

SPEC MY TRUCK

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Service Truck

THE MAGAZINE FOR MOBILE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

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TRENDS

Some like it light

More service body makers are turning to aluminum and composite alternatives

ERIN GOLDEN

Lightweight materials like aluminum, carbon fiber and plastic composites are becoming the backbone of more trucks, as fleets look to shave off weight and gain results like better fuel efficiency and increased durability.

More service body manufacturers are jumping in the "lightweighting" trend, including Knapheide, which debuted its new aluminum body at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March. Other companies, like BrandFX and Johnson Truck Bodies displayed trucks built with composites, highlighting their lighter profiles. Reading Truck Body displayed its own aluminum concept model.

Omar B. Sandlin II, vice president of business development for the U.S. operations of Drive Products, a Canadian truck equipment supplier, said major vehicle builders like Ford, General Motors and others are now even looking beyond lightweight materials for the body and figuring out how to design everything from the truck cab to the transmission to lessen the load.

"Green technology, lightweighting, is here to stay and going to continue to improve and grow," he said. "At the end of the day, it provides safety — but also a massive amount of financial payback."

continued on page 9



Mandar Dighe, vice-president of sales and marketing for The Knapheide Manufacturing Company, and Knapheide president Bo Knapheide, get close to the company's new aluminum service body, which made its debut at the 2018 Work Truck Show.

TECHNOLOGY

Flood of truck fleet data requires careful analysis

Utilimarc's Paul Milner discusses the importance of proper data analysis

MATT JONES

In an increasingly connected world, technologies such as telematics are providing fleet managers with more information than ever before about their vehicles and their performance. But having that information and being able to analyze it in a useful way are two completely different things. Paul Milner, a senior analyst and product developer with Minnesota-based fleet analytics firm Utilimarc, spoke with *Service Truck Magazine* about the conflict between what people believe and what fleet data actually shows and the importance of finding the right ways to utilize and analyze the information available.

Where the conflict exists

While Utilimarc's work is specific to the gas and electric utility industry it is nevertheless applicable to many other sectors, said Milner, who deliv-

continued on page 20



Paul Milner

FUEL ECONOMY

Inevitably, idling proves costly

There are good reasons to idle a service truck but ways exist to reduce its negative effects, experts reveal

ERIN GOLDEN

On the road and at the job site, idle time is inevitable when you're operating a service truck.

But all that time with the engine running can burn through a lot of fuel — and add up to a significant chunk of your company's budget.

"When a vehicle is driving, it gets 15 miles to the gallon, but when it's idling, it's zero miles to a gallon," said Tom Kanewske, vice-president of business development for Derive Systems, a maker of idle-reduction software. "The more the vehicle idles, it pulls down that total MPG by a huge amount ... that's a massive bottom line driver in terms of efficiency. And when you think of bottom line costs, it really, really hurts."

An expanding area of technology aims to ease that pain, with systems that regulate idle fuel use — or regulate idle time altogether. A panel of experts, including Kanewske, delved into the issue earlier this year at the National Truck Equipment Association's annual Work Truck Show in Indianapolis. In interviews after the



"When a vehicle is driving, it gets 15 miles to the gallon, but when it's idling, it's zero miles to a gallon."

— Tom Kanewske, vice-president of business development, Derive Systems

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Tool calculates axle weight and COG

A new “user-friendly” tool for calculating a commercial vehicle’s axle weight and center of gravity is now available from the National Truck Equipment Association.

The web-based tool can be accessed only by NTEA members, who receive it as a free benefit, according to a posting on the association’s website.

“When upfitting or modifying a vehicle, these calculations produce information to share with customers, and assist in understanding how certain



New online calculator is available free but to NTEA members only.

hardware and operating system requirements, can be found at <http://www.ntea.com/calculatoraccess>.

industry standards may apply — both in spec’ing prior to purchase and after upfitting is complete,” the posting explains.

Steve Spata, technical assistant director with the NTEA, was scheduled to deliver a webinar on the weight calculator tool on June 20 shortly before this edition went to press.

More information about the tool, including minimum



Dealers group has new board members

Three new directors have been added to the board of the Independent Equipment Dealers Association.

The new directors are Michael Cole of Cole Equipment in Ada, Okla.; Kiki Brignoni of Heavy Equipment Inventory in San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Mike Pentz of Calvin Group in Loveland, Colo.

The three were inducted to the board at the IEDA’s annual meeting and expo in Orlando, Fla., in late February, the association said in a news release.

One other board member — Luke Brenner of Heavy Equipment Co. in Austin, Texas — was promoted to vice-president of the association.

Outgoing board members include Drew Van Brunt of Global Tractor Company in Colleyville, Texas; Brian Pokrajac of Peps Equipment in San Jacinto, Calif.; and Chris Lohman of South Mountain Tractor in Phoenix, Ariz.

“IEDA board members consist of highly recommended individuals, recruited by previous board members with the insight of a fresh perspective progressing the group and its members forward,” IEDA’s executive director Kristen Williams said in the release.

Directors, who serve at least two consecutive years, are responsible for establishing industry best-practices and quality used equipment standards.



Kiki Brignoni



Michael Cole



Mike Pentz

Webinar looks at industry dynamics

A mid-year update on market activity in the work truck industry will take place in late July.

Steve Latin-Kasper, director of market data and research with the National Truck Equipment Association, will present a webinar on the subject July 26 from 11 a.m. to noon Eastern daylight time.

The webinar promises “to assess current industry dynamics and analyze the degree to which economic forecasts match what’s really taking place,” says a posting on the NTEA website.

Registration to NTEA webinars is free to association members.

For more information, visit www.ntea.com.



Steve Latin-Kasper

COOL TOOL

This wrench works in tight spots

Long bolts used in chain or belt tensioners, or bolts/nuts in tight spaces often defy speedy removal or installation using conventional ratchet wrenches or box-end wrenches. Wright Tools offers ratcheting box-end wrenches that allow the user to “open” the wrench to get it on the fastener, then “close” the wrench so it can be used to ratchet the fastener on or off.

— Dan Anderson

Wright-brand ratcheting wrench that allows the user to “open” the wrench so it can be used on nuts or bolts positioned where a traditional wrench can’t be used.



NEWS

ConExpo organizer named industry icon

A long-time organizer of the ConExpo and ICUEE trade shows has been announced as the trade show Industry Icon for 2018 by the Trade Show News Network.

Megan Tanel, senior vice-president of exhibition and events for the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, will receive the honor during the network's awards gala this August in Louisville, Ky., says a posting on the awards website.

"I am beyond humbled to be receiving the TSNN Industry Icon Award," Tanel said.

With over 20 years experience in the trade show and hospitality industries, Tanel is currently responsible for overseeing AEM trade shows and partnerships, both in the U.S. and globally.

Those shows include the triennial ConExpo-Con/Agg show in Las Vegas and the biennial International Construction and Utilities Equipment Exposition, a.k.a. The Demo Expo, in Louisville.

The award will be presented during the Aug. 10-12 weekend at a TSNN gala that also celebrates the 50 fastest growing trade shows and the Show Manager of the Year.

"She is an absolute powerhouse in our industry, not only for all of her success at AEM, but also for the many ways she continues to give back," said Rachel Wimberly, president of Tarsus Media, parent company of TSNN.

Among her previous accolades, Tanel in 2017 won the Woman of Achievement Award and the Distinguished Service Award from the International Association of Exhibitions and Events, an organization she chaired in 2015.

She joined the AEM in 1995.



Megan Tanel

Exhibit space open for next ICUEE

It's still over a year away but sales of exhibit spaces are now open for the biennial International Construction and Utility Equipment Exposition in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 1-3, 2019.

Known as ICUEE or the Demo Expo, the show features "extensive equipment test drives and product demonstrations," said a news release from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, which owns and organizes the event.

Exhibitors at ICUEE include dozens of manufacturers of service trucks and their accessories.

The 2017 show covered nearly 1.24 million net square feet of exhibits and attracted participants from more than 50 countries.

A new feature for 2019 will be an emerging technologies pavilion that will include business solutions, technology, and software.

For more details on ICUEE 2019, visit www.icuee.com.

File photo by Keith Norbury



The next International Construction and Utility Equipment Exposition takes place in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 1-3, 2019.



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NEWS

Cat execs named to AEM posts

A pair of executives with Caterpillar Inc. have been elected to positions with the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, says a recent news release from the AEM.

Philip Kelliher, vice-president of Caterpillar's Americas & Europe Distribution Services Division, has been elected to the AEM's board of directors. Meanwhile, Anthony Fassino, vice-president of Caterpillar's Building Construction Products Division, was elected to the AEM's Construction Equipment Sector Board.

Both positions fill unexpired terms.

"We greatly appreciate the dedication of our volunteer leaders who serve AEM and the off-road equipment industry," AEM President Dennis Slater said in the June 6 news release. "Our success helping member companies and the industry succeed in changing business conditions would not be possible without their active participation, and we welcome Phil and Tony in these leadership roles."

Both Kelliher, who joined the company in 1994, and Fassino, who joined in 1996, have held various positions with Caterpillar around the world.

The AEM represents more than 950 companies, including dozens of manufacturers of service trucks and accessory equipment.

For more information about AEM, visit www.aem.org.



Philip Kelliher



Anthony Fassino



Chassis sales growth slows

Growth in commercial truck sales in the U.S. and Mexico slowed 6.7 percent in the first quarter of 2018 compared with the first quarter of 2017, according to the June 2018 quarterly chassis report from the National Truck Equipment Association.

Those sales nevertheless still grew by 5.7 percent in Q1 2018 to 102,378 compared with 96,843 in Q1 2017, according to a graph from the chassis report. Sales growth for chassis in the U.S. and Mexico had been "exceptional" in the second half of 2017 at almost 14 percent.

For Canada, sales growth in the second half of 2017 was only seven percent. That growth slowed slightly to six percent in Q1 2018. Sales in Canada totalled 7,433 units in Q1 of 2918 compared with 7,012 in Q2 of 2017.

NTEA members can download the chassis reports for free from the NTEA website. Nonmembers can buy a yearly subscription to the reports for \$299.

For more information, visit www.ntea.com.



The NTEA releases quarterly reports on truck chassis sales.



MECHANIC'S MUSINGS

Pet Tools

DAN ANDERSON

I've noticed over the years that many mechanics have a favorite hammer.

One co-worker will swing nothing except a wooden-handled hammer. Another doesn't consider a hammer "worthy" of using unless it weighs at least four pounds. Personally, I've grown very fond of a 32-ounce ballpeen dead-blow hammer with an orange polyurethane handle.

For years I thought it was just habit that encouraged me to always reach for that orange-handle when I needed a beater, but I recently proved to myself that there are differences in the way a hammer "feels."

A tool dealer had a two-fer deal where I received a free hammer when I bought a ratchet set that I needed. Long story short, the hammer is a new high-tech design that has a sort of tuning fork hidden in the handle. The theory is that the fork resonates or mirrors or somehow damps the vibrations the user feels through the handle.

Since it was the "new toy" in the toolbox, I consciously reached for it for a couple weeks, just to see if it lived up to its claims. It certainly feels different from all my other hammers, and I kind of like it. Maybe. Sort of.

But I noticed last week that the new hammer has migrated to the bottom of my hammer drawer, and that Ol' Faithful, the orange-handled workhorse, is again at the top of the pile. I don't know why — maybe it fits my hand better. Maybe I like the way the grip feels. Maybe my eyes simply fall on the orange polyurethane handle.

Whatever the reason, I now acknowledge and accept that I play favorites with my hammer collection. I think I'll name it "Bob."



Dan Anderson has great affection for his favorite hammer.



MVP status granted

Knapheide Truck Equipment Center Charleston of Ladson, S.C., and Reading Truck Equipment of Nashville, Tenn., are among the new Member Verification Program companies of the National Truck Equipment Association.

