

# SPEC MY TRUCK

Check out Crossroads Mobile Maintenance's rigs, page 12

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# Service Truck

THE MAGAZINE FOR MOBILE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

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## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Managing employees requires continuous improvement culture

Work Truck Show presenter emphasizes leadership and change focused on customer needs

MATT JONES

**E**mployees are an invaluable resource, just like the equipment that they operate.

But, are those resources performing at their best?

For equipment, the answer is simple enough: If your equipment isn't performing well, you either fix it or replace it. But for human resources, it's not as straight forward. With the right approaches and corporate culture, employees can become more productive and profitable.

.....  
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Photo by iStockphoto.com/monkeybusinessimages

*Talent development is key to continuous improvement.*

## PROFILE

### Truck body sales veteran soldiers on as songwriter

Composition that Jamie Trent co-wrote included in Grammy-nominated folk album

SAUL CERNOS

**B**y day, Jamie Trent is a mild-mannered strategic account manager with The Knapheide Manufacturing Company. But, even while busily promoting the truck body manufacturer's wares, his star is rising in the world of country and folk music songwriting.

Just last month, Trent marked a musical milestone. "Bullet Holes in the Sky," a song he co-wrote, was featured on an album nominated for a 2019 Grammy Award.

Music has been a lifelong passion for Trent, 44, who lives in Lynchburg, Va., with his wife Tammy and their four-year-old daughter Kardigan.

Photo courtesy of The Knapheide Manufacturing Company



*Jamie Trent (center) shares the stage with Big Kenny and John Rich of Big & Rich at Knapheide's 2018 Awards at the annual convention of the National Truck Equipment Association in Indianapolis.*

.....  
*continued on page 8*

## INNOVATIONS

### Versatile power units offer advantages aplenty

▶ Multifunction power units are saving space on service trucks

ERIN GOLDEN

**A** decade ago, a typical service truck was weighed down with components that were necessary, but not particularly efficient.

Carrying all the pieces to get the job done — a compressor, a crane, a welder — meant running multiple machines that operated independently from each other, and required long periods of engine idling.

Today, there are still plenty of trucks with that setup. But a growing number of service truck drivers are opting for something a bit more streamlined: multifunction power units that combine a variety of functions into a single package.

"The nice part for a fleet manager is to be able to go to a company and be able to say, 'I want one thing, I want one machine or system that does all of these (functions),'"

said Caleb Pontius, vice-president of sales for Boss Industries, a compressor manufacturer based in LaPorte, Indiana.

Boss is one of several manufacturers that have jumped into the multifunction unit market in recent years, spurred on by an explosion in interest from service fleet managers and mechanics focused on a variety of industries.

.....  
*continued on page 14*



*The Boss WorkMaster GW combines a generator and welder with a compressor.*

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## Trio of firms earn MVP status

**A** Georgia truck equipment dealer is among the latest three recipients of Member Verification Program Status from the NTEA — the Association for the Work Truck Industry.

Based in Norcross, Ga., Commercial Truck & Van Equipment Inc. has product offerings that include service bodies from Warner Bodies Inc. of Elwood, Ind., and cranes and crane bodies from Venco Venturo Industries LLC of Cincinnati.



NTEA's MVP program recognizes quality standards

The other new recipients of MVP status are truck door manufacturer Todco, of Marion, Ohio; and Williamsen-Godwin Truck Body Co. LLC, a Salt Lake City-based maker of dump bodies.

Six other companies renewed their MVP status. They include Dejana Truck & Utility Equipment LLC of Baltimore.

The MVP program "recognizes eligible companies in the work truck industry for outstanding business practices and successful implementation of quality standards," says the NTEA.

As of the most recent count, 270 companies have MVP status.

The current MVP directory can be found on the NTEA website, www.ntea.com.



## Industry group reveals new logo

**T**he Association of Equipment Manufacturers, whose membership includes dozen of service truck manufacturers and accessory makers, has a new logo.

This new "brand identity" will reflect how the association's more than 1,000 members "build momentum" for the heavy equipment industry, said a news release from AEM.

"The launch of our new logo embodies the spirit of AEM to move the off-road equipment industry forward," the release quoted AEM president Dennis Slater. "It reflects what we are doing at AEM in the thought-leadership space — with our Thinking Forward events and annual conference, as well as our advocacy, market information, shows and other services we offer our members."

The AEM is perhaps best-known as the organizer of the triennial ConExpo-Con/Agg trade show in Las Vegas, and of the biennial International Construction & Utility Equipment Exposition in Louisville, Ky. The next ICUEE takes place this Oct. 1-3, while the next ConExpo is set for March 2020.

According to the AEM, equipment manufacturers contribute \$188 billion to the U.S. and Canadian economies. The industry supports 1.3 million U.S. jobs and another 149,000 Canadian jobs, the AEM says.

For more information, visit www.aem.org.



The AEM's new logo "represents a new era of how together we build momentum for equipment manufacturers and for society at large," says president Dennis Slater.

## Mannings appear at Work Truck Show



Peyton Manning won two Super Bowls and his father Archie Manning played 13 NFL seasons. Photos by Gage Skidmore

**F**ootball legends Peyton Manning and his father, Archie, have been added to the lineup at the annual Work Truck Show's President's Breakfast on March 7.

Craig Bonham, first vice chairman of the National Truck Equipment Association's board of directors, will moderate the "Conversation with the Mannings," says a news release from the NTEA, which produces the Work Truck Show.

The show, running March 5-8, takes place as this edition goes to press.

Author Jeffrey Gitomer, known as "the King of Sales," was to deliver the breakfast's keynote address.

Now retired, Peyton Manning won two Super Bowls as a quarterback, including a 2006 title with the Indianapolis Colts, with whom he played 14 of his 18 National Football League seasons. Archie Manning, also a quarterback, played 13 NFL seasons, mostly for the New Orleans Saints. His youngest son, Eli, who also won two Super Bowl titles, was still an NFL quarterback in 2018.

It isn't the time first former NFL stars have appeared at the President's Breakfast.

Tony Dungy, who coached the Colts to that 2006 Super Bowl win, gave the keynote address in 2015, while four-time Super Bowl winner Terry Bradshaw and 1984 champion Howie Long spoke at the 2017 breakfast.



## Equipment dealer appoints VP

Strongco Corporation has named Kevin Disher as the regional vice-president of the Canadian equipment dealer's Case Construction division.

Disher, who joined Strongco in 2012, had been sales manager of the Ontario Case division for six years. Before coming to the company, Disher worked for Mack Trucks and for Detroit Diesel Canada.

"During his time with Strongco, Kevin has contributed significantly to the success of our organization and I'm confident that he will grow the Case business to new heights," Oliver Nachevski, Strongco's vice-president and chief operating officer, said in a news release announcing the appointment.

Headquartered in Mississauga, Ont., Strongco has about 500 employees at its 26 branches across Canada. In addition to Case, Strongco represents such familiar equipment brands as Volvo, Sennebogen, Manitowoc, Fassi, and Dressta. Strongco is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol SQP.

For more information, visit www.strongco.com.



Kevin Disher



## COOL TOOL



Lincoln Electric's Drill Tip Set has 12 high-speed drill bits.  
Photo by Dan Anderson

## Clear clogged torch tips easily

**L**incoln Electric's Drill Tip Set is the solution to clogged acetylene torch tips.

The pen-sized tool has 12 high-speed drill bits ranging in size from #52 to #74 stored in its hollow body. A finger-tightened collet tip holds the teeny bits while the user rotates/drills through clogged torch tip orifices.

Much better than traditional torch cleaners that use easily bent abrasive wires to clean orifices, and the Drill Tip Set only costs \$6 at mainline welding shops.

