoted in video

A new video, which features several cranes in operation, has been released to help Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association member companies recruit workers to the industry.

The five-minute high definition video from the Specialized Carriers & Rigging Foundation explains that "depending on factors such as background and experience," industry employees can earn \$40,000 to \$200,000 annually.

Foundation president Stephanie Bragg said in a news release that the video will help reach those who might not otherwise know about the high-paying and value jobs available in the industry.

"We see it as a great snapshot of what the crane and rigging and specialized trucking industry has to offer," the release said.

The video includes testimonials from crane operators as well as "dramatic footage" of jobs undertaken by 13 SC&RA member companies, including Alaska Crane Ltd.; Barnhart; Bills Mobile Crane Service, Inc.; Bragg Companies; Deep South Crane and Rigging LLC; Mountain Crane Service; Rossco Crane and Rigging Inc.; and Southern Crane.

The SC&RA has 1,300 members in 46 countries. To view the video or to download it, visit www.scr-foundation.org/videos.

Pennsylvania firm expands

Curry Supply Company expects to complete a 32,000 square foot expansion of its main parts facility by the end of the summer.

The expansion, at the company's two-story facility in East Freedom, Pa., facility "will allow for a much larger in-stock parts inventory," said a news release from Curry Supply.

Meanwhile, Curry Supply has begun stocking a "comprehensive inventory" of water truck parts at the firm's new facility at Deer Park, Texas, near Houston. Curry Supply also stocks and sells products and parts in Australia through the company's authorized dealer, Coleman's Equipment.

The expanded location in East Freedom provides more parking, for staff and customers, as well as easier access for walk-in customers, the release said. The location maintains a multi-million dollar inventory of OEM parts for such equipment as mechanics trucks, fuel/lube trucks, lube trucks, rail gear trucks, lube trailers and skids, and "all makes and models of on- and off-road water trucks," the release said.

"We have experienced exceptional growth over the past few years," the release quoted Curry Supply president Jason Ritchey. "With that type of growth, it is imperative that we provide an industry-leading level of



Curry Supply Company has a multi-million inventory of OEM parts.

post-sale support to our customers. Hence the need to expand our facilities to house an even greater volume of replacement parts."

For more information on Curry Supply, a family-owned business founded in 1932, visit www.currysupply.com.

New regional sales manager named

Omaha Standard Palfinger has announced the appointment of a new regional sales manager.

John Stremper will manage OSP's northeastern territory, the company said in a recent news release.

Stremper, who has more than 30 years of industry experience, will report to national sales manager Brian Heffron. In his new role, Stremper will act as the company's point of contact for its distribution partners in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Michigan, Maine, and the District of Columbia.

Stremper's focus will be on such products as service cranes, crane reinforced service bodies, compressors, hoists, service and platform bodies, and pick-up liftgates, the release said.

Based in Council Bluffs, Iowa, OSP has been part of the Palfinger North America Group since 2008.

For more information about the company, visit www.palfinger.com.



John Stremper

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NEW PRODUCTS

Turn any truck into a lube truck

A new lube skid from Southwest Products promises to turn “any truck into a lube truck.”

The product, introduced in late March, “equips operators to perform fleet and heavy equipment lube services in the field from any vehicle and expands operators’ preventative maintenance capabilities,” said a news release from the company, which is headquartered in Vancouver, Wash.

The new lube skid, which comes standard with three 50-gallon product tanks, attaches and detaches easily from a truck bed, the release said. The skid, which also has a 55-gallon used oil tank, can also be loaded onto a trailer or truck.

Shane McDermott, vice-president of Southwest Products’ vehicle division, said in the news release that the new skid offers “a flexible option to bring critical preventative maintenance services” to fleets.

“It’s a perfect complement to our IMT Dominator mechanics trucks,” McDermott said, referring to Southwest being a major distributor for Iowa Mold Tooling Co. Inc. “With the SWP lube skid, operators will be able to increase equipment uptime and performance across their fleet.”

Other features of the skid, which weighs 1,592 pounds and is 48 inches wide, include a quick-connect air coupler for the product pump, and 10:1 air-operated oil pump.

“To make movement as easy as possible for operators, it has four heavy-duty lift-rings for easy crane lifting and fork pockets for forklift maneuvering,” the release noted.

The skids can be custom-tailored to meet the needs of large or small fleets. Southwest also builds custom lube skids.

For more information, visit www.southwestproducts.com/trucks/lube-trucks/lube-skid.



New lube skid from Southwest Products can be custom-tailored, company says.

More rotary screw compressors unveiled

Two more new rotary screw air compressor models have been launched by VMAC.

The company announced on Aug. 2 a new Underhood-Lite compressor for the Ford Transit Connect. VMAC, which stands for Vehicle Mounted Air Compressor, followed that with an Aug. 16 announcement of its latest Underhood150 compressor for Ford F650 and F750 6.8-liter Triton V10 gas engine work trucks.