Other companies achieving MVP status in the first quarter of 2018 were, according to an NTEA news release, the following:

- Crysteel Truck Equipment Inc. of Lake Crystal, Minn.;
- HP Fairfield of Skowegan, Maine;
- Prime Time SV of Elkhart, Ind.; and
- Utility Equipment Service Inc. of Spring Hill, Tenn.

Companies renewing the MVP status included BrandFX Body Co./Gem Top of Fort Worth, Texas; General Body Mfg. Co of Texas in Houston; Knapheide Truck Equipment - Southwest of Red Oak, Texas; Reading Truck Equipment - Bowmansville, Pa.; and Summit Truck Bodies LLC of Wathena, Kansas.

The MVP program, which now has 274 member companies, recognizes outstanding business practices and implementation of quality standards.



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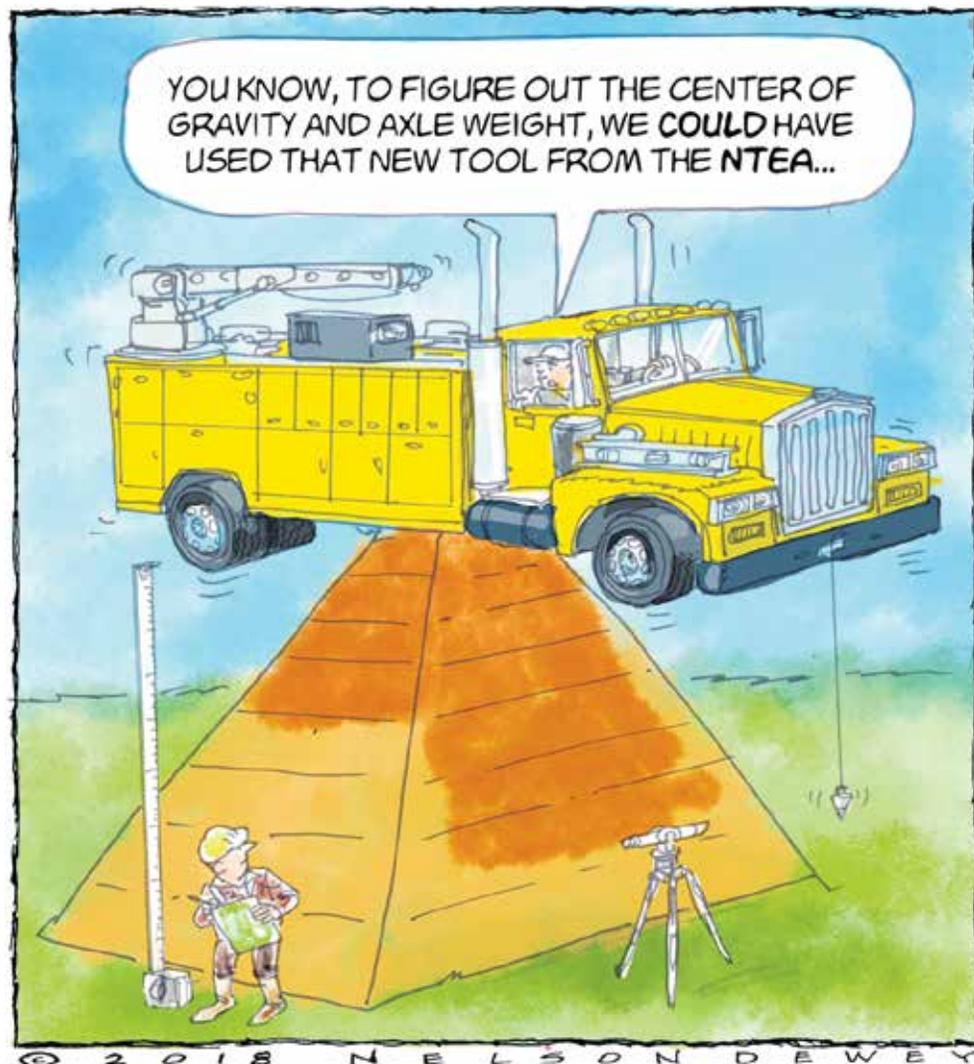


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About our cartoonist

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.

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Short notices: Tell us about individual promotions, appointments, awards, staff movements, plant openings, plant closures, expansions, and other milestones. These short items should be no longer than 100 words.

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 might publish only part of a press release or use it as starting point for an article by one of our writers.

Story ideas: Maybe you have an idea you'd like us to explore for an article. A good rule of thumb is to limit your story idea to no more than 30 words. If it takes longer than that to describe it, then chances are we won't be able to take it on.

All submissions are subject to editing and publication cannot be guaranteed. The deadline for our next issue of *Service Truck Magazine* is Aug. 14, 2018. Sooner is always better than later.

EDITORIAL

Bad idea gets worse

Tariffs are a bad idea. Yes, we've made that case in this space before. But tariffs have emerged as the major economic issue of these times. So it bears repeating: they are a really bad idea.

Deploying them to launch a trade war is an even worse idea. Yet U.S. President Donald Trump has decided to go down that warpath. And, unfortunately, the United States Congress appears powerless to do anything about it.

For a time it looked as though Trump had come at least partially to his senses and was prepared to exempt Canada, Mexico, and the European Union from the steep tariffs he sought to impose on steel and aluminum imports. But when renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement stalled or didn't proceed to his liking, Trump withdrew that exemption. The timing might only be a coincidence but that shift in direction occurred just as he was about to meet with leaders of the major western economies — the Group of Seven — in Quebec.

Why a U.S. president would want to provoke a trade war with his country's longstanding allies is one of the great mysteries of the 21st century so far. Unravelling that will no doubt employ generations of future historians and economists. The latter are already by a large margin condemning the trade war as utter folly.

Now, one consequence of the tariffs, the 25 percent levy on steel at least, has been, or appears to have been, the restarting of steel furnaces in Illinois and South Carolina. As a result, several hundred steel workers are back on the job. U.S. Steel Corporation in Granite City, Illinois, returned 500 employees to work earlier this year and will put 300 more back to work when a second blast furnace restarts in October, according to a Yahoo News report.

On the surface, that looks a big victory for Trump's tariffs. But all indications are that it will be Pyrrhic victory. For just as King Pyrrhus of Epirus defeated the Romans, Trump can prevail in a trade war — but only with many casualties and a lot of collateral damage.

One immediate consequence is going to be higher prices for aluminum. That means it's going to cost more for aluminum service bodies built in the U.S. because the major sources of those grades of aluminum are from Canada and will be subject to a

10 percent tariff. Manufacturers of those bodies will pass costs along to buyers. It's Economics 101 that any time you raise the price of something, demand for it falls.

Fortunately, demand for service bodies has been robust. So the tariffs aren't likely to drop the bottom out of the market. But they will slow growth.

In fact, economists estimate that Trump's tariff will stifle growth in the U.S. gross domestic product by two to three percent. That's not huge but it will about cancel out the average annual growth of a mature industrialized economy.

And because the U.S. economy is still the world's largest and has such a huge internal market, it can limp along — at least until secondary effects of the tariffs kick in to disrupt the global supply chains.

In the meantime, longtime allies of the U.S. face a more grim immediate future.

In 2016, trade accounted for 64 percent of Canada's gross domestic product compared to 27 percent for the U.S., according to figures from the World Bank Group.

Exports accounted for 31 percent of Canada's GDP, but only 11.9 percent of U.S. GDP. Meanwhile, about 76.25 percent of Canada's exports in 2016 were to the U.S. But those exports only translated into 12.6 percent of imports into the U.S. that year.

It's clear which partner is more dependent on trade.

European countries aren't in nearly such a precarious position. Germany, for example, only sends 8.9 percent of its exports to the U.S.

Mexico, though, is in a similar predicament as Canada, with 81 percent of Mexican exports bound for the U.S. Nearly half, 46.5 percent, of Mexican imports come from the U.S. Overall, trade accounts for 78 percent of Mexico's GDP.

An unintended consequence of a trade war would be to squeeze the GDP of Mexico and result in even more Mexicans attempting to seek economic refuge in the U.S.

Retaliatory tariffs certainly aren't going to help the fortunes of Mexico or Canada. For the minuscule pain they inflict on the U.S., those measures will harm the retaliators more.

Unfortunately, that's where things are headed.



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NEWS

Three things about 3D printing

File photos by Keith Norbury

The Association of Equipment Manufacturers offers a primer on 3D printing of construction equipment

Editor's note: The following is a lightly edited version of an article submitted by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.

MILWAUKEE — The 3D-printed excavator unveiled at ConExpo-Con/Agg and IFPE in Las Vegas in March 2017 was more than just an attention-getter.

It demonstrated how three-dimensional printing has slowly but surely developed into a disruptive technology poised to have far-reaching effects on the equipment industry.

The Association of Equipment Manufacturers was part of the team effort that developed that 3D-printed excavator, which was displayed at the event's inaugural Tech Experience.

(Editor's note: Mark Noakes, a senior researcher at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory who was explaining at the pavilion how 3D printing works, told *Service Truck Magazine* that only a few of the excavator's components were actually 3D printed. They included parts of the cab and an arm of the boom.)



3D-printed excavator moves dirt at ConExpo 2017's Tech Experience pavilion.

going to displace welding.”

One key hurdle to adoption is that 3D printing is not yet fast enough, Love says.

“When you make these great parts at low volumes, you don't care that it takes a week or a month ... but we've got to go faster because it drives the productivity up and the costs down (for manufacturers).”

Does things never done before

Love and his colleagues at Oak Ridge National Laboratory can attest to both the technology's incredible capabilities and its value proposition for manufacturers.

They were involved in building the world's first operational 3D-printed excavator unveiled at ConExpo.

Known as Project AME (Additive Manufactured Excavator), the excavator was 3D printed using a variety of machines to create and assemble three components: a cab, a boom, and a heat exchanger. The excavator's boom was fabricated using a cutting-edge free-form additive manufacturing technique to print large-scale metal components.

It was an incredible undertaking, and the success of Project AME proved the sky's really the limit in terms of what 3D-printing technology can do.

Creates efficiencies and save money

The costly and time-consuming process of tooling is a prime example of an opportunity for manufacturers to leverage 3D printing to create efficiencies.

According to Love, the production of molds, jigs and fixtures used in the mass production of heavy equipment can take months, run six-figure costs and very often involve tooling companies based overseas.

continued on page 11



Mark Noakes, a senior researcher at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, explains how additive manufacturing, or 3D printing, works to a visitor to ConExpo 2017's Tech Experience pavilion.

The AEM relays three things to keep in mind when looking at 3D printing and its potential for equipment manufacturing.

Enormous potential, but still evolving

The consensus right now among leading additive manufacturing experts is that the technology's immediate potential can be most readily found in smaller-scale deployments, according to Dr. Lonnie Love, corporate research fellow at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

“(3D printing) is not going to change all of manufacturing overnight,” Love says. “It's not going to displace casting. It's not



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COVER

Some like it light *continued from cover*

Sandlin, who gave a presentation on lightweighting strategies at this year's Work Truck Show, said outfitting a truck with nontraditional materials does come with a bigger upfront cost.

Cost gap shrinking

A service body built with aluminum, rather than steel, is likely to cost 20 to 25 percent more. But that gap has been declining; Sandlin said the markup used to be closer to 45 to 50 percent. And once the truck is in use, the more expensive materials start paying for themselves in the form of savings on fuel and maintenance — and the potential for increased capacity.

Sandlin said lightweight trucks just don't wear out as quickly.

"It's (savings in) the total annual cost of maintenance — it's not wearing out your tires, not wearing out your shocks," he said.

And if the truck weighs less overall, some of its key components can look a little different, too.

"Now, lightweight technologies are interfacing with brakes," he said. "If your braking distance (is shorter), the technology is changing — why do you need this big, beefy brake?"



Ben Rookey, marketing manager for Fort Worth, Texas-based BrandFX, stands in the spacious bed of one of the company's new composite service bodies at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis.

"Green technology, lightweighting, is here to stay and going to continue to improve and grow. At the end of the day, it provides safety — but also a massive amount of financial payback."