— Dan Anderson

## MECHANIC'S MUSINGS

# Very valuable tool provides perspective

DAN ANDERSON

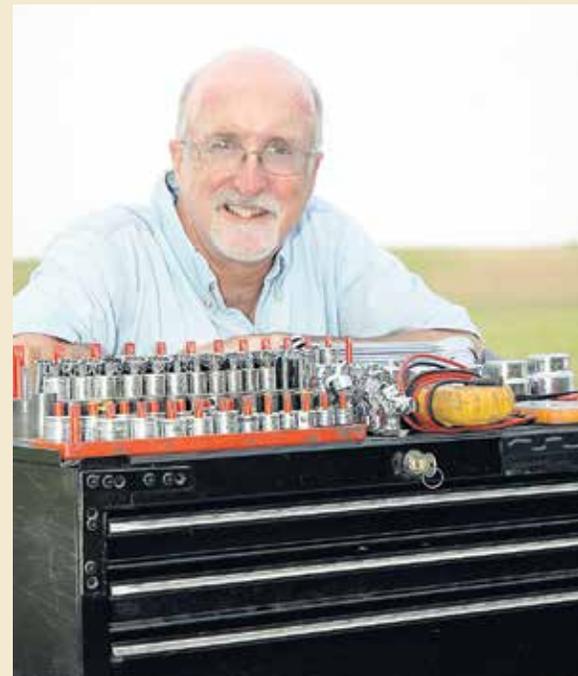
**I** was working on a machine trying to fix a problem buried in a maze of hoses and harnesses under a lot of access ladders, platforms and decking.

The customer was watching. I resolutely wormed my way under the overhead stuff, and finally, by stretching and reaching as far as I could, was able to touch my fingers on the components I needed to fix.

I can't say that my position was actually painful, but it was far from comfortable. But after much effort, I was able to tell the customer standing somewhere outside the machine that, "Yes, I'll be able to get it fixed."

It was at that moment I heard the customer working a ratchet wrench above my head. He removed a large panel from over my head and shoulders, and sunlight flooded down on me. He reached down and tapped the handle of the ratchet wrench on the components my fingers were barely touching and asked, "Would it be any easier to reach from up here?"

Yes, it would. Yes, it was, and yes, I felt stupid for almost making the repairs more difficult than they needed to be. Once again I was reminded that humility is an important tool in my tool chest.



Dan Anderson has plenty of tools but one of the most valuable he finds from within.



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## NTEA offers advanced truck equipment course

The first module of a sequel to Truck Equipment 101 is now available free to members of the National Truck Equipment Association.

Like its predecessor, Truck Equipment 201 is intended as a series of online course modules. But where the 101 series looks at basic regulatory requirements, the 201 modules are aimed at “those with a technical knowledge seeking a deeper understanding of certain topics,” said a news release from the NTEA.

The first 201 module focuses on certification, which NTEA senior director of technical services Susan Dehne calls “a foundational subject vital to delivering high-quality, safe vehicles to market.”

The module covers certification processes in the U.S., Canada, and European Union, label requirements in the U.S. and



Susan Dehne

Canada, and motor vehicle safety standards.

“The course conveys important and complex aspects of the process in a succinct way; it’s a great educational resource for the work truck industry,” Dehne says.

Launched in 2017, Truck Equipment 101 consists of 15 online modules.

No prerequisites are required for either program.

NTEA members who sign up for Truck Equipment 201 are also eligible for Member Verification Program credit and Continuing Education Units through the association’s accreditation by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training. Nonmembers can buy access for \$49.

For more information, visit [www.ntea.com](http://www.ntea.com).



## Speaker named for fleet congress

The keynote speaker for the Work Truck Show’s second annual Fleet Technical Congress has been announced.

Former Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator W. Craig Fugate was announced as the speaker in mid February, about three weeks before he was scheduled to give his keynote address on March 5.

Fugate, who served as FEMA administrator from May 2009 to January 2017 under President Barack Obama, oversaw the federal government’s response to such disasters as Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and massive Louisiana flooding in 2016, said a news release from the NTEA – The Association for the Work Truck Industry, which produces the Work Truck Show.

The Fleet Technical Conference takes place March 5 at the JW Marriott Indianapolis in conjunction with the Green Truck Summit. Both events are set for the opening day of the Work Truck Show, scheduled until March 8 at the Indiana Convention Center.

“Fugate has played a critical role in helping our country recover from some of the most devastating disasters in recent history,” the news release quoted George Survant, NTEA senior director of fleet relations. “Emergency preparedness is sometimes overlooked in the work truck industry. Learning how Fugate was able to lead emergency response during such chaotic and challenging situations will help fleet managers develop or improve their own emergency response plans.”



W. Craig Fugate

The Fleet Technical Congress was scheduled to start at 8:30 a.m. with opening remarks, followed by Fugate’s keynote address at 8:45 a.m. The speech was scheduled to happen as this edition was going to press.

In January, the NTEA announced that Stan Stanford, general manager of Parker Hannifin, would give the keynote address at the show’s inaugural Manufacturer and Distributor Innovation Conference. It was also scheduled for March 5 at 8:45 a.m.

For more information, visit [www.work-truckshow.com](http://www.work-truckshow.com).



## OSHA extends operator documentation deadline

The federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration is giving employers until April 15, 2019 to meet the documentation requirements of a new rule establishing a national requirement to certify U.S. operators of cranes used in construction.

Scott Ketcham, acting director of OSHA’s Directorate of Construction, issued a memorandum Feb. 7 delaying enforcement of the documentation requirement for 60 days. During that period, “OSHA will evaluate good faith efforts taken by employers in their attempt to meet the new documentation requirements for operators of cranes used in construction,” the memo states.

However, the memo also notes that “OSHA will be fully enforcing the requirement that employers must evaluate their operators before allowing them to operate cranes independently.”

According to the memo, OSHA has delayed the documentation requirement after receiving feedback from construction industry employers indicating they need more time.

Until April 15, OSHA “intends to offer compliance assistance, in lieu of enforcement, for those employers who have evaluated operators in accord with the final rule and are making good faith



A candidate maneuvers a test load through a National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators’ service truck crane operator practical exam.

efforts to comply with the new documentation requirement. If, upon inspection, it is determined that an employer has failed to make sufficient efforts to comply, OSHA should cite for that deficiency.”

The rule, which also applies to service truck cranes when used in construction, went into effect Dec. 10, 2018. It requires that operators of cranes of more than 2,000 pounds capacity, when used in construction, be certified by an accredited certification body.

The new rule specifically includes “service/mechanic trucks with a hoisting device” but also excludes a “mechanic’s truck with a hoisting device when used in activities related to equipment maintenance and repair.”