They were the Nanaimo, B.C.-based company’s third and fourth product announcements since March. Those earlier launches were of the Raptair-G30 gas drive, and the DTM70 PTO drive air compressor.

The Underhood-Lite provides 100 percent duty cycle and up to 30 cubic feet per minute of air, and 150 pounds per square inch of pressure, the release said. Because it is mounted on the engine, “it eliminates the need for expensive and unreliable workarounds for ventilation.” It also reduces the risk of damage and injury because it doesn’t have to be moved in and out of the van.

“Developing a system for the growing van market demonstrates VMAC’s agility and responsiveness as a manufacturer to continually understanding the unique challenges of fleet managers and developing solutions for these challenges,” the release quoted Gordon Duval, the company’s vice-president of marketing and sales.

The Underhood-Lite has a small installed footprint that only requires space inside the van for a separator/cooler tank, which frees up about 10 cubic feet, Duval said.

The Underhood150, meanwhile, provides up to 150 cfm and 175 psi. Installing it using a specially engineered mounting kit takes only a few hours, the release said.

“There is no installed deck footprint compared to up to 76 cubic feet of typical deck mounted compressors, which provides our customers with more free deck space,” Duval said in the release.

The system weighs 200 pounds, a fraction of the 1,900 pounds of a typical utility mount system, according to the company.



VMAC has a new Underhood-Lite rotary screw air compressor system designed for the Ford Transit Connect van.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2016

Sept. 11-13, 2016

**Tennessee Trucking Association
86th Annual Convention**
Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa,
Destin, Fla.
<http://www.tntrucking.org/>

Sept. 13-15, 2016

**NTEA New Model Truck Product
Conference**

TBD
“An annual event held in the fall where leading chassis manufacturers present critical information about product upgrades and new product launches for the upcoming model year and beyond.”
<http://www.ntea.com/truckproductconference/>

Sept. 12-17, 2016

**International Manufacturing
and Technology Show**
McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill.
“More than 114,000 industrial decision-makers, including many of your competitors, attend IMTS.”
<https://www.imts.com>

Sept. 15-17, 2016

**Crane Industry Council of Australia
Exhibition & Crane Display**
Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns, Queensland
“Up close and personal access to the industry colleagues.”
<http://conference.cica.com.au/>



The International Manufacturing and Technology Show happens in Chicago, Sept. 12-17.

Sept. 18-20, 2016

Intermodal Expo
George R. Brown, Convention Center
Houston, Texas
“Find 3PLs, ocean carriers, motor carriers and drayage companies, railroads, equipment manufacturers and leasing companies, technology vendors, shippers/BCOs and many more intermodal industry professionals.”
<http://www.intermodalexpo.com/>

Sept. 18-22, 2016

**Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance
Annual Conference & Exhibition**
Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Ark.
http://www.cvsa.org/events/events_list_2015.php

Sept. 22-24, 2016

Demo International 2016
Maple Ridge, B.C.
“Anything and everything to do with forestry operations, and the equipment that is needed to make operations run more efficiently.”
<http://www.masterpromotions.ca>

Sept. 26-28, 2016

MineExpo 2016
Las Vegas Convention Center,
Las Vegas, Nevada
“Solutions that make it possible for the mining industry to meet the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities in a rapidly changing world in need of metals, minerals and energy.”
<http://www.minexpo.com>

Sept. 26-29, 2016

Breakbulk Americas 2016
George R. Brown Convention Center,
Houston, Texas
“Exhibitors and sponsors include specialized ocean carriers, freight forwarders, ports/terminals, logistics providers, ground transportation, heavy air, export packers, equipment companies and more.”
<http://www.breakbulk.com/events/breakbulk-americas/americas-2016/>

OCTOBER 2016

Oct. 1-4, 2016

**American Trucking Associations
Management Conference & Exhibition**
Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino,
Las Vegas, Nev.
“The premier annual industry event you must attend to gain the business advantage.”
http://www.truckline.com/Auto_Carriers_Conferences.aspx

Oct. 5-6, 2016

**Service Specialists Association
Convention**
Wild Dunes Resort, Charleston, S.C.
<http://www.truckservice.org/>

Oct. 9-12, 2016

**International Combustion Engine
Fall Technical Conference**
Hyatt Regency, Greenville, S.C.
“All offers relating to the internal combustion engine, or interfaces with internal combustion engines, are accepted for rigorous review by experts in the field.”
<https://www.asme.org/events/iccf>

Oct. 17-19, 2016

Fleet Technology Expo
Renaissance Schaumburg
Convention Center Hotel,
Schaumburg, Ill.
“Designed for fleet professionals who oversee vehicle fleets of all sizes and types in all industries and are looking to improve operational efficiencies.”
<http://www.fleettechnologyexpo.com>

Oct. 23-26, 2016

**American Association of Port Authorities
Annual Convention and Expo**
Sheraton New Orleans,
New Orleans, La.
“The premier gathering of the seaport industry.”
<http://www.aapa-ports.org>

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