— Omar B. Sandlin II, vice president of business development for U.S. operations, Drive Products

As more fleets make the switch to lightweight materials, Sandlin said the thinking that aluminum won't hold up as well as steel is disappearing. He points to service trucks used in the tree care industry, which need to hold up against heavy use.

"For chipper bodies in tree care, when they throw a giant stump in steel, it's going to dent, same as aluminum," he said. "The biggest difference is when it rains and there's moisture, the steel body is going to rust, and you're going to have to put labor into repairing that."

No rust, less fuel

Aluminum, on the other hand, won't have problems with rust. Sandlin said composite materials can also be good alternatives, though they make for bodies that can be tougher — or impossible — to repair if they are pierced or if there's other serious damage.

For many fleets, the fuel savings of going lightweight is the most obvious difference. Among the numbers Sandlin has shared with attendees at the Work Truck show are those that show how lightweight materials can boost efficiency significantly over traditional steel: magnesium by 30 to 70 percent, carbon fiber composites by 50 to 70 percent and aluminum by 30 to 60 percent, among other options.

That boost to fuel efficiency also means fleets are reducing their carbon emissions. Though the Trump administration is working to reverse some of the Obama-era environmental regulations around emissions, Sandlin said it doesn't seem to be dampening enthusiasm for lightweighting.

"I think there's enormous momentum," he said.

Erin Golden is a writer based in Minnesota.



New aluminum crane service body from Warner Bodies is reinforced to handle a crane of up to 3,000 pounds capacity.

NEWS

Former NTEA president preparing for retirement

Mark Woody is stepping down as president of Palfinger Inc., headquartered in Niagara Falls, Ont.

The 2018 Work Truck Show represented Mark Woody's last as president of Palfinger Inc., the North American branch of the Austria-based equipment maker.

Woody said during an interview at the show that he is officially retiring at the end of March but will remain as advisor with the company until the end of the year. When that happens, he plans to remain in Niagara Falls, Ont., where Palfinger has its North American headquarters.

Originally from Seattle, Woody lived in Vancouver, B.C. for about 10 years before moving to Niagara Falls 25 years ago. A dual Canadian and U.S. citizen, he nevertheless remains a devoted fan of his hometown Seattle Seahawks.

"I'm going to spend time with my wife. She thinks that she wants to have me home more often," quipped Woody, who has five children and two grandchildren. "So we'll see how that works after a few months. The job entailed a lot of travel and pretty much every Monday I've been on a flight somewhere and hopefully back by Friday."

Woody served as president from 2014 to 2015 of the National Truck Equipment Association, which organizes the annual Work Truck Show.

"I have a lot of friends here, a lot of acquaintances and this might be the



Photo by Keith Morbury

only place I can ever come back to see everybody," Woody said. "We'll see how it goes. Right now there's no immediate plans. This could be my last Work Truck Show."

Palfinger North America had only 11 employees and about \$5 million in annual revenue when he joined the division in 1993. Today, Palfinger Inc. has more than 1,000 employees and around \$300 million in annual sales.

"Originally it was just the one division. That's all there was when I first started was the one facility at Niagara Falls," Woody said.

The company's growth included acquisitions, such as the purchase in 2008 of Iowa-based truck body manufacturer Omaha Standard. Palfinger has also grown internationally. It now has around 10,000 employees in more than 130 countries and annual revenues of about \$1.4 billion.



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COVER

Idling proves costly continued from cover

show, they said fleet managers have a number of options to consider if they're looking to target idle time as an area to boost efficiency.

Good reasons for idling

Kanewske said companies should first take a broad look at when and why their trucks are idling. More often than not, he said, it's for good reason: the truck's power is needed to run equipment, the driver is gearing up to head to his or her next call, or the truck is stuck in traffic. Even if a driver is just having lunch or making a call, maybe the conditions outside are too extreme to have the engine off.

"There are tons of reasons for that vehicle to be idling, and for those cases we say if it is idling, is there a way to optimize the mode of idling?" he said. "The short answer is: yes."

Derive Systems' solution involves using software that helps alter how an individual vehicle functions. Using the truck's computer system, the software gathers information about how the vehicle is used — things like speed and mileage — and data about outside elements, like weather, traffic and routes.

Then, the company customizes the vehicle's software to ensure that it's using only the power it really needs. Unlike other solutions to the idling problem, it doesn't deal in converting vehicles' power systems to accommodate additional batteries or other hybrid energy solutions. Instead, it just makes a truck "smarter" about its fuel use.

The technology is useful both for reducing the impact of both useful and unnecessary idle time, Kanewske said. If a fleet is having trouble with drivers' speeding, braking or wasteful idling, the software can be set to limit all of those behaviors — avoiding the problem of having a manager continually issue reminders that may or may not be heeded. He said setting up the system is about as easy as doing the initial setup on a new iPhone.

"We'll sit down with a fleet and talk about some truck, and at the end I'll say: 'What else are you not telling me about — a coffee pot? Microwave?'"

— Bruce Beegle, vice-president for truck and military sales, Vanner Inc.



"We're able to cut out that middle man — management — and go directly from, 'you're idling too much' to saving fuel," he said.

Software saves on fuel

Using the software to control speed and idling can amount to noticeable fuel savings, Kanewske said. The company offers a guarantee: that fleets will see a six- to 12 percent savings in fuel after installing their systems.

Bruce Beegle, the vice-president for truck and military sales at Vanner Inc., an Ohio-based producer of vehicle power conversion systems, said his company's electronic systems help fleets use electrical power to keep their vehicles running.

That process typically begins with a load analysis, where the company looks for any and all ways that power gets drained from the vehicle.

"We'll sit down with a fleet and talk about some truck, and at the end I'll say: 'What else are you not telling me about — a coffee pot? Microwave?'" he said.

Beegle said any small appliance or item that wasn't part of the truck's initial design could be making it less fuel efficient. His company figures out how much power a vehicle needs, and when it needs it. Then, it's a matter of figuring

out where an electrical system can be installed.

Depending on the type of vehicle and how and where it is used, trucks need different sizes of auxiliary batteries, alternators, cables and other components. To explain how it all comes together — and how much the systems can vary to meet a particular fleet's needs — Beegle likes to highlight some of the companies using Vanner systems.

Battery solution

Among them: Fleet Electric, a Worcester, Mass.-based telecom fleet that replaced its trucks' generators with battery systems. The battery takes up about the same amount of space and can be recharged as the trucks go to and from job sites. For Safelite Auto Glass, Vanner designed a system that keeps the engine off at job sites and recharges an auxiliary battery while on the road. Previously, Safelite had left vehicles idling for hours at job sites.

"They are good examples of taking conventional technology, understanding the applications and sizing and balancing the system correctly," Beegle said.

Like the Derive Systems software, the Vanner idle reduction systems are designed to be easy for fleets to use.



"Quiet job sites allow for improved crew communication, less interruption to the neighborhood and a more pleasant working environment."

— Ryan Hulleman, green fleet market manager, Altec Inc.

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COVER

File photo



Altec service truck is on display at the 2017 International Construction & Utility Equipment Exposition in Louisville, Ky.

“A lot of fleets like that their guys can repair it – it’s not some exotic thing,” Beegle said. “It’s components that are on these trucks all day.

Ryan Hulleman, green fleet market manager for Altec Inc., said his company’s idle-reduction offering is what it calls Jobsite Energy Management Systems, or JEMS. The technology is available on most of Altec’s models and uses electric power to take over during idling.

“Stored energy from a truck mounted lithium ion battery pack provides the energy needed for operating the vehicle’s aerial device, outriggers, 12 V accessories, lights and cabin comfort systems,” he said.

Quiet benefits

In addition to fuel savings, Hulleman said reducing engine idling cuts down on maintenance – and unpleasant work environments.

“Quiet job sites allow for improved crew communication, less interruption to the neighborhood and a more pleasant working environment,” he said.

Fleets using JEMS can track their results in a controller mounted in the truck

or online. Hulleman said fleets of a variety of sizes and industries, from small city government operations to large electric utilities, have made use of the systems.

He expects more fleets will find themselves looking for innovative ways to cut idle time, if they’re not already.

“We’re all very eager to see how battery technology develops over the next couple of years,” he said. “Improvements in energy density and performance in extreme climates will help to improve the attractiveness of hybrid solutions.”

Beegle, with Vanner, agrees — but he said the success of these types of systems is often contingent on how seamless it is for fleets to introduce to their vehicles, drivers and mechanics.

“If it’s too complex to do, or you need a lot of training, your best guys will do it, your worst guys will never do it, and the guys in the middle will have some level of compliance,” he said. “But if you make it transparent to the user, your odds of success grow exponentially.”

Erin Golden is a writer based in Minnesota.



“We’ve already proven this on the automotive and aerospace sides. Now it’s time to take a look at construction and see where it fits.”

— Dr. Lonnie Love, corporate research fellow, Oak Ridge National Laboratory

ConExpo 2017’s Tech Experience pavilion features a large 3D printer in operation.

3D printing

continued from page 7

However, Love says the widespread adoption of additive manufacturing could change all that.

“This may be a mechanism to rapidly get tooling back in the U.S., to make it take days and not months,” Love says. “It costs thousands instead of hundreds of thousands. We’ve already proven this on the automotive and aerospace sides. Now it’s time to take a look at construction and see where it fits.”

The equipment industry has earned a well-deserved reputation for designing and building machinery that stays in use for decades. But manufacturers spend heavily to keep massive inventories of spare parts on hand to meet customer needs.

According to Love, companies are now combating that challenge by cutting back on the overhead costs of warehouse space through 3D printing.

“The advantage of this technology is you could actually print a replacement part without having to have that inventory,” Love says. “That, to me, has tremendous potential.”

The Tech Experience returns to the next ConExpo in 2020. For more information, visit www.conexpoconagg.com.

The Association of Equipment Manufacturers has more than 950 member companies, including dozens of makers of service trucks and related accessories.



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CONFERENCE NEWS

Economy dominates discussions at annual Truck World conference

Attendees and exhibitors at Toronto conference report a brisk economy while wondering what Trump's tariffs might wrought

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SAUL CHERNOS

While North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiations and tariff threats are infusing uncertainty into the economy, attendees at Truck World in the Toronto suburb of Brampton, Ont., reported business as brisk and gaining traction in the wake of previous recessionary years.

Based in Toronto, Pro Reefer and Mobile Truck Services provides round-the-clock mobile services for trucks, trailers, reefers and heaters, and national account manager Derek Hone told *Service Truck Magazine* his company is growing and signs for his sector look promising.

"We have 65 service trucks in our fleet and we take care of Toronto, Montreal, Regina, Winnipeg and Vancouver, our sister company is Triple Diamond Truck Center, a truck shop in Etobicoke (a district of Toronto), and we just became the official Zanotti dealer in Ontario for self-contained units," Hone said.

Positive indicators

One positive indicator is that product from companies that build boxes for truck chassis are about 14 weeks out.

"With the box companies being so far out on the build dates on actual van bodies, that's a good sign," Hone said, adding that transportation is a strong indicator of overall economic activity.

Hone said owners always need to maintain and service their equipment to some degree, no matter how the economy is faring, and Pro Reefer services food refrigeration sys-



Attendees at Truck World in Toronto check out a Summit Bodies service truck on display at the Kenworth booth.

tems for hauling meat, dairy and produce. "It doesn't matter how bad the economy is, people still have to eat. If a unit goes down they still need to get it fixed."

While talk about the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement and threats of tariffs on materials such as aluminum and steel are potentially concerning, Hone said he thinks President Donald Trump is more likely to take action against countries other than Canada.

"I think he's more interested in trying to level the playing field with China and maybe the deficit with Mexico," Hone said. "But there's too many what-ifs. We'll have to see what happens."

(As it happened, citing a lack of progress on NAFTA renegotiations, Trump decided in late May to eliminate an exemption he had granted to Canada, Mexico, and the EU from the tariffs.)

Rick Lawrence is national sales manager with Iowa-based SmithCo Inc., which manufactures side-dump trailers for aggregate, construction, demolition, mining and agricultural markets, and he reported a record year.