File photo courtesy of NCCCO



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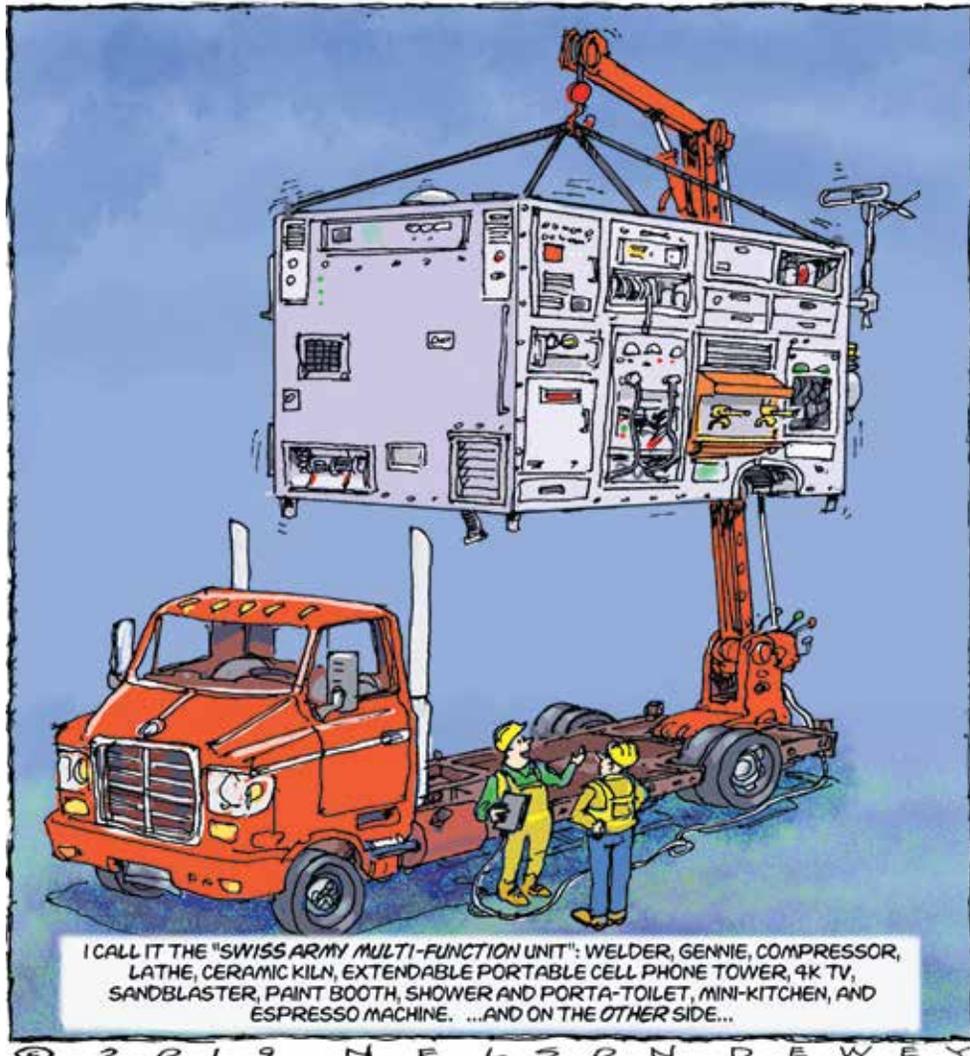
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## About our cartoonist

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](http://www.nelsondewey.com).

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**Guest columns:** These can be up to 700 words. Please send a brief note of inquiry first, however, just in case space what you wish to write about has already received a lot of coverage in our pages. Include your full name, the city or town you live in, and a contact phone number.

**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 April 10, 2019. Sooner is always better than later.

## EDITORIAL

# Make work meaningful and the profits will come

**I**t's great when an industry reveals that it values employees and wants to figure out ways to keep them contributing to the industry's health.

So it's encouraging that the National Truck Equipment Association has organized a presentation at the 2019 Work Truck Show this March along that theme. The session, titled "Increase Productivity, Quality and Profits with Existing Employees," is scheduled for after this edition goes to press. However, one of the presenters — Shannan Vlieger, director of operational excellence for Douglas Dynamics Inc. — spoke with *Service Truck Magazine* about how companies in the work truck industries can help workers perform at their best, and become even better at their jobs.

Rather than steal Vlieger's thunder, we'll point you to the article, which begins on page 1, to check out her insights. For the purpose of this commentary, we'll stick to the notion that today's workers are understandably nervous about their futures. As companies become larger, the temptations to automate and outsource jobs often become insurmountable. So the simple fact that an industry is even considering ways to help workers learn new skills as technology changes, as well as how to become leaders and managers themselves, bodes well for that industry.

Of course, it's a thin line between "lean practices" and "continuous improvement." If the aim is simply to make workers do more with less, without affording them the tools and skills to accomplish the goal, that will only increase anxiety and resentment. Until a company can completely automate all its systems, or ship every job outside the country, it is going to have employees. And their productivity will remain arguably the most important variable in determining a firm's profitability.

Fortunately, companies in the service truck industries tend to be small and hyper local. It seldom makes economic sense to ship jobs to Mexico when the business is so heavily customized. Sending a truck for an upfit south of the border might be possible but not at all convenient. The logistical challenges alone would likely outweigh any savings in labor costs.

And even if someone could make that work, the mechanics using the upfitted vehicles aren't easily outsourced. The whole idea behind mobile equipment repair and maintenance is that it is done locally. Unless, farms, mines, and logging opera-

tions are moved en masse out of the country, there will remain plenty of work for mechanics to do.

In fact, the work is so specialized and requires such a deft human touch that a mobile mechanic will probably be among the last vocations to be automated. Much of the work of lawyers, accountants, clerks, and even journalists can already be reduced to computer algorithms. It should take at least a few decades before robots and computers develop the dexterity to pull out and fix the transmission of a broken-down bulldozer.

In the meantime, though, the tools available to mechanics are going to increase and make their work even more complex. But what mechanic doesn't like cool new tools to play with?

In fact, we'd argue that most workers like to learn new things. But that's only so long as those new duties aren't thrust upon them in a baptism by fire.

Most people are employees of one description or another. Many can tell stories about how they've endured indignities they wouldn't stand in any other relationship.

Yes, customers are the king and treating them well is the secret to any successful business. But every worker is also a customer from time to time. It's what makes an economy tick. Your purchase is my sale. The economy should work for everyone, especially for those who work for a living.

Just imagine for a second what it would be like if every job in this country disappeared because of automation or outsourcing and no means of support replaced them. That would be a tragedy of immeasurable proportions. Each time a job is lost it's just a smaller tragedy.

Yet preserving jobs just for the sake of preserving jobs never makes any economic sense. The jobs need to have meaning, if only because the people doing them yearn for meaning in their lives. It's one thing that people of all political stripes can agree on, even if they disagree on how to accomplish that.

So we applaud efforts by industry to give meaning to work and to workers, as companies struggle with how to survive in a highly competitive world. It won't be easy. The progress will come in fits and starts.

But the progress will happen. It has to happen. The alternative is too dire to contemplate.



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# Creating an effective service-to-cash cycle



John Cameron

John Cameron is general manager of Trimble Field Service Management (FSM), where he is responsible for worldwide operations and development. Before joining FSM, Cameron was general manager of Trimble's Spectra Precision Division. Previous that, he was general manager of Pacific Crest Corp., a company he co-founded in 1994 that was acquired by Trimble in 2005. More information can be found about FSM at [www.trimblepulse.com](http://www.trimblepulse.com).

JOHN CAMERON  
SPECIAL TO SERVICE TRUCK MAGAZINE

**F**or equipment dealers and companies that manage large service operations, service-to-cash cycles can be a headache.

If there is a breakdown or bottleneck in the process, significant payment delays often occur.

How can inconsistencies between the work hours paid to technicians and hours available for billing customers improve? What is the best way to accurately bill for parts used? How can companies make sure they are not giving away technician time on “service freebies” when he or she arrives onsite? And most importantly, how do you reduce the lead time from job completion to invoicing?

The clock for service-to-cash starts as soon as a technician is assigned a task and continues until the dealership or company can recognize the revenue. The Aberdeen Group states that the average service-to-cash cycle is 34 days, with best performers able to reduce this to around 26 days. Following the three-step “manage, mobilize, monitor” process can help dealers increase efficiency and generate revenue faster.

## Manage all-encompassing

Effectively managing service-to-cash has to be an all-encompassing service workflow solution — one that is fully integrated with other systems, such as enterprise resource planning solutions, telematics devices, and customer relations management platforms. This should include a workflow that communicates in real-time with every other part of the business and allows for streamlined business processes that are repeat-

## Three-step “manage, mobilize, monitor” process can aid efficiency and generate revenue faster

able, predictable and instantaneous. When done right, companies get service revenue into their business as quickly as possible.

### Mobilize for more profits

Allowing service technicians to capture parts actually used and change work orders to accurately reflect what services were performed onsite, in real-time, means that no profit is left on the table. All too often, a technician will arrive at a job and only then find out that there are actually multiple items that require a fix. Additionally, a technician unable to perform some preventative maintenance at the same time wouldn't need to plan a return trip. Mobile service apps give the technician flexibility to pass this information back to the office at the push of a button.

### Monitor for accurate billing

Adding GPS into the equation means you can verify that technicians are at the job when they say they are. Tracking your technicians through their smart device or vehicle telematics allows you to accurately bill for the amount of time the technician was actually onsite. If a task overruns because its actual complexity wasn't originally planned for, not only are you able to reschedule the following tasks, but you will also be able to recognize that additional time in the billing process.

Turning service-to-cash starts with identifying obstructions that are holding you back from receiving payment quickly and accurately. These can quickly be identified by mapping out your service workflow, from the back office, through schedule and dispatch, to those out in the field.



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## COVER

**songwriter** continued from cover**Gulf War service**

Quiet and mildly shy as a teenager, Trent fell in with musically inclined friends and discovered an outlet for expressing himself. Then, dispatched to the Persian Gulf with the U.S. Navy in 1993 during Operation Desert Storm, he served with a communications team.

"If a soldier lost his life, the American Red Cross would let the families know stateside," Trent told *Service Truck Magazine*. "All of that sort of information came through the communications department, and I was one of the ones responsible for that."

He eventually wound up his service stateside, refurbishing vessels at Newport News, Virginia, before enrolling in college. Extended periods at sea afforded Trent the time and opportunity to hone his songwriting skills, and he soon found himself in demand at parties, weddings and private clubs.

"Along and with the Navy College Fund and GI bill, the money I made singing and performing on weekends helped me pay my final stretch through college," he said.

A few years after graduation, while employed in snowplow sales, Trent experienced the first of several heart attacks — at the tender age of 31. While his health soon stabilized he was beset by other chronic conditions, including severe migraines.

**A hit with Knapheide**

Trent persevered with his work and music, and a recruiter soon steered him toward Knapheide.

For more than a decade, Trent has thrived with the Quincy, Illinois company, serving first as regional sales manager handling distributor relationships throughout the Northeast and more recently working direct with national fleets throughout the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.

**"Along and with the Navy College Fund and GI bill, the money I made singing and performing on weekends helped me pay my final stretch through college."**

**— Jamie Trent, strategic account manager, The Knapheide Manufacturing Company**

Music has proven key all along. At annual National Truck Equipment Association conventions, Knapheide holds parties featuring popular artists such as Big and Rich and Huey Lewis and the News. One year, management invited him on-stage as an opening act, prompting him to pen "1848," a musical tale about Knapheide's founding.

Later, for a contest at a sales event, Trent reworked the lyrics of "American Made," an Oak Ridge Boys song, to help pitch a Knapheide Utility Van (KUV). "My Knapheide's American Made" scored a victory and became a hit in company circles.

"He'd sing a bit, stop and point out a few things about the features of the product, then finish the rest of the song," recalled retired sales vice-president Jim Bockenfeld, who frequently traveled with Trent and was at that particular sales event. "He absolutely brought the house down."

In 2017, when Bockenfeld retired, Trent delivered a song rather than the conventional congratulatory speech. "It was about our travels together selling Knapheide products," Bockenfeld said. "It will probably never show up on the top 20 of any hit list but will always be a number one song to me."

All photos courtesy of The Knapheide Manufacturing Company



Jamie Trent wrote and performed a song in honor of his friend and mentor, sales vice-president Jim Bockenfeld, when he retired in 2017.



Jamie Trent (right) participates at the United Rentals yearly convention in January 2019 in Minneapolis along with fellow Knapheide employees (from left) Jeremy Holt, Bruce Bunting, and Kelly Baker.



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Jamie Trent (center) meets offstage with Big Kenny and John Rich of Big & Rich at the Knapheide's 2018 Awards at the annual convention of the National Truck Equipment Association in Indianapolis.

### Connecting with veterans

While striking chords within Knapheide, Trent maintained a connection with fellow veterans, knowing that many returning from combat never truly leave war behind. While Trent embraces veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress, he explicitly excludes himself from that degree of pain.

"I can't put myself in the same category as the soldiers who have experienced the really, really heavy stuff on the front lines," he explained.

Still, Trent's own health challenges deepened his empathy to the plight of combat veterans. His physicians attribute his various illnesses to his exposure to asbestos, lead and other chemicals at the naval shipyards, and he's been in litigation for eight years, seeking official recognition and compensation.

"I was bitter for a long time, but I've gotten past that," he said. "I don't want it to slow me down going forward. It is what it is."

Just as songwriting offered Trent an emotional outlet when he was a teenager, so it has in his adult years. Through country music and military connections, Trent discovered SongwritingWith:Soldiers, an organization which helps veterans tell their stories and share their pain.

Through this network of artists, Trent met a kindred spirit and mentor in one of the organization's more active members, Nashville-based singer-songwriter Mary Gauthier.

"She gives me advice when I ask for it and doesn't sugarcoat anything," he said. "If I have an idea, I'll throw it her way. She always keeps me grounded."

### How music was made

Trent credited Gauthier for advice that has influenced him profoundly — that songs are like three-minute movies, with a beginning, middle and end, and good storytelling, tells the audience who the characters are and where they're going.

One evening, Gauthier texted him seeking lyrical input to an idea. "Mary was in the Johnny Cash room at the Grand Ole Opry, getting ready to go on stage," Trent said. "The chorus had come to her suddenly but she didn't have the 'movie' for it — she needed the verses."

The chorus, about physical and emotionally wounded veterans feeling left behind, resonated with Trent. He immediately envisioned the opening scene — a soldier, alone at a restaurant table on Veterans Day, wistfully watching a parade pass by.

Over the next few hours they texted back and forth to flesh out their movie. As a result, Trent is listed as Gauthier's co-writer for "Bullet Holes in the Sky," which is on her album Rifles & Rosary Beads, nominated for a Grammy in the category of best folk album. (The winner in that category turned out to be All Ashore by Punch Brothers.)

**"He's a loyal and skilled employee, and we're proud of what he's done for our country."**

**—Bo Knapheide, president and CEO,  
The Knapheide Manufacturing Company**

"Bullet Holes in the Sky" also landed on *Esquire Magazine's* list of best country songs of 2018, with the magazine calling it "the most visceral cut on an album full of show-stoppers."

Trent said the recognition has left him "shocked" and appreciative.

Knapheide president and CEO Bo Knapheide said he's awed by Trent's accomplishments and the company is fortunate to have him on its team. "He's a loyal and skilled employee, and we're proud of what he's done for our country."

Tara Gilroy, vice-president of strategic accounts, said she and other Knapheide personnel have heard Trent live in Nashville and are glad he's part of their team.

"It's an important part of our family culture as it relates to Knapheide," Gilroy said. "We all support what he's doing."

Trent said he cherishes Knapheide's enthusiasm for his songwriting and for the country's veterans.

"Some organizations tell you to keep your personal life personal and your work life your work life, but Knapheide has gone above and beyond to support me, and I don't know how I'll ever thank them. I guess one of these days I'll write a song about it."

*Saul Chernos is a freelance writer based in Toronto.*



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## Managing employees continued from cover

Shannan Vlieger, director of operational excellence for Milwaukee-based Douglas Dynamics Inc., says that one of the most important elements is to create a culture of continuous improvement, also sometimes referred to as “lean” practices. Vlieger, however, prefers the term “continuous improvement,” as it emphasizes the continual journey of improvement, and avoids potential negative connotations of downsizing.