"Unless something goes sour, this is probably going to be our biggest year," Lawrence said. "Everything's work-

"It doesn't matter how bad the economy is, people still have to eat. If a unit goes down they still need to get it fixed."

— Derek Hone, national account manager, Pro Reefer and Mobile Truck Services



"Unless something goes sour, this is probably going to be our biggest year. Everything's working. The agricultural people are buying, and construction and mining are up. Usually you have some markets that are down, others that are really peaking, but for the last year or so everything is up."

— Rick Lawrence, national sales manager, SmithCo Inc.

ing. The agricultural people are buying, and construction and mining are up. Usually you have some markets that are down, others that are really peaking, but for the last year or so everything is up."

Lawrence said SmithCo's markets cover all of the U.S. and Canada, and his participation on the trade show floor was to reach Canada's aggregate market and also showcase trailers for hauling sand, gravel, demolition waste and other materials.

Hiccups cured

"It seems like everyone's feeling good about things and trying to go forward," Lawrence said, describing the recession of 2008-2009 as "a little bit of a hiccup" and tough times in 2000 as "one big hiccup."

This year is decidedly in the other direction. "We do 700 to 800 trailers a year and we're going to be in the upper area of that this year," Lawrence said. "There seems to be more of the expensive, specialized, high-dollar trailers being purchased."

While SmithCo buys steel from U.S. and Canadian suppliers, Lawrence said he'll wait and see what happens. "The only thing we've noticed since the tariff talks have been going on is that Canadian and U.S. manufacturers have all raised their prices. We're seeing anywhere from 10 to 30 percent higher-priced steel these days. There's a lot of speculation going on right now, and I'm hoping by the third or fourth quarter the dust settles a little bit."

Auburn Hills, Michigan-based BorgWarner/Delco Remy offers rotating electric products, thermal products and fan clutches. Regional sales manager Craven Mabrey described markets as strong, with truck sales, secondary sales and repairs all healthy.

"We have more tonnage on trucks being moved now than we've had in the past few years, and as the tonnage goes up more trucks are in service for a longer period of

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CONFERENCE NEWS



“We have more tonnage on trucks being moved now than we’ve had in the past few years, and as the tonnage goes up more trucks are in service for a longer period of time.”

— Craven Mabrey, regional sales manager, BorgWarner/Delco Remy

“Everybody’s backlogs are pretty far out into the end of the year for on-highway trucks and vocational trucks. It’s been a good year for everybody.”

— Jamin Swazo, on-highway marketing manager, Kenworth Truck Company



time,” Mabrey said, attributing the rebound to a once-depressed energy market that’s starting to come back and a housing market that’s holding strong.

“The majority of products for these markets have to be transferred by truck, so you’re going to see a lot more.”

Tough talking tool

Mabrey said the tough talk might simply be a “talking tool to do broader negotiations” rather than anything more specific. “Until we know all the details of it, it’s more of a shot across the bow. It may sound harsh, and like something ridiculous, but it may not ever come to the forefront.”

Delco Remy manufactures in Mexico, maintains its technical support center in Noblesville Indiana, and has warehouses in Mississauga, Ontario for its Canadian distribution and in Laredo, Texas for U.S. distribution. So the company could potentially be directly impacted by changes to NAFTA.

“I would like to see it stay just like it is, not even worry about it, and just continue along the way we are,” Mabrey said. “But there may be something else out there that’s upside down. It may be an advantage one way or the other that should be equalized.”

Jamin Swazo, on-highway marketing manager with Kenworth Truck Company, said business has been stronger overall for the U.S. and Canada.

“Everybody’s backlogs are pretty far out into the end of the year for on-highway trucks and vocational trucks,” Swazo said. “It’s been a good year for everybody. The whole market size is definitely a lot bigger (with) several thousand more trucks expected (industry-wide) by the end of the year.”

Paul Kangas, eastern Canada district sales manager with Dana Incorporated’s aftermarket group, has a bird’s eye view from his office in Timmins, Ont., and the company’s home base in Maumee, Ohio.

“We’ll see what happens”

“Distributors might see increased pricing, but our company has not put a price increase down. But it might eventually show up in the new year — we’ll see what happens with the tariffs.”

As Kangas sees it, Canadian steel isn’t the issue. It’s decidedly cheaper product coming from other countries.

“If that gets taxed by 20 percent, the next time you buy that part from China



“If that gets taxed by 20 percent, the next time you buy that part from China and bring it into the United States it’s going to cost you 20 percent more.”

— Paul Kangas, eastern Canada district sales manager, Dana Incorporated

and bring it into the United States it’s going to cost you 20 percent more,” Kangas said. “Someone’s got to eat that up, right?”

In the meantime, Kangas reported business as steady. “I’m not breaking records. Sales are up a little bit, but it may not grow as much as last year.”

Based in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Wheel Monitor manufactures lift axle controls for trucks and trailers. Finance and operations vice-president Shannon Bell said January to April sales rose 30 percent over the same period last year.

“The last quarter of 2017 was very slow, but sales have picked up,” Bell said. “It was a pleasant surprise.”

Bell attributed this to increased truck sales, in turned prodded by increased demand to transport goods.

The fact the trade pact is under review “is causing me a little bit of grief because a lot of our goods that are transported into the U.S. right now are being stopped because every single item is being scrutinized to see if it’s eligible under NAFTA,” Bell said, describing week-long hold-ups at the border.

“It’s actually a bit of a nightmare because the government is scrutinizing everything,” Bell said. “They’re looking at it more and making sure they’re getting their tax dollars.”

Saul Chernos is a freelance writer based in Toronto.



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BY DAN ANDERSON

SPEC MY TRUCK

Big, Beautiful Beast

Chris Leker's rig is a one-of-a-kind, multi-purpose service truck that's pure "work" under a gleaming exterior

There are service trucks dedicated to agricultural machinery, there are service trucks dedicated to earthmoving and construction equipment, and then there is Chris Leker's service truck. It's dedicated to repairing agricultural machinery, earthmoving and construction equipment — and just about anything that breaks and needs fixing.

"I try to be self-sufficient, to have the tools and parts to fix anything I run into," says the owner of Chris Leker Enterprises, a construction and excavating company based in Bristol, Wisc.

He is also co-owner of Valleycroft Farms, a 2,300-acre family-owned concern with row crops, hay, and livestock ventures that include cattle, swine, turkey, and chicken operations. "I move the farming tools and parts on and off the truck according to whether we're planting or haying or harvesting. But the construction stuff stays on year-round."

Leker's do-it-all service truck is based on a 2001 four-wheel-drive Ford F750 powered by a Caterpillar 3126 engine. The truck came with a 16-foot-long Carco Industries high-side service body outfitted with an 8,000-pound Auto Crane crane. A 30,000-pound Braden cable winch is mounted on an extended front bumper. On the opposite end, the rear bumper boasts a vise and a hefty bench grinder. A fuel-injected Miller Trailblazer generator/welder nestles in a cut-out on the right side of the service body to provide easy, from-the-ground access to its controls. A twin-cylinder, hydraulically driven air compressor nestles at the front of the service body's bed.

Compartments on both sides of the truck feature AG Body Inc. ball-bearing drawers brimming with Snap-on tools. Various compartments store an amazing variety of metal working tools, including a Miller 22A wire welder, a Millermatic portable suitcase wire welder, an oxyacetylene torch, and a portable metal-cutting bandsaw as well as a Thermodynamics plasma cutter configured to plug into the 230-volt side of the Miller Trailblazer.

"I can't imagine not having a plasma cutter on the truck," Lesker says. "It cuts so much cleaner and faster than a torch. Plus we do a fair amount of stainless steel and aluminum cutting, which the torch can't do. I can clean-cut 3/4-inch steel and sever steel up to 7/8-inch with the plasma cutter."

The truck has hydraulics plumbed to quick-couplers out the rear of the service body as well as to the left side.

"The hydraulics are nice when we're moving agricultural equipment. Plus we use them to power a machine that pushes water service under roads, and for running a (hydraulically powered) concrete cutting saw," he says. "I've also got half-inch air lines plumbed to the rear and side of the truck for maximum air power on my one-inch air tools."

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.

Four-inch floodlights mount on all corners of the service body, but are his second choice for work after sunset.

"We've got trailer-mounted Wacker (Neuson) light towers (with motor-driven generators) that we tow where we need them," Leker says. "They light things up better than truck-mounted lights."

Other tools stored in the truck's compartments include multiple PortaPowers, their pumps and their accessories, as well as a Milwaukee Sawzall reciprocating saw, a hammer drill, boxes of bulk agricultural roller chain, multiple angle-head grinders, die grinders, spare spools of steel and aluminum welding wire, and large-scale torque multipliers, torque wrenches and breaker bars. Total weight of the truck, tools and parts inventory is ... unknown.

"I've never weighed it, and really don't want to know," Leker says. "I sort of cringe every time I meet a DOT enforcement vehicle."

Is a bigger truck an option?

Leker says no.

"If I do anything, I'd add another truck, rather than get a bigger one," he says. "That way I could have a truck in more than one place at the same time. As it is, I have a lot of help from friends and employees to keep everything running during the busy times."

"I can't imagine not having a plasma cutter on the truck. It cuts so much cleaner and faster than a torch."

— Chris Leker, Bristol, Wisc.

Home base for Leker's service truck is a 60- by 135-foot shop large enough to accommodate the biggest farm equipment or one of several Cat 322 excavators he owns. The shop is equipped with a metal lathe, ironworker machine, sheet metal brakes, a stationary band saw and, "... enough stuff so we can fix about anything we need to."

Keeping so much diverse equipment running would seem to be a major strain on Leker's time and mental well-being, but that diversity is actually what fuels him.

"What I like best about all of this is the variety," he says. "I don't like to do the same thing all the time. About the time I get tired of farming, there's something to do with the excavating, or the livestock, or combinations of all of them. I just like to be challenged by something new or different all the time."

Photos: Hope Francis Photography



Home base for Leker's service truck is a 60- by 135-foot shop.



This compartment stores his trusty plasma cutter.



A 30,000-pound Braden cable winch is mounted on extended front bumper.



Auto Crane crane boasts 8,000 pounds of lifting capacity.

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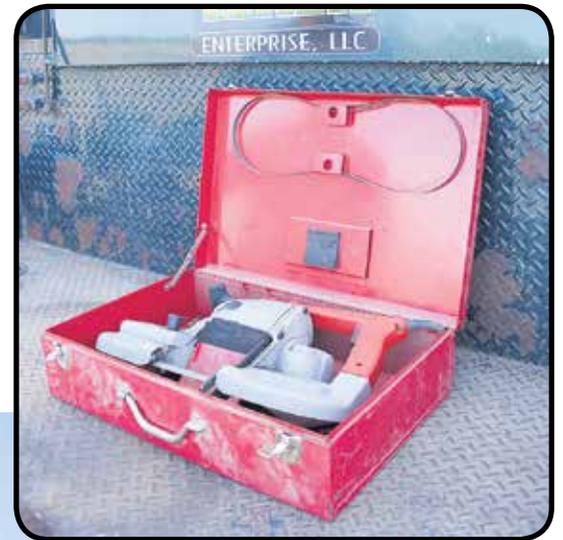
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Caterpillar 3126 engine powers the 2001 four-wheel-drive Ford F750.



Cabinet doors gleam on the 16-foot-long Carco Industries high-side service body.



Portable metal-cutting bandsaw is among Leker's tools.



Using his truck, Chris Leker will fix just about anything.



Compartments store the likes of a Miller 22A wire welder, a Millermatic portable suitcase wire welder, and an oxyacetylene torch.



Auxiliary hydraulics are plumbed to quick-couplers.



Twin-cylinder, hydraulically driven air compressor nestles at the front of the service body's bed.



Fuel-injected Miller Trailblazer generator/welder nestles in a cut-out.



AG Body Inc. ball-bearing drawers brim with Snap-on tools.



Truck is equipped with multiple grinders.

CONFERENCE NEWS

Highway horror stories

Police presentations at Truck World recount tales of trucking woe

SAUL CERNOS

Unsecured loads falling off trucks. Wheels coming off a school bus and a patient transportation vehicle. Drivers running 36 hours straight. Brakes shot. Signals out.

Police from southern Ontario were not lost for words at a truck show just outside Toronto in April. Truck World takes place every two years at the International Centre in Brampton. This year's roster featured two sessions on truck safety.

The officers who spoke had tales aplenty about miscreant trucks they've hauled off the road — often after fatal mishaps, sometimes thankfully before anything serious happened.

Staff Sgt. Mike Hinsperger of Waterloo Regional Police Service spoke of two sisters, ages 19 and 23, who died in 2007 after being struck by a truck with three-quarters of its brakes inoperative. The company was fined \$10,000 for failing to maintain the vehicle to proper standards.

Overweight truck proves fatal

Const. Pat Martin of Halton Regional Police Service told of a woman traveling on Highway 25 in the Town of Oakville to visit her boyfriend. The southbound dump truck that killed her was four and a half metric tonnes over its allowable weight, and most brakes were inoperative.

"That was my first fatality as a CVSA officer," Martin said, referring to the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, a North America-wide organization that certifies inspectors.

Soon afterwards, in the same town, an overloaded dump truck with misaligned brakes struck a car, seriously injuring an elderly couple who had just dropped their granddaughter at preschool.

Martin was particularly moved by the story of a woman who happened to be a municipal transit safety officer in Barrie, north of Toronto. Driving northbound on Highway 400, she died when a southbound truck, faced with a sudden traffic jam, couldn't stop and collided with a rental van, pushing the van over the median into the northbound lanes and into the woman's path.

"When the driver left he didn't do his daily pre-trip inspection," Martin said. "Investigators (from the Ontario Provincial Police) found seven brakes out of adjustment on his trailer. He went to court and was convicted of criminal negligence causing death — not a Highway Traffic Act offence — and got four years custody and a 15-year driver's license suspension. If he'd done his daily inspection we would have had a different ending."

Hinsperger and Martin are both members of the Ontario Police Commercial Vehicle Committee — chair and vice-chair respectively — and their goal at Truck World was to persuade drivers to take their safety obligations seriously.

"Extremely preventable"

Hinsperger drove long-haul and local-haul transport for a dozen years in an earlier career, so he understands the world of trucking even as the pair, with their respective detachments, perform inspections on a daily basis, often collaborating with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, the provincial governing body.

"The stuff we're finding is extremely preventable," Hinsperger said. "Drivers could find the vast majority of defects that we see simply by completing a proper trip inspection prior to going on the highway."

During inspection blitzes police and transport ministry enforcement personnel conducted in Ontario last year, officers stopped 1,837 trucks and placed 748 of them out of service for major defects.



This highway tractor truck lost the wheel from an axle. Photo at right shows wear into the metal of the rim caused by the flange of a hub piloted fastener scraping the rim as the clamping force is lost.

Photos courtesy Ontario Provincial Police/Sgt. Scott Parker



Photo by Saul Chernos

Sgt. Scott Parker of the Ontario Provincial Police takes part in a safety session at Truck Show in Toronto this spring.

"That's a 40 percent out-of-service rate, with 1,574 charges laid," Hinsperger said. "A lot of the stuff we find when we do Level 1 inspections (complete vehicle inspections) is stuff the driver should have found prior to us. So preventability is the issue we want you to take away today."

In Ontario, Regulation 199(07) of the Highway Traffic Act mandates pre-trip inspections on a 24-hour timeline. However, while defects must be noted and often addressed during pre-trip inspections, trucks must also be monitored while in use.

"If some lights go out, it's considered a minor defect and you can still operate the truck but you must note the defect at the time it's found," Hinsperger said. "Then you have to report it to the shop and it has to be repaired before you go out with the truck again. And if a truck changes trailers, the inspection report must reflect that new trailer — it's like a new vehicle."

Under Ontario law, drivers must let the vehicle owner or operator know of any defects they find, and reports listing defects must be kept for three months.

Mechanics share responsibility

Some attendees lamented that drivers seem to bear the onus, but Hinsperger pointed out that drivers aren't alone in bearing responsibility or facing charges. "It could be the owner of the company, it could be a mechanic, it could be the driver," he said.

While a driver does bear responsibility, the operator of the company is ultimately responsible for the conduct of its drivers and the operation of its vehicles. "The driver is going to get charged if there are issues, but there are certain circumstances where the driver may not be charged," Hinsperger said.

Martin, his co-presenter, chimed in: "Sometimes we find there's a blame game. The driver will blame the company or the company will blame the driver. Our courts (in Halton Region) want us to charge both parties so they can come to court as one single entity and the prosecutor can determine, in court as opposed to at the roadside, whose responsibility that defect is."

Sgt. Scott Parker, who oversees commercial vehicle and dangerous goods enforcement for the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), spoke about wheel separations.

Photo by Saul Chernos



"The stuff we're finding is extremely preventable. Drivers could find the vast majority of defects that we see simply by completing a proper trip inspection prior to going on the highway."

— Staff Sgt. Mike Hinsperger,
Waterloo Regional Police Service

Breaking down the 94 wheel separations reported to him personally in 2017 by police officers across Ontario, Parker attributed 68 instances to failed fasteners, 23 to failed bearings, and three to broken wheels. He also noted a spike in events during lower temperatures, leading to the same culprit Hinsperger and Martin fingered — failure to perform pre-trip vehicle inspections adequately or at all.

"It's cold," Parker said. "The pre-trip is being done inside the cab. Things are not being checked."

Long hours responsible

Interestingly, the problem in Ontario is largely domestic. "The vehicles that are losing their wheels in this province by and far are Ontario-plated vehicles," Parker said, showing a short video clip of a spun-off tire killing a motorcyclist. "It's a problem we own."

It's not just trucks. Parker told of one patient transportation vehicle losing a wheel while moving someone between hospitals. Const. Dal Gill of Toronto Police Service, Parker's co-presenter, recalled motorists alerting officers to a school bus carrying children with a wheel breaking off on Toronto's Don Valley Parkway.

Vehicle mishaps don't always involve failing equipment. Halton's Pat Martin recalled a collision involving a transport trailer that crossed the median and struck an oncoming car, killing its lone occupant.

"The driver of that transport truck was up 36 hours straight," Martin said. "His logbooks didn't show that, but when we went back and did the investigation we determined he'd been all the way down to Ohio and had come all the way back up. It took a couple of years to convict him of criminal negligence, and he received seven years in custody."

The candle might not burn at both ends much longer for Canadian motorists. At another session on electronic logging devices (ELDs), Rihard Suler of Isaac Instruments reminded attendees that ELD devices will be mandatory north of the border sometime in 2020. (ELD's became mandatory in the U.S. in December 2017, with a grace period that expired March 31, 2018.)

Electronic logs will replace paper ones and will record actual driving hours. The new systems will be attached to a truck's wheels and won't be able to fake driving times, Suler said.

While paper logs are currently legal in Canada, fleet managers can install an automatic on-board recording device to eliminate cheating. They will then be able to use AOBDR until 2022, whereas those without AOBDR devices prior to the 2020 date will generally need to go straight to ELD.

Saul Chernos is a freelance writer based in Toronto.



New Reading president gets ready for the future



Greg Freeman

“So I’ve been coming up the learning curve very quickly to be able to speak the language, speak intelligently with our customers, with the staff. That’s really the biggest area.”

Greg Freeman, president and CEO, Reading Truck Group

KEITH NORBURY

In his first two months as head of Pennsylvania-based service body manufacturer Reading Truck Group, Greg Freeman has visited every company site on a mission to learn, listen, and absorb information.

“I’ve gone out to a lot of customers and everything I’ve heard has either reinforced or added to what I thought coming into the job,” Freeman said in a telephone interview with *Service Truck Magazine*. “So it’s been great.”

Freeman’s appointment as president and CEO of Reading took effect April 2. He reports to John Poindexter, president of Houston, Texas-based J.B. Poindexter & Co. Inc., Reading’s parent company.

“It’s a very thorough process that one goes through with John Poindexter,” Freeman said. “So you come in with a fairly thorough knowledge of the business as it is.”

While Freeman came to Reading with no direct experience in the service body industry, his 25-year career in other specialty industries — such as at Graham Packaging Company — readied him for Reading, he said.

Solving speciality problems

“Every one of those steps in my career has prepared me for Reading in the sense that Reading is a specialty product,” Freeman said.

Greg Freeman says his background with speciality manufacturing firms has prepared him well for the specialized world of service bodies

He described specialty manufacturing as a business that modifies commodities “to create products that solve specific customer problems.”

That’s what Graham Packaging does in the business of rigid plastic bottles for such laundry detergent and motor oil. And it’s what Reading does in manufacturing truck bodies.

What his career didn’t prepare him for at Reading are such things as the industry-specific language and its acronyms.

“So I’ve been coming up the learning curve very quickly to be able to speak the language, speak intelligently with our customers, with the staff. That’s really the biggest area,” Freeman said.

For example, since it’s his first time in a metals industry, he is needing to learn how the raw materials procurement chain works. He also has to learn the acronyms of Reading’s specific product lines — such as RVSL, SL, and CSV.

Talking tariffs

Speaking of metals, Freeman arrived at Reading just as U.S. President Donald Trump announced he was imposing stiff tariffs on imports of aluminum and steel. Initially, Trump exempted Canada, Mexico and the European Union from those tariffs. But in June, he removed that exemption, citing a lack of progress on renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement.

“I’ll try to stay unpolitical about this because it is what it is, and certainly our president feels it’s important,” Freeman said. “For me, as an industry producer, it’s more of a hassle than anything else. What I mean by that is if it’s creating an increase in the price of the commodities, which it is, I will pass that through to the customers because it’s a cost increase.”

The tariffs won’t mean any additional profit for Reading, he noted. And the hassle is ensuring that any cost increase is fair to the customer and timely.

“It’s not something I welcomed but it’s there and we will continue to address it,” Freeman said.

As a leading producer of aluminum service bodies, Reading hasn’t yet analyzed how those tariffs will affect its customers. But despite the aluminum tariff being 10 percent compared with 25 percent for steel, the aluminum charge has so far had the greater impact, he said.

That’s because there are far more sources of domestic steel available than of the specialized grades of aluminum that Reading uses in its bodies.

“Canada is really the major source for a lot of the grades of aluminum that are used in these types of industries. So it can be a big impact,” Freeman said.

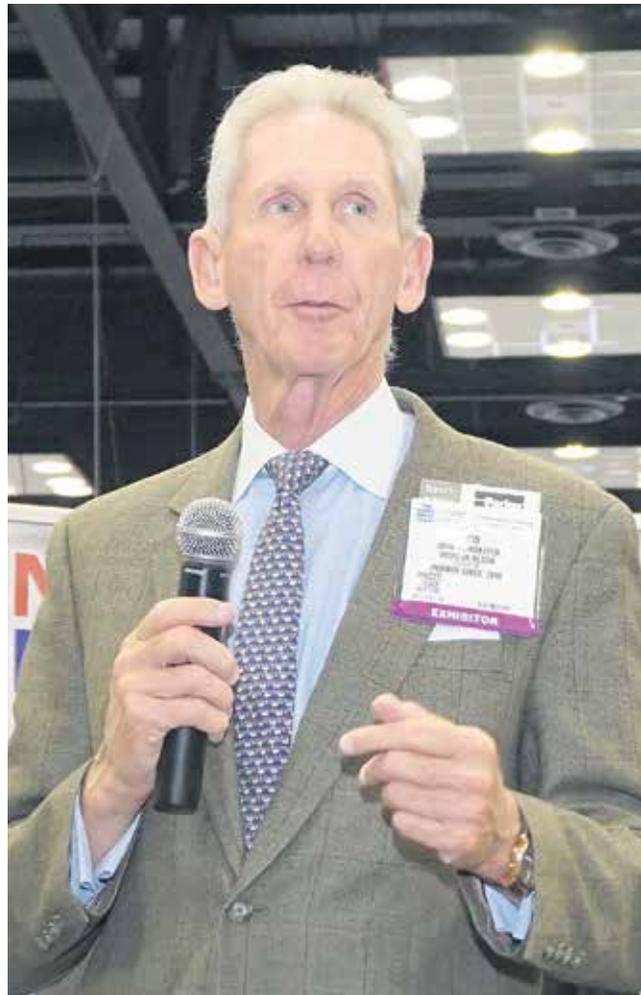
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NEWS

continued from page 17



John Poindexter

Smaller, tighter focus

In moving to Reading, Freeman has gone from a much larger company with facilities around the world to one that, until recently, had a primarily regional presence in the eastern U.S. At Graham, Freeman was president of the company's household, personal care, and automotive division — a multi-million dollar business unit with 22 operating facilities. He earlier had leadership roles with Celanese, a multi-billion dollar global company, and with W.R. Grace and the Grace Construction Products Group.