### Developing leaders

“It’s around talent development, specifically leadership development,” Vlieger said in an interview prior to a presentation she was set to give on that subject at the Work Truck Show in Indianapolis this March after this edition went to press. “We’re taking kind of a different angle here rather than diving right into continuous improvement tools or methods. We’re going to talk about the people aspect and specifically the need to develop leaders and helping paint the picture for what it means to lead in a continuous improvement environment or culture.”

Scheduled to co-present with Vlieger at the March 5 session, titled “Increase Productivity, Quality and Profits with Existing Employees,” were Jeff Messer, president

Photo by iStockphoto.com/ Berkut\_34



Find out what the needs are on the shop floor.

of Messer Truck Equipment, and Ranae Stewart, associate director of statewide outreach and partnerships at Purdue University.

Implementing continuous improvement concepts can take some of the confusion and chaos out of the work environment, says Vlieger, whose company manufactures and upfits commercial vehicle attachments and equipment. Most businesses represented in the National Truck Equipment Association, which produces the Work Truck Show, are familiar with highly complex custom work, and having the right processes in place can help make that more efficient and effective.

“We’ve tried to take an approach where we say, ‘Yes, we have a large portion of our work that is custom, but we can still bring some processes together to help us in managing that complexity and customization in a more predictable way,’” Vlieger said.

### Information management

It largely comes down to information flow and the management of information. Whether that takes the form of a process for employees to follow or an information technology solution, the end result is that communication is more streamlined and effective. At Douglas Dynamics, whose



**“If we are on the shop floor, if we’re outfitting a truck and we know that our end product has to now go down to somebody installing hydraulics, what do they need from us and how do we know that we did our job successfully?”**

— *Shannan Vlieger, director of operational excellence, Douglas Dynamics Inc.*

brands include Dejana Truck and Utility Equipment, there was a time where everything the company did felt like a one-off, and each project would start its own process. Now Douglas Dynamics has developed a consistent process for taking the feedback of the customer and using that to drive processes to ensure the best outcomes.

“Ultimately, externally we have customers,” Vlieger said. “But internally we have customers too. So we talk about the term value add and what our customers are willing to pay for. So the work that we do that they’re willing to pay for is what we want to do better and better. The waste that they aren’t willing to pay for we want to eliminate or reduce. So the time it takes us to go look for a part on the shop floor is non-value added.

“So we need to figure out how to reduce that waste. What does our customer want? What do they need? What value are they getting out of the work that we do?”

“If we are on the shop floor, if we’re outfitting a truck and we know that our end product has to now go down to somebody installing hydraulics, what do they need from us and how do we know that we did our job successfully?”

Douglas Dynamics is very data rich, after extensive efforts in collecting customer feedback through surveys and other means. That feedback data is then used by their tech service department to drive decision-making and to prioritize efforts.

### Customers inform culture

A change of corporate culture needs to be informed by the needs of the customer, but management and team leadership are essential in implementing those changes. Middle management, in particular, plays a crucial role, as the front-line of supervision.

“We really want to focus there because this is where we find the greatest need to build those middle managers and to help ensure that they’re providing, not only the right support, but that they’re doing it in the right way. We’re talking about how we’re really using our companies’ core values as the back bone to drive behaviors.”

The ability to visualize these ideas is also very important. Lean processes encourage the use of a metrics board, which shows where a company is currently with their efforts and where they need to be. Douglas Dynamics also utilize their own management system, with tools and methods for continuous improvement, one of which is value stream mapping or process mapping.

“Often times, what we need to do is just understand a process from start to finish and break it down,” Vlieger said. “We use Post-Its; we take it to the wall. We map those activities at a variety of different levels and then you can provide that analysis.

We’re breaking up the process understanding the activities and then analyzing them to say, ‘This is value added, this is non-value added.’ That non-value added activity is what we spend time on with problem-solving tools to reduce them or eliminate them from the process. That in turn provides better quality, better service.”

Vlieger admits that probably 80 percent or more of her company’s work is non-value-added — the customer doesn’t care about invoice processing, for example, but it must be done. The key is to use processes to make those non-value-added items better, faster and smarter so they take up less time and effort.

### Knowledge transfer

It is also important to build a culture of mentoring and knowledge transfer, so that your employees feed off of each other’s

knowledge and experience. One way Douglas Dynamics has been implementing this is through the introduction of the lead role.

“You have your shop floor technician and in each of those key areas we’ve developed a lead role,” says Vlieger. “So they are there to help assist in the process but also provide some other guidance and coaching and demonstrate the behaviors that are expected in our environment and participate in problem solving. And it really provides a career path for people that say, ‘I like what I do, but I want to do more, I want to take on more, I want more responsibility.’ That lead role is one way that we’ve really seen a way to build development paths.”

The company has also enacted manager development programs, which cover topics such as how to have difficult conversations, or how to do performance reviews and other management/leadership tasks.

“For us, it’s customer driven,” Vlieger said. “It’s embracing continuous improvement. Holding yourself and others accountable. And celebrating success is a big one. We like to have fun at Douglas Dynamics. How are we encouraging others by celebrating those wins and communicating the successes that we have? Those are all expectations of our leaders at all levels, but we’ve been doing a lot more with developing the middle management and helping them understand their role to be the coach or the mentor on the shop floor.”

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



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BY DAN ANDERSON

# SPEC MY TRUCK

## Cheaper By The Half-Dozen

### Finding the balance between tight budgets and optimizing techs' performance in the field

**T**he opportunity: Spec and buy six service trucks to repair and maintain utility equipment used to build and maintain power lines.

The challenge: Satisfy the veteran field mechanics who will operate the trucks, while meeting the needs of the changing utility equipment service industry. Oh, while you're at it, spend as little money as possible but maximize the durability and longevity of whatever you decide to buy.

Those were the challenges Crossroads Mobile Maintenance faced in early 2018. Based in Reed City, Mich., and Williamsburg, Iowa, Crossroads services nearly 1,400 pieces of utility equipment owned by sister company Hydaker Wheatlake. After extensive research, a committee of managers and technicians headed by Matt Bertotti, director of marketing and sales, selected 2018 Dodge Ram 5500 four-wheel drive chassis outfitted with four-door crew cabs, and powered by Cummins 6.7-liter diesel engines ahead of six-speed automatic transmissions.

"We chose the Cummins diesel for longevity and power," Bertotti says. "Techs prefer automatic transmissions, and four-wheel-drive is almost mandatory for us. Power lines are built through pretty remote locations, and if a boom truck has its boom stuck in the air, we've got to be able to get to it. Plus, it saves time if we can go to the machines for maintenance work, rather than have the utility company drag the equipment out to a road. Mobility was a big reason we went with the 5500 Rams — they're lighter and more nimble."

After extensive research, Bertotti's team decided to outfit the new trucks with 11-foot-long Service Trucks International service bodies equipped with STI's 3215E Tiger electric crane.

"We decided not to order PTO drives (necessary to run a hydraulic crane) on the trucks," Bertotti says. "These are our first service trucks with cranes. After we looked at the options and compared them to what our guys need to do, the electric crane was a good fit."

Welders, air compressors, and other peripherals were transferred from previous service trucks, a "hodge-podge," according to Bertotti, of older but still viable Millers, Vanair, and Lincoln units.

"We like durability and longevity," he says. "We saved money transferring those units to the new trucks, and want to extend that strategy to the STI service bodies. Several people we talked to said the STI service bodies will outlast the truck cabs and chassis."

Decisions about economy were balanced against intangibles such as driver comfort.

"We went with crew cabs not because our trucks haul a lot of people, but to give our guys room

to store stuff that needs to be protected from the weather," says Bertotti. "They carry extra clothes, laptops, tech manuals and electrical test equipment, and appreciate having the extra space in the cab. We also put on running boards simply because the 5500 four-wheel-drives sit a little high, and we wanted it to be easy for the guys to get in and out of their trucks."

Field technician Grant Zylstra operates one of the new trucks, and says he's had to do very little to adapt the truck to the way he works.

"I really like the crew cab," he says. "Some of the guys took out their back seat, but I've left mine in. It folds up pretty close to the back wall, and there's storage under that seat that keeps the things I put there from sliding around. I put plastic totes on the floor, and store all my tech books and schematics back there."

**"These are our first service trucks with cranes. After we looked at the options and compared them to what our guys need to do, the electric crane was a good fit."**

**— Matt Bertotti,  
director of sales and marketing,  
Crossroads Mobile Maintenance**

Zylstra is impressed with the strength of shelving in the STI service body.

"I bolted a 40-foot-long torch hose reel to the bottom of one of the shelves and it didn't flex at all," he says. "In another compartment, I turned one shelf upside down (the shelves have lips on their fronts) then wedged a set of Fastenal cabinets between that shelf and the one under it. Works great — the Fastenal drawers slide in and out and make it easy to get at small parts I store in them."

The only major change Zylstra plans is to remove the factory Dodge center console in the cab and replace it with a Mobile Office Solutions console.

"It's got its own fused-power distribution center and places for a two-way radio, smart phone, built-in filing cabinet and a mount for my laptop. Other than the Fastenal cabinets, the center console and some extra flashing strobe lights for safety, the truck is set up pretty well like I want it. It's nice not to have to change a lot of stuff on a brand new truck."

Photos by  
Casey Tjalsma



Field technician Grant Zylstra (left) and Matt Bertotti, director of marketing and sales, are happy with Crossroads Mobile Maintenance's new service trucks.



STI's 3215E Tiger electric crane doesn't require a PTO.



Indian lead reels offer a boost.



New trucks meet demands of a changing utility service industry.



The four-wheel drive chassis comes with six-speed automatic transmissions.

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

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Field technician Grant Zylstra is impressed with the shelving strength of the STI body.



Brake and backup light sits atop the cab.



Running boards make for easier access to the cab.



Fastenal drawers slide in and out easily.



Each of the six Ram 5500s carries an 11-foot Service Truck International service body.



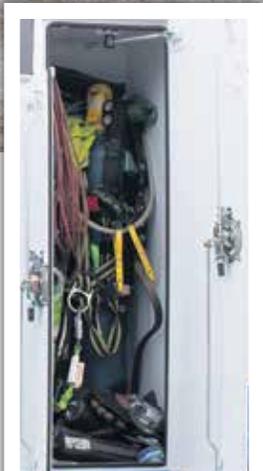
Torch hose reel is attached to the top of a cabinet.



Cummins 6.7-liter diesel was chosen for power and longevity.



Lights brighten the work site.



Cabinet stores assortment of gear.



The backseats of the crew cabs provide additional storage.



Rear deck affords ample work space.



Telematics system tracks truck's usage.



Light switches are handily placed in the cab.

## COVER

# Versatile power units

continued from cover

## Regulations drive shift

Like many other engineering changes in recent years, the move toward multifunction units has been driven in part by tighter regulations.

Matt Sherrick, a product manager in the power systems division for Miller Electric, a welding equipment manufacturer in Appleton, Wisc., said the Tier 4 emissions standards phased in by the federal government over the last several years have had fleets searching for ways to be lighter and cut down on unnecessary idling. And for a service truck, avoiding idling can be a major challenge.

"If you've got a PTO-driven compressor, anything the guy is going to do, the truck's going to be running, and you're going to pay a penalty for that in fuel economy," Sherrick said.

Meanwhile, manufacturers and fleets continue to be in a race toward lighter-weight materials in nearly all aspects of the truck and its components. Chris Lamb, a national sales representative for VMAC Global Technology, a

"The nice part for a fleet manager is to be able to go to a company and be able to say, 'I want one thing, I want one machine or system that does all of these.'"

— Caleb Pontius, vice-president of sales,  
Boss Industries

manufacturer of compressors in Nanaimo, B.C., said weight has been the top issue in the market for the last couple of years, in part because of tighter standards from the insurance companies that cover service trucks and other types of vehicles.

"If you talk to any major (manufacturer) out there, everybody is looking at weight savings," Lamb said. "Some is regulation and a lot of it is they need more capacity to carry their own tools and supplies and things of that nature."

With multiple companies turning out multifunction units to keep up with those demands, customers have plenty of options as they search for something that fits their needs.



File photo by Keith Norbury

Gold Rush star Juan Ibarra swears by his Lincoln Electric Air Advantage 600 SD multifunction unit.

Some want a unit with the most power, while others are looking for something that will keep their truck's weight down. Service truck drivers who end up working in residential neighborhoods or other areas where noise is an issue, meanwhile, might be interested in the quietest unit on the market.

At the 2018 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis, Dean Strathman, vice-president of sales for Vanair Manufacturing Inc., noted that increased demand for the company's Air N Arc all-in-one product series was putting the Michigan City, Ind.-based manufacturer on pace for a record year. "We've seen significant amount of fleet business but we've also seen increased activity through our distributor base as well," Strathman said at the time.

According to Vanair's website, the Air N Arc units from the 150-amp Air N Arc 150 to three versions of the 300-amp Air N Arc 300, including a diesel version.

## Mechanics cites the upsides

Larry Bryant, a longtime service truck operator with Excel Truck Group in Roanoke, Virginia, uses a Miller EnPak power system. It's powered by a diesel engine and has a generator, pump and rotary screw air compressor.

Bryant said he bought the unit about three years ago on a recommendation from the people who built and mounted his truck bed. They told him the multifunction units were the way of the future, and Bryant figured he might as well check it out.

Now, he quickly ticks off the list of upsides: fuel savings, less idling time, and less noise.

"The only thing I don't like is you've got two engines to service instead of one," Bryant said.

Juan Ibarra, a service truck mechanic whose family owns Ibarra Drain Services in Sun Valley, Nev. — but who is better known as a star of the Discovery Channel show, *Gold Rush* — uses a Lincoln Air Vantage 600SD unit. He said the combination of a welder, generator, compressor and pump made for the right fit for the kind of heavy, unpredictable work he runs into. (On the show, Ibarra has frequently had to take his truck into remote work sites in Alaska and other locations.)

"Before it was on my truck I had to idle my truck," he said. "And sitting there idling, especially when you're an owner-operator, that definitely can cost you quite a bit of money."

Ibarra said he's able to run multiple operations off the unit's power, including his 28-foot cutting trailer that has a CNC plasma table. He said he picked the Lincoln unit in large part because of the power of its 600-amp welder.

"This unit kind of stands in a category of its own," he said. "It's a true multifunction unit; they didn't skimp on the welding side."

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## COVER

File photo by Keith Norbury



Dean Strathman, Vanair Manufacturing's vice-president of sales, says the company's Air N Arc all-in-one product family has received a lot of interest.

**"If you talk to any major (manufacturer) out there, everybody is looking at weight savings," he said. "Some is regulation and a lot of it is they need more capacity to carry their own tools and supplies and things of that nature."**

— Chris Lamb, national sales representative, VMAC Global Technology

## Diesel and gas options

Nick Winarski, a product manager for industrial engine drives at Lincoln Electric, said his company has recognized that a one-size-fits-all design for multifunction units wouldn't reflect the wide range of operators and functions of service trucks. Lincoln offers both diesel and gas-powered systems.

"We know trucks don't come in one type or one size, and that's why we have all these different iterations — probably 20 different types of machines to fit different applications," Winarski said.

Lamb, with VMAC, said his company's products stand out because they are entirely manufactured in North America, come with lifetime warranties — and have advanced efficiency features that shut down the multifunction unit engine when it's not needed.

He said customers are often pleasantly surprised that shifting to a multifunction unit can extend the lifespan of other parts of a truck. Less engine time means less maintenance — and a potential savings of a couple thousand dollars a year, he said.