During his career track, he has “intentionally” moved to smaller and smaller companies. In his previous jobs, his “wide variety of functional experiences” ranged from product management and operations management to new business development — all of which proved to be great training grounds.

“What I loved about going to the smaller businesses and the privately held businesses is a much greater reliance on the immediate business team to create success,” Freeman said.

In recent years, however, Reading has been growing. In 2012, it became part of J.B. Poindexter, which now has about 6,000 employees and 80 subsidiaries in the U.S., Canada, and beyond, John Poindexter said during a presentation at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March.

In 2017, Reading itself acquired “substantially all of the assets” of service body manufacturer and Reading distributor Caseco Manufacturing Inc., and the “service body distribution and upfitting business” of Palfinger Group's four PalFleet facilities in the U.S. Midwest.

Even though Reading is part of a larger company, Freeman said his boss expects him to run Reading as a self-contained unit and be accountable for its success.

“You can make decisions faster in a small environment and you have just a much tighter focus on the accountability of the team and what you need to do to win. That's what I love,” Freeman said.

So how is Reading doing at integrating its new parts? “I have over five years in what I call business development, which is really M&A (mergers and acquisitions) work, so I've seen the really good, I've seen the really bad. And I'll say Reading's right in the middle,” Freeman said.

The company has done some things really well, such as integrating new product lines and offering new solutions to Reading customers, he said.

As for the future of the Caseco brand, it is being folded into the Reading brand, he said.

“Reading is the key brand for us,” Freeman said. “Where it's appropriate on certain products we may retain Caseco product trademarks but overall we want customers to experience Reading.”

National aspirations

Looking ahead, a key strategy for Reading, and for John Poindexter, is to become a “truly national brand” while maintain the Reading approach of focusing on solving customers' problems.

“So we need to be local to the customers and that's where getting the manufacturing in the Midwest is a key step to that,” Freeman said. “And we will look for continued opportunities to expand further to the west as they present themselves. We want to be local from an understanding of the local market, understanding of the local customer needs, but also meeting the lead time requirements, the delivery requirements, and making sure we're doing it at a low freight cost.”

Pressed for specifics, Freeman declined to share any details of what expansion plans are on the horizon for Reading. However, he did offer that “this business will be significantly bigger, better in the coming years than what it is today.”

The challenge for Reading in gaining a greater share of that bigger pie will be “how do we help the rest of the country come to know Reading like the Northeast has for all these years,” Freeman said.

continued on page 19

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To succeed at that, Reading will also have to take into account the differing needs of the different regions.

“We can’t assume we’ll be great there just taking exactly what we’ve got today and taking it there,” he said. “We’ve got to continue to innovate, understand what the local customer needs are, make sure we’re doing it in a way that’s helpful to them and still meeting all their other needs. But fundamentally the biggest opportunity for us is to build our national presence.”

Readying for the future

Technology and automation are also expected to create fundamental changes across the economy. Freeman said those changes should result in more demand for the types of service vehicles Reading provides. “But they’re all going to be slightly different needs than maybe what’s out there today,” he said.

In its own operations, Reading is always looking for ways to work faster and more efficiently, even in adopting robotics. However, he noted that robotics presents challenges when doing customization work, although robots capable of mass customization are being developed. Then again, that sort of automation isn’t on the immediate horizon for Reading because it’s not something customers are demanding.

“That’s not our first and best opportunity to make sure that we’re maximizing efficiency and cost for our customers,” Freeman said.

Another looming challenge is the imminent retirement en masse of the baby boomers, particularly in skilled trades. In Reading’s case that means welders. Reading works with educational institutions to create pipelines of talent, but the company does the training itself on its shop floors, Freeman said.

“We’re doing I think what any great company would do. We’re creating our own in-house training programs.”

Photo by Keith Norbury



Reading service body is on display at the J.B. Poindexter & Co. Inc. stand at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March.

New truck body facility opens in Pennsylvania

Production has begun at truck body maker M.H. Eby Inc.’s newly acquired facility in Ephrata, Pa.

The company acquired the 100,000 square foot plant on 17 acres in 2017, said a news release from M.H. Eby Inc.

The company is using the facility to build all-aluminum trailers and truck bodies.

“We are pleased to have this new plant up and running several months ahead of schedule,” company president Travis Eby said in the news release. “Our initial plans called for production to begin in the summer of 2018. With the help of Ephrata township personnel, a lot of hard work by our employees, and a terrific effort by key suppliers, we were able to take months off the initial schedule.”

Established in 1938, Eby will continue operating its two other plants in Lancaster County, Pa., as most of its manufacturing operations are moved to the new facility. The company also plans a new corporate office for the Ephrata site.

“The first products off the line in Ephrata will be specialized truck bodies manufactured in partnership with a major fleet management company for a large U.S. client,” the release said.



M.H. Eby Inc.’s new facility in Ephrata, Pa. recently began production.



A mechanics truck built by Eby Truck Bodies for CSX railway is displayed at the 2017 International Construction and Utility Equipment Exposition in Louisville, Ky.

Those trucks were to begin shipping in late March 2018.

Eby also invested in state-of-the-art fabrication equipment at the new plant. That includes a new laser-punch combo, a robotic bending cell, and an additional four-axis mill “to expand our fabrication capacity,” said Gary Musselman, head of Pennsylvania manufacturing operations. “The technology really accelerates our strategy of producing a wide variety of highly-customized equipment.”

Eby’s truck body line includes service bodies and van bodies.

For more information, visit www.MHEBY.com.

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COVER

Fleet data analysis *continued*

Image courtesy of Utilimarc

ered a talk on fleet data misconceptions at the Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March.

“We started out as a benchmarking firm, looking at maintenance performance between these like fleets,” Milner said. “One of the questions we always got from folks was ‘When should I be replacing my assets?’ The way we phrased the question after we were working with folks was ‘What effect is the vehicle age and the life-to-date mileage on the maintenance costs that we have recorded?’”

The company Utilimarc was working with had years of maintenance data on hand, so they attempted to use that to identify at what point it becomes more expensive to continue to maintain an asset as opposed to the cost of obtaining a new one. The company insisted that the data showed that maintenance costs were flat as their assets aged, and Utilimarc’s initial analysis showed the same thing. However, they were looking at the total maintenance costs as the assets age and were not accounting for the fact that as units got older crews tended not to use them as much.

“We could see the drop in utilization in terms of the mileage and fuel consumption on the assets,” Milner said. “We suspected it was either that the older units are breaking down more often so they’re not getting used as often or the crews don’t like using the older equipment or what have you. So we decided to rephrase the question as a

“If you have a problem unit that’s constantly breaking down, it’s unlikely that it will ever make it to that higher life-to-date mileage.”

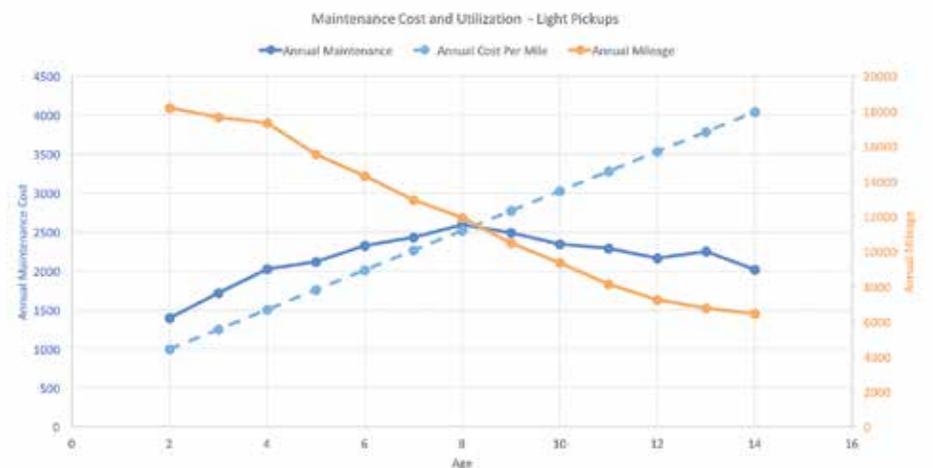
— Paul Milner, senior analyst and product developer, Utilimarc

cost per utilization and almost immediately we saw that there was a pretty significant linear trend in the cost per mile in these assets as they age.”

They found an association with age — as vehicles get older, the cost per mile goes up. But in terms of life-to-date mileage, they actually saw a negative correlation. Units that had a higher life-to-date mileage actually cost less per mile in order to do the same work, accounting for the utilization factor. It’s a surprising finding, but life-to-date mileage isn’t actually an indicator of how expensive a unit is to operate.

“This is a statistical relationship we’re seeing with the data, not a causal relationship,” Milner said. “We’re not telling folks to go run an extra lap around the garage every time you park the vehicle. We suspect

Effect of Vehicle Age and Life-to-date Mileage on Maintenance



If you only look at the annual maintenance costs in this graph, you get the impression that costs are roughly the same regardless of age. However, when you take annual cost per mile and annual mileage into consideration a far different picture emerges.

it’s more likely, if you think about the way these vehicles drive, they incur a cost only when they’re not being utilized — when they’re in the garage and not at the job site. If you have a problem unit that’s constantly breaking down, it’s unlikely that it will ever make it to that higher life-to-date mileage.”

The balance of life cycle cost analysis

Many companies tend to view life-cycle cost analysis as a balancing game, where they either end up paying more for maintenance costs if they don’t replace a service truck or paying more in ownership costs if they do replace it. However, unless the truck is way outside of the life cycle, those costs should only be a few hundred dollars a year per unit, not in the thousands.

“If you’ve got a fleet that’s a couple of thousand units, over the lifetime of that asset it does add up,” says Milner. “But where it does wind up becoming an issue for a lot of folks that we’ve worked with is planning for the vehicles being available, whether they’re younger or older, and also planning for technician demand.”

During the economic downturn a few years back, many companies stopped purchasing new equipment. However, when their existing units broke down, many companies lacked adequate technical staff to cover the repairs. On the other hand, companies that leaned more heavily on purchasing new assets risked having underworked technicians because of the lower labour requirements on newer equipment.

“How folks are spending money in terms of replacement on their assets can affect the organization and how the organization runs as a whole, outside of just the straight maintenance costs on the vehicles,”

Milner said. “When you’re comparing the maintenance and ownership costs, a lot of times there isn’t too much of a difference in terms of the long-term monetary strategy. But there is a difference in terms of the service that you can provide and the personnel that you’d need in order to maintain those units.”

Skills gap at the heart of the matter

Many companies that Utilimarc has worked with simply lack dedicated analysts who have the time or ability to process all the information being collected. With more and more information coming in, the problem is getting worse.

“Everybody is moving to telematics devices, which have a much, much larger data set than the historical work order systems that they’ve been utilizing,” Milner said. “There’s all this extra information, and we’ve shown that support staff has actually gone down in our industry almost 30 percent over the past five years. Those two factors come together and we’ve got folks with more information and less people to process it.”