"The ROI is pretty quick: they're able to extend their chassis sometimes out two to three years of service, not having to run them as much," Lamb said.

## Reliability essential

Sherrick said the Miller multifunction unit provides an essential benefit for service truck operators who spend their days handling complex and time-sensitive demands: reliability.

"If you think of a guy that's going from multiple pieces on a truck to a single unit, it's got to run," he said, "They've got to be able to count on it. If your all-in-one unit goes down, your truck is down."

He said the Miller unit is equipped with features that are becoming necessary to stay competitive in the market, like a rotary screw compressor and technology that helps turn either then truck or the unit engine on and off when needed, to save energy.

Boss Industries has offered both above- and under-deck multifunction power units, though it is currently redesigning its above-deck system, Pontius said. He said the under-deck systems provide a competitive option in a market where above-deck systems are often quite expensive.

Pontius said business is booming, and he expects the trend to continue as more service truck fleets find reasons to make the shift.

"It seems like a product line that's going to be very viable for the foreseeable future," he said.

With a file from Keith Norbury.  
Erin Golden is a writer based in Minnesota.



## NEWS

## Body maker expands dealer network

Photo courtesy of Maintainer Corporation of Iowa Inc.

**A**n Iowa-based service body maker has a new dealer for southwest Ohio, northern Kentucky, and southern Indiana.

Maintainer Corporation of Iowa Inc. recently reached an agreement with The Larson Group to sell Maintainer's service trucks, lube trucks, and cranes in those regions.

"We have worked with The Larson Group many times over the years to secure chassis for our customers," said Tom Wibben, Maintainer's director of sales and service, in a news release. "TLG will now help us capitalize on the growing interest for Maintainer that we are seeing in this region."

Maintainer's newest dealer will sell through Peterbilt outlets in Louisville, Cincinnati, northern Kentucky, and Evansville, Ohio.

The Larson Group started in 1987 with Peterbilt parent company Paccar Inc. to have a Peterbilt dealer-



A Maintainer JJ585 two-ton body with H10025 crane was shipped to Peterbilt of Cincinnati in January.

ship in Springfield, Mo. TLG now operates 20 locations in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, and South Carolina.

For more information about TLG, visit <http://tlg-trucks.com>.

Headquartered in the northwest Iowa city of Sheldon, Maintainer has been in business since 1976. For more on Maintainer, visit [www.maintainer.com](http://www.maintainer.com).



## Compressor maker adds new VP

**I**ndustry veteran Jim Perschke has been appointed vice-president of business development and OEM sales for compressor maker Boss Industries LLC.

Perschke comes to Boss from Work Truck Solutions, where he was vice-president of sales. He previously worked as vice-president of global sales for Vanair Manufacturing, and as general sales manager for The Knapheide Manufacturing Company.

"Jim brings to Boss, over 25 years of experience in the truck body and equipment industry," Caleb Pontius, vice-

president of sales with Boss, said in a news release announcing Perschke's appointment. "Jim's knowledge and understanding of highly specialized trucks, bodies, and equipment, and his ability to provide integration solutions to our diverse customer base, will be instrumental in achieving our growth goals."

Perschke said he is excited to join the Boss team "and to get back to providing truck equipment solutions."

Founded in 1988, Boss is headquartered in LaPorte, Ind. For more information, visit [www.bossair.com](http://www.bossair.com).



Jim Perschke



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## LEGISLATION

# Right to repair fight gaining momentum

Nearly 20 states now have active RTR bills

MATT JONES

Since the 2015 signing of the Right to Repair Memorandum of Understanding, supporters of the cause have continued to fight to enact RTR legislation. Over the past few years, the number of active bills has risen as more people and legislators have become involved, with 18 active bills in 2018.

Gay Gordon-Byrne, executive director of The Repair Association, says that each bill faces a long series of hurdles, but every cleared hurdle makes room for others to get further along. With a number of bills that didn't make it to a vote due to timing issues ready to move forward in early 2019, support seems to be growing. But what is driving that support?

"Pardon my language, but more people are getting screwed," says Gordon-Byrne with a laugh. "And they're starting to find out why. Apple has become the poster child of this. They seem to want to continue to make repair difficult, even when it's visibly not, and then they offer up all of these

excuses for blocking repair that just don't hold any water. So thank you very much, Tim Cook. You've made this whole thing possible."

## AEM sends mixed signals

RTR has impacts on a staggering range of sectors, from home computing and mobile phones to heavy construction equipment. And while the RTR MOU signaled an intention to share crucial info and equipment with third-party repair shops, manufacturers appear loathe to have that enshrined in law. In February 2018, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers announced a statement of principles on RTR, saying members would make crucial info and tools available by 2021. The same month, however, the association argued against RTR legislation in New Hampshire, deeming it unnecessary.

"It's because they don't really want to honor it," says Gordon-Byrne. "Why not do it now? Customers want it now ... You look at the details, they said they're going

Image by iStockphoto.com/josdim



The Right to Repair movement covers a wide range of products including heavy equipment and trucks.

to provide essentially a subset of diagnostics. Not all of them, and they're going to decide which subsets the customer gets, and they're going to decide whether or not that customer is going to be allowed to replace the motherboard or do an oil change."

The AEM did not respond to a request for comment.

Gordon-Byrne notes that Vermont has established a special task force to study RTR as a legislative concept. The task force represents a diverse set of interests and their last meeting is set for mid-December with a report forthcoming shortly thereafter.

Kit Walsh, staff attorney for non-profit civil liberties organization the Electronic Frontier Foundation, says another crucial upcoming decision to monitor is by the Copyright Office and the Library of Congress, who were expected to publish a new rule regarding RTR in October.

"We'll see if they've accepted the arguments about why this is an important, legitimate activity – that it isn't something that interferes with any legitimate scope of copyright, that the freedom is important to prevent an unfair monopoly on repair from



**"We are supporting the effort to pass legislation to make telematics more accessible and eliminate the monopoly the vehicle manufacturers have created."**

— Marc Karon,  
committee chairman,  
Commercial Vehicle  
Solutions Network



**"Pardon my language, but more people are getting screwed. And they're starting to find out why."**

— Gay Gordon-Byrne,  
executive director,  
The Repair Association

emerging," Walsh says.

The influence of the manufacturers and their lobbying groups is the biggest challenge to RTR legislation. In some states, Walsh says, bills that would allow people to repair anything have removed vehicles or farm equipment from being covered.

"A lot of them exclude motor vehicles, because that's a fight they don't think they can win, politically, against the money of the auto manufacturers," Walsh says.

## Focus on heavy trucks

Marc Karon, a committee chairman and former president of the Commercial Vehicle Solutions Network, says that they have had success by maintaining a very narrow focus on heavy trucks and independent distributors.

"I have preached to anyone who would listen, 'if you do not have a seat at the table, you are likely to be on the menu.' For that reason, CVSN, which is only focused on

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the independent distributor, has been able to get positive results,” Karon said. “We have used our own lobbyist, and our focus is solely on what is good for our association members.”

A significant issue for the heavy truck industry is telematics. Karon expects telematics to become even more important with the increasing use of computers on trucks.

“We are supporting the effort to pass legislation to make telematics more accessible and eliminate the monopoly the vehicle manufacturers have created,” Karon says.

The California Farm Bureau recently gave up the right to repair parts without going through a dealer. Karon says this is a common occurrence that illustrates a key difficulty in these issues.

“There are many associations that represent conflicting interests within their membership,” Karon says. “When this happens, the association is faced with a difficult decision and a neutral stance is usually the result. To take a firmer position might compromise funding.”