Fleet managers, for example, are primarily tasked with keeping the vehicles up and running for the crews. That is a demanding full-time job on its own, leaving little time for exploratory analysis into datasets and processing what those numbers mean. For that reason, many companies would be well served to invest in a dedicated support staffer or to engage the services of a company with expertise in that area.

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



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Gold Rush star surprises fans at Work Truck Show

The 2018 Work Truck Show presented another golden opportunity for Juan Ibarra to help a pair of exhibitors promote their wares.

A star of the Discovery Channel's *Gold Rush* reality series, Ibarra drove his 1992 Peterbilt truck with its 1995 Aresco off-road mechanics body just over 2,000 miles from his home near Reno, Nevada, to Indianapolis.

He parked the big orange rig at the booth of C-Tech Manufacturing, where he spent some quality time with fans as well as at the booth of Taylor Pump & Lift, which also invited him to the show.

"Great show, a lot to see," Ibarra said during a visit to the Taylor booth. "This is the right show for what we do in the industry, heavy equipment industry or anything that has to do with a service truck or any kind of a work truck."

This was his first trip the Work Truck Show after having attended the International Construction & Utility Equipment Exposition in Louisville, Ky., last fall, and ConExpo-Con/Agg in Las Vegas in March 2017.

"I'm definitely impressed with what's available and what's here," Ibarra said.

Equally impressive is that he drove 28 hours, mostly along Interstate 80, through snow and rain much of the way.

"We had weather the whole time," he said. "But definitely worth it. Got here in one piece.

The truck ran great."

For the ride to the show, he had his brother-in-law for company. But he flew back home from Indy, leaving Ibarra to drive solo back to Nevada.

Then he was off to the Klondike — about 90 minutes south of Dawson City, Yukon, on the Indian River — to begin shooting another season of *Gold Rush*.

"Juan's been real good for us," said Jeff Taylor Sr., who company struck a deal with Ibarra last to provide him with a lube skid, something Ibarra had never had on the truck before that.

The rig's goodies also include a Lincoln Air Vantage 600SD hydraulic four-in-one unit, an HC-8x crane from Auto Crane, and C-Tech drawers.

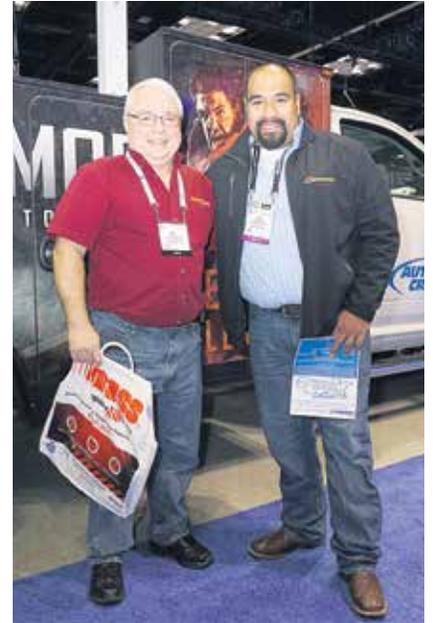
Ibarra's presence at the C-Tech stand came as a pleasant surprise to Mark Doerfler, highway commissioner with Wauponsee Township of Illinois.

"We walked by and I saw that truck and I said, 'Geez that looks like that guy from *Gold Rush*!' And sure enough we walked around the corner and here he stands," Doerfler said. "It's pretty cool."

Doerfler and his two sons, aged 4 and 6, never miss an episode of the show. "That's our big thing on Friday night to sit and watch him sling dirt," Doerfler said.



Fans of the reality TV series *Gold Rush*, Mark Doerfler (left) of Wauponsee Township, Illinois, and Stephen Wilhelm of Troutman Excavating of Morris, Ill., meet *Gold Rush* Star Juan Ibarra in front of his service truck on display at the C-Tech booth at the 2018 Work Truck Show.



A likeness of Juan Ibarra, star of the Discovery channel's *Gold Rush* reality series, greets visitors to the C-Tech booth.

Service Truck marketing manager Nick Moss, a diehard *Gold Rush* fan has a chance encounter with Juan Ibarra.

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APPOINTMENTS

Compressor maker names regional sales manager

Jerry Eckel has been appointed western region sales manager for compressor manufacturer Boss Industries LLC.

Caleb Pontius, vice-president of sales with Boss, announced the appointment in a news release.

Eckel has more than 30 years of sales experience in vocational, utility and specialty vehicles, including with Dakota Bodies and Stahl Truck Bodies.

"My diverse background in the vocational truck application arena will bring an added dimension to the sales team efforts to continue as the market leader in product and application," Eckel said in the news release.

He has also been involved deeply in customer service and support roles during his career. Boss expects its partners in the western states "will gain a valuable resource from his combination of experience and vocational market knowledge," the release said.

Founded in 1988, Boss is based in La Porte, Ind. The company's products include rotary screw, engine-driven rotary screw, and hydraulically driven rotary screw compressors, as well as rotary screw air ends for OEM applications, and piston air compressors.

For more information, visit www.bossair.com.



Jerry Eckel

Iowa firm appoints trio

Stellar Industries Inc. announced three appointments in early March.

Kevin Harmon is the Garner, Iowa-based manufacturer's new regional sales manager for the Mid-South.

Lorie Nelson is a human resources generalist, who is the liaison at Stellar's Kanawha facility.

And Huinker is the new manufacturing manager at the company's North State and 675 Highway 18 locations.

Harmon has 15 years of service with Stellar, including in production, quality control and inside sales, said news release on the Stellar website. In his new position, he covers Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana.

"I like building new customer relationships as well as spending time with those that I have already established a connection," he said in the release.

Nelson has many years experience in human resources, most recently at Woodhar-



Kevin Harmon

bor Custom Cabinetry. She lives in the Garner area.

"I'm looking forward to working in my hometown, and learning a new job after spending many years at my previous position," Nelson said.

Huinker also brings many years of experience, his case with Eaton Corporation in Belmond. At Stellar, he directs and manages manufacturing for the American Eagle division and the 675 Highway 18 location. He lives in Garner.

"I am entering a new industry, so I am also anxious to transfer the skillset I've learned in my previous positions into this position," Huinker said.

Employee-owned, Stellar offers such products as mechanic service trucks, truck cranes, and other truck accessories.



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TITAN ARMOR

Pennsylvania firm names new sales VP

Curry Supply Company has hired a new vice-president of sales.

Andrew Roberts brings to Pennsylvania-based Curry over six years experience in the construction and rental industry with a truck equipment manufacturer that focused on safety products, said a news release from Curry. As senior director of business development, Roberts focused on marketing strategies from product development to customer engagement.



Andrew Roberts

"I feel totally at home with Curry Supply," Roberts said in the news release, adding, "I've been very impressed with the sales team and the passion of the entire company. I look forward to meeting with customers and making an impact through partnerships and team development."

In his new role with Curry, Roberts will support the company's team of regional sales managers across the U.S. and work closely with the vice-president of operations.

"We are very excited to welcome Andrew to the Curry Supply team," Curry president Jason Ritchey said. "His experience and expertise in construction and unique insight into the market will be extremely beneficial to our company."

Curry's product lines include mechanics and service trucks from such manufacturers as Stellar, Auto Crane, Wilcox, and Reading.

Established in 1932, the family-owned business is headquartered in Martinsburg, Pa.

For more information, visit www.currysupply.com.



Forward thinking sessions scheduled

The Thinking Forward Series from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers is taking place in cities across the U.S. in the months ahead.

The four remaining events in the second annual series are as follows:

- How Artificial Intelligence is Changing Product Innovation — Aug. 23 in San Francisco at Autodesk's Gallery and Pier 9 Workshop.
- The Secret to Sparking Innovation and Building a Culture of Creativity — Sept. 18 in Pella, Iowa, at Vermeer Corporation.
- Growing Your Customer Base Through New Membership Models — Oct. 16 in West Lafayette, Ind., at Purdue University.
- Using Data to Improve Performance and Your Bottom Line — Nov. 6 in Mooresville, N.C., at Penske Racing.

The series began April 3 at Carnegie Mellon University's National Robotics Engineering Center in Pittsburgh, Pa.

"Thinking Forward events give participants an opportunity to explore a wealth of emerging trends and technologies that are poised to transform the equipment manufacturing industry," Paul Flemming, AEM's senior director of membership and engagement, said in a news release announcing the program. "Last year's events were well received, and AEM is committed to building on the success of the program."

Pre-registration is required as space is limited. For more information, visit www.aem.org/think.



IN MEMORIAM

VP remembered

Truck-Lite Co. LLC is celebrating the life of Bradley C. Van Riper, the company's senior vice-president and chief technology officer, who died recently after a brief battle with cancer.

Van Riper, 64, started his career at the company in 1978 as a maintenance technician. He was promoted to vice-president of research and development in 1994, and had been in his most recent role since 2006.

"Brad has been an integral part of the Truck-Lite organization for 40 years," Truck-Lite CEO Brian Kupchella said in a news release. "His contributions extend beyond the success of this company to the entire transportation safety industry. He will be missed by all who knew him."

Van Riper is survived by his wife of 40 years, two sons, a grandson, his mother, four siblings, and many colleagues and friends.

Memorials in his name can be made in his name to the LINKS Charity to help fight cancer in the Jamestown, N.Y. area, at www.linkscharity.com, or to the Bemus Point United Methodist Church.

LINKS was one of various community organizations Van Riper supported. In his professional life, his honors included the American Trucking Associations' Technology & Maintenance Council Silver Spark Plug lifetime achievement award for heavy-duty vehicle maintenance.



Bradley C. Van Riper



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NEW PRODUCTS

New coating protects service truck cabinets

KEITH NORBURY

A new, thinner coating from Line-X Protective Coatings was unveiled at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March.

Called Line-X Ultra, it's designed for interior cabinets, such as on a service body, said Chad Reinertson, digital marketing manager for Line-X.

To demonstrate that, the Line-X Ultra was installed in the cabinets of a Palfinger Pal Pro 43 mechanics truck on display at the Line-X stand.

"You get the same kind of Line-X protection that you do out of your traditional black bedliner material, but now you get it on a thinner coat that's available with any color," Reinertson told *Service Truck Magazine*.

Like the bedliner product, Line-X Ultra is a proprietary polyurea coating but of a slightly different formulation "to have some different hardness properties to it," he said. "It also allows you to spray it on much thinner."

Goes on thinner

It can be sprayed on doors without adding significant weight to the truck. For the Pal Pro body, the Line-X Ultra spray added only about 50 pounds more than powder coat paint would have done, he said.

Line-X Ultra applies at about 50 mils compared with 80 to 120 mils for the Line-X XS-350 bedliner coating.

"We want it a little thinner for this confined area," Reinertson said. "It works really well in the actual cabinets but it's still going to have that really tough impact resistance. So you can be dropping tools or tossing tools and you're not going to have the same type of denting as it would with the regular aluminum and the powder coat."

Line-X Ultra is thin enough that it won't interfere with the closing of cabinet doors. The coating also has a textured property that can be smoothed out with a topcoat.

"But what we've found is that people really like this texture," Reinertson said.

Line-X coatings can also be applied to other parts of truck, such as wheel wells and bumpers to create a "blackout" effect.

"It replaces some of the chrome pieces that would get dented, nicked, beat up, and rusted out," Reinertson said.

Quartz for extra grip

For the Pal Pro 43 on display, black Line-X XS-350 coating was applied to the front bumper. On the back step, Line-X Ultra was applied in yellow with quartz added to it to provide extra grip.

"One of the highest risk areas of a work truck is actually slipping off the back steps," Reinertson said. "They get wet. So when we're able to add a little bit more durability and grip to it, we're adding some safety to the trucks as well."

The company's trained applicators install the coatings directly to the metal by using a preparation process that ensures a strong bond, he said. That's why ideally, the coatings are applied to new truck bodies during their initial upfitting.

"It's a little easier to do that because then you don't have to worry about it being soiled or having oils in it or what you would have to clean out of it," Reinertson said. "It's a brand new truck, we know we're going to get a really strong bond."

The cost varies widely depending on the vehicle and the coatings but can range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, he said.

The coatings can be applied to used trucks, but that requires more work.



Chad Reinertson, digital marketing manager, shows where the new Line-X Ultra protective coating was applied to the cabinets of a Palfinger Pal Pro 43 mechanics truck on display at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis.

"It's still very possible," he said. "A lot of people will bring their trucks in after some heavy wear and tear. And we can take care of those but it does require some prep process."

Now headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama, Line-X dates back to 1993 when it became a division of Santa Ana, Calif.-based Burtin Urethane Corp., according to the Line-X website. The company has a franchise network of more than 500 stores in the U.S. and Canada. And it also has arrangements with manufacturers to install the coatings in their own facilities, Reinertson said.

For more information, visit www.linex.com.



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New products launched at show as compressor maker rebrands

Compressor manufacturer VMAC announced a rebranding as the company revealed two new products at the Work Truck Show this March in Indianapolis.

The announcement of the “Air Innovated” rebranding theme coincided with the unveiling of VMAC’s new Underhood40, a.k.a. VR40, air compressor series for vans, and the DTM70-H under-deck PTO-driven air compressor and hydraulic power system. Nanaimo, B.C.-based VMAC, which stands for Vehicle Mounted Air Compressor, described each of those products as the firsts of their kind.

“From humble beginnings over 30 years ago when VMAC was designing disposable military jet engines, that same spirit of innovation is what drives VMAC today,” Gordon Duval, VMAC’s vice-president of marketing and sales, said during a press conference at the Work Truck Show.

“One of the only rotary screw compressor manufacturers in the world, VMAC’s been designing and manufacturing innovative products specifically for the North American work truck industry for over 20 years.”

Duval described the DTM70-H as “the world’s first direct transmission mounted 70 cfm air compressor with hydraulic pump.” He then introduced the VR40 Underhood system, calling it “the only engine-mounted compressor in the world specifically designed for commercial vans.”

The DTM70-H provides “continuous-duty compressed air, and hydraulic power to run a crane or other tools at the same time in one complete, very small and easy-to-install system,” Duval said.

It also frees up gross vehicle weight by as much 600 pounds because it doesn’t require a receiver tank or compressor to mount on the truck bed.

“Prior to this innovation, service truck operators required two separate systems to run air and hydraulics,” Duval said.

VMAC’s new Underhood40 air compressor, available for trucks and vans, weighs just 14 pounds and can fit in the palm of one’s hand, Duval said.

It produces 40 cubic feet per minute of continuous-duty compressed air, reduces gross vehicle weight by up to 290 pounds and frees up 10 cubic feet of cargo space. It will replace VMAC’s Underhood30 model, a news release noted.

“Until now, compressed air systems for vans had to be fuel-based and mounted in the cargo area of the truck, creating an unsafe working environment for the operator, and taking up valuable cargo space,” Duval said. “Or they were electric-driven compressors that simply were not able to keep up with the commercial applications.”

Duval went on to say that “innovation isn’t just about developing new products that the world has never seen before. It’s also about evolving existing products to better suit customer needs.”

As an example, VMAC’s G30 gasoline driven compressor was designed from the southern U.S. market from Texas to Florida. But “interest in this new product



Gord Duval, vice-president of marketing and sales, unveils new products at the VMAC press conference during the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis.



The DTM70-H provides “continuous duty compressed air, and hydraulic power to run a crane or other tools at the same time.”



Underhood40 air compressor, or VR 40, frees up 10 cubic feet of cargo space

quickly spread throughout the U.S.,” he said, noting that it is a “premium, compact, high-performance rotary screw compressor” that doesn’t need a receiver tank.

Duval closed the press conference with one final product release: At the request of Finning, VMAC designed and built its multifunction power system for a Caterpillar engine.

The Oilman Series power system, used by Finning, “combines an air compressor, generator, welder, battery booster/charger, PTO and a positive air shutoff system, powered by a diesel engine,” said a subsequent news release from VMAC.

From initial concept to field trials took only six weeks, Duval said. VMAC began supplying the units exclusively to Finning in March and plans to make them available to other customers this fall.

“Having full in-house design, engineering and manufacturing, and as of 2016 our own onsite foundry, VMAC works with its customers and partners to turn their ideas into reality and in very short time,” Duval said.



Crane and body maker strike deal

Photo by Keith Norbury

Readings Truck Body and Omaha Standard Palfinger have entered into a co-branding agreement on a range of Palfinger truck-mounted cranes.

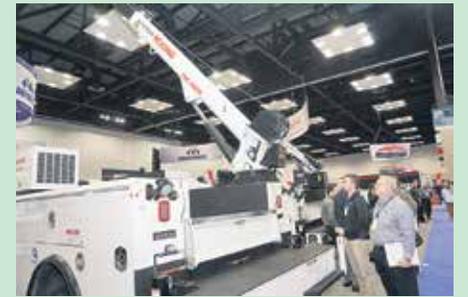
The co-branded models include hydraulic and electric Palfinger telescopic cranes ranging from 12,500 to 72,000 foot pounds, said a news release from Reading.

The companies announced the agreement at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March.

“The partnership will allow both companies to collectively expand their geographical footprints within North America and several key industry segments,” the news release said.

The cranes are being installed on Reading’s trademarked Master Mechanic Series crane bodies.

“The new cranes are part of a newly integrated crane and body system that will open up the crane compartment, eliminating levers and replacing them with all push button controls as standard,” John Tak, Reading’s senior director of marketing and product management, said in the news release. “This enhancement delivers more storage, higher qual-



Danny Stern (left) and William Eschmann of Geartek Inc. check out a Reading service body equipped with a Palfinger PSC 4329 crane at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March.

ity and ease of use for our customers.”

Features of the Palfinger service cranes include single-weld hexagonal booms, proportional wireless remote controls, and an anti-corrosion E-Coat paint process. A patented winch damage-prevention system on the cranes, meanwhile, replaces a conventional boom tip anti-two block system.

Reading Truck Body, based in Reading, Pa., is a subsidiary of Houston-based J.B. Poindexter & Company. Omaha Standard Palfinger is a division of Palfinger North America, in turn part of Austria-based Palfinger AG.



New mechanics body made for classes 3 and 4

The new Pal Pro 20 mechanics body from Omaha Standard Palfinger made its debut at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis.

The compact Pal Pro 20 comes in 11-foot and nine-foot configurations and can accommodate cranes of up to 20,000 foot-pounds capacity, said David Phillips, regional sales manager for the Midwest, during an interview at the show this March.

“It’s designed to fit on a class 3 or class 4 chassis,” said Phillips, who joined Palfinger in July 2017 after about eight years with Elliott Equipment Company. “So it gives us a lot of options to provide you with configurations on a smaller truck.”

He said the Pal Pro 20 is receiving a lot of interest from companies looking for a smaller mechanics body outfitted with a crane in the 3,200 to 4,000 pound range — such as in the Texas oil patch and in municipal markets.

“Now that we are fully out of the service body business, this is a good way for us to have a true mechanics body in that size range,” Elliott said in a reference to Palfinger selling its service body business to Reading Truck Group in 2017.

Mark Woody, who was set to step down as president of Palfinger Inc. at the end of March, said it was difficult for the company to differentiate itself from other players in the service body segment. “But mechanics trucks, we can show people there’s a real difference — lift, capacity, quality and those kinds of things,” Woody said.



David Phillips (right), regional sales manager for the Midwest for Omaha Standard Palfinger, addresses a press conference at the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis.

Standard features of the new Pal Pro 20 include “two-piece steel doors featuring internal C-channel stiffeners, automotive adhesive bonding and 316 marine grade stainless steel hinges,” said a news release issued at the show.

A full-length channel drip rail diverts water away from the compartment openings while three-point compression latches improve sealing and security. Also available are aluminum shelving and roll-out drawers with four longitudinal dividers and padded floors.

The bodies come in more than 30 outrigger and bumper configurations. As with other Pal Pro bodies, the new model also has Palfinger’s 12-step E-coat corrosion protection.

The tops of the compartments are reinforced to accommodate welders and other accessories, Phillips said. The reinforcement also prevents cracking should the body twist during off-road use “that happens commonly on service bodies.”



CALENDAR

JULY 2018

July 12-14, 2018**39th Annual Walcott Trucks Jamboree**
Iowa 80 Truckstop, I-80 Exit 284,
Walcott, Iowa

"This event is a great place to celebrate and learn about trucking and those big rigs."

<https://iowa80truckstop.com/trucker-jamboree/>**July 15-18, 2018****North Carolina Trucking Association Annual Management Conference**Marriott Grande Dunes,
Myrtle Beach, S.C.<http://www.nctrucking.wildapricot.org/event-2787196>**July 17-19, 2018****Ag in Motion**
Western Canada's Outdoor Farm Expos
Near Langham, Sask.

"The 4th annual expo will feature live demonstrations of field equipment, crop plots and interactive agribusiness exhibits."

<https://aginmotion.ca>**July 20-21, 2018****Expedite Expo**
Lexington Center, Lexington, Ky.

"People from all over North America will come to learn about the newest expedite trucking industry news, equipment, career opportunities and products geared specifically to owner operators and drivers."

<http://expediteexpo.com/>*The annual Walcott Trucks Jamboree stops in Iowa in July.*

AUGUST 2018

Aug. 2-4, 2018**Louisiana Motor Transport Association 77th Annual Convention**

Pensacola Beach Hilton, Pensacola Beach, Fla.

"An excellent opportunity not only to catch up on the most current industry issues but also to network with other industry representatives."

<http://www.louisianatrucking.com/>**Aug. 8-10, 2018****Idaho Trucking Association Annual Conference**

Post Falls, Idaho

<http://www.idtrucking.org/convention.php>**Aug. 15-18, 2018****National Truck & Step Van Driving Championships**

Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio

"This competition has a long history – dating back to 1937 when it was known as the National Truck Roadeo."

http://www.trucking.org/Driving_Championships.aspx**Aug. 17-18, 2018****29th Annual Great Salt Lake Kidney Kamp Truck Show**

Electric Park at Thanksgiving Point, Lehi, Utah

"Truck drivers, vendors and sponsors come from all across the country to help support this 2-day show that funds the Kidney Kamp for Kids."

<http://www.saltlaketruckshow.com/>**Aug. 23-25, 2018****Great American Trucking Show**Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center,
Dallas, Texas

"More than 500 exhibitors meet at GATS, representing truck, trailer, engine, component and parts manufacturers, among many others."

<http://www.gatsonline.com/>**Aug. 26-29, 2018****PWX 2018 — Public Works Expo**Kansas City Convention Center,
Kansas City, Mo.

"Kick tires, talk about technology, or get the scoop on new products."

<https://www.apwa.net/PWX>

SEPTEMBER 2018

Sept. 10-15, 2018**International Manufacturing Technology Show**

McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill.

"IMTS is the premier manufacturing technology show in the Americas."

<https://www.imts.com>**Sept. 11-13, 2018****COMVEC18**

Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Rosemont, Ill.

"Discover the latest and critical need-to-know information impacting global commercial vehicles through the expanded event program."

<https://www.sae.org/attend/comvec/>**Sept. 11-12, 2018****Oil Sands Trade Show & Conference**
Suncor Community Leisure Centre,
Fort McMurray, Alta.

"Over two days, visitors meet hundreds of companies, and see thousands of products and services dedicated to the industry in which they work."

<http://oilsandstradeshows.com>**Sept. 11-13, 2018****SAE 2017 Commercial Vehicle Engineering Congress**Hyatt Regency Chicago O'Hare
Rosemont, Ill.

"Discover the latest and critical need-to-know information impacting global commercial vehicles through the expanded event program."

<https://www.sae.org/attend/comvec/>**Sept. 16-18, 2018****Tennessee Trucking Association 88th Annual Convention**Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa,
Destin, Fla.<http://www.tntrucking.org/>

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