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



**“A lot of them exclude motor vehicles, because that’s a fight they don’t think they can win, politically, against the money of the auto manufacturers.”**

**— Kit Walsh, staff attorney, the Electronic Frontier Foundation**



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## On the job

Tim Jenkins (top left) of King's Construction prepares to service a Caterpillar dozer with a lube and fuel truck from Summit Truck Bodies on a job site in Burlingame, Kansas. (Below) Jenkins (left) and a co-worker service a Caterpillar excavator on a construction site on the University of Kansas campus in Lawrence, Kansas. The photos are two of several that Summit marketing specialist Sondra Kirby shot as she followed the lube truck on its rounds one day last fall. Summit is headquartered in Wathena, Kansas, about 80 miles northeast of the university, and about 110 miles from Burlingame. King's Construction is based in Oskaloosa, Kansas, about 25 miles north of the university.



## FEATURE

# Chassis makers reveal innovations during industry trade conference

FuelSense, collision mitigation systems, and IronFeather backpack system are among the features on new work truck chassis

SAUL CHERNOS

Representatives of several major truck chassis makers talked about their new products lines during presentations at the 2018 annual manufacturers conference of the Canadian Transportation Equipment Association in Toronto in October.

The following are highlights of those presentations.

## HINO — 237



Hino Motors is introducing its XL Series truck to the Class 8 market.

Photo courtesy of Hino Motors Ltd.

Hino Motors Canada technical manager Stuart Bottrell discussed the planned introduction of the Hino XL Series truck to the Class 8 market.

Currently in production, initial units will be destined as demonstrators for select customers. "Those select customers are going to beat them up for a certain time and then give them back to us, so it's more of a product testing," Bottrell said, forecasting broader availability by summer 2019.

The Hino XL Series will be available in both single and tandem configurations, with a Hino A09 turbo diesel engine — with 300 or 360 horsepower. This is new to North America but has been available globally for a decade.

An Allison 3000-series transmission includes FuelSense, a program designed to help save fuel by shifting into neutral when the vehicle stops in order to ease the engine load to the transmission.

"Older HINO MDTs had a power/economy button beside the transmission shifter," Bottrell said. "That's now changed with FuelSense. You will have power mode for approximately three minutes, so if you're going up a hill and you press to the floor it will shift the transmission to power mode and then drop back to economy."

Other features — some optional — include a Dana drive shaft and axles, a Wabco OnGuard for Collision Mitigation collision avoidance system, Wabco OnLane2 for lane departure warning, a Jake Brake compression-brake system, and a passenger side mirror to observe blind spots.

## NAVISTAR — 263



With the launch of the International CV Series medium-duty Class 4 and 5 work trucks, Navistar International has completed a refresh across its entire lineup. Shown, left to right, are the MV, CV and HX lines.

Photo courtesy of Navistar International Corp.

Joel Shaw, vocational sales manager with Navistar Canada, said a joint venture with General Motors will see medium-duty 4500 and 5500 units available in early 2019.

These class 4 and 5 trucks, branded International CV at International dealerships in the U.S. and Canada, and

Silverado at Chevrolet dealerships in the U.S., feature a Navistar chassis reminiscent of TerraStar, and a 6.6-litre GM-designed turbo-diesel Duramax engine branded as International.

With 350 horsepower, 700 foot-pounds of torque and Allison 1000 or 2000 series transmissions, vehicles will be available in regular and crew cab models. Other options include an engine-mounted belt-driven air compressor, two and four-wheel drive capability, and choice of a 25- or 40-gallon fuel tank, or both. The battery box is integrated into the cab underneath the step; and the hood tilts.

Shaw described the gross vehicle weight rating of up to 23,500 pounds as an industry first for this size truck.

Shaw also outlined improvements across the MV-HV line. "We've totally redone the interior to freshen it up," Shaw said. "The interior was new in 2003, so it was time for an update."

Many switches have been relocated. The transmission touchpad moves from knee level to the steering column and the fuse panel moves from passenger side knee level to the top of the dash.

"The idea is to keep the driver's eyes on the road instead of looking for a button to push," Shaw said.

Safety enhancements include, IMMI RollTek seats, Wingman collision mitigation, Wabco OnGuard, a Bendix Blindspotter system, and Air Disc braking.

## PETERBILT — 234



Peterbilt bills its model 567 truck as a steadfast workhorse.

Photo courtesy of Peterbilt Motors Co.

The year 2018 marked a milestone for Peterbilt. In January at its manufacturing facility in Denton, Texas, the company's one millionth truck rolled off the assembly line.

"Peterbilt gave that truck away in its SuperFan contest at the Mid America Truck Show in Louisville," said Greg Grabinsky, vocational sales manager with Peterbilt Canada.

Grabinsky recapped a flurry of changes — a new front steer axle, drive axles and a 12-speed Paccar automated transmission designed to accompany Paccar's MX engine. "The transmission right now is for over-the-road," Grabinsky said. "We're reviewing whether we can take this up to a vocational transmission."

Safety improvements topped the list. An alarm sounds if a door's left open or a parking brake isn't set when it should be. High visibility egress grab handles are also newly introduced. And cruise control deactivates when the wipers turn on, which ensures drivers are in control.

Referencing the company's Vehicle Electronic Control Unit (VECU), leveraged through Peterbilt's parent Paccar,

Grabinsky noted extensive communication improvements within the chassis to connect to the Body Builder module.

"The U.S. Air Force F35 has 21 million lines of software and the average truck today has 60 million lines of software, so there's a lot of communication going on between all the systems," Grabinsky said. "It going to get even more complicated as we continue to add additional driver-assist programs such as collision avoidance and lane departure."

## WESTERN STAR — 243



Western Star's new IronFeather backpack system comes in 12-, 24- and 36-inch cab extensions. The 12-inch version, shown above, extends the back of the cab to offer the driver more room and better seating.

Photo courtesy of Western Star Truck Sales Inc.

John Tomlinson, vocational sales manager with Daimler Trucks North America, the parent company of Western Star Trucks, outlined improvements to its XD off-road offerings.

These come with Detroit Diesel engines, with Tomlinson describing the DD16, in particular, as high-powered. "It's pulling 150-ton loads around the clock," he said.

Another new development is the IronFeather backpack system, which comes in 12-, 24-, and 36-inch cab extensions. "It extends the back of the cab to offer the driver more room and better seating," Tomlinson said.

Additional recent enhancements on most models include LED headlamps, a 3rd Eye camera and radar system to alert drivers to blind spots, sealed double-channel frame-rails to address salt and corrosion, Grip Safe safety steps, and a new 18,000-pound all-wheel drive.

A new Tough Wrap harness system is meant to minimize abrasion and chafing damage that can lead to electrical failures. "It makes the truck more bulletproof," Tomlinson said. A RollTek seat system is designed to pull the driver towards the floor, tighten the seatbelt and inflate side airbags when a rollover is detected.

To save outfitters' time, Western Star can pre-drill and mount transition plates and REPTO mixer pump brackets at the factory.

Also available is a Twin Steer conversion kit, and the Twin Steer diesel exhaust fluid tank can be relocated onto the exhaust bracket. "That saves you guys moving the fuel tank forward to get all that frame space," Tomlinson said.



## NEWS

# New board member appointed

**B**ernie Brenner has joined the board of directors of Work Truck Solutions, a California-based company that provides applications to help dealers organize and sell their inventories.

Brenner has a career of more than 25 years in “building innovative companies in the automotive industry,” said a news release from Work Truck Solutions, which is headquartered in Chico, Calif.

In 2005, he co-founded TrueCar Inc., which went public in 2014. Before TrueCar, Brenner was vice-president of business development for Carfax. At present, he is co-founder and CEO of Rollick Outdoor Inc., “a one-to-one relationship marketing platform for manufacturers and franchise dealers to connect and nurture consumers through the shopping process of large ticket items,” the release said.

Kathryn Schifferle, CEO of Work Truck Solutions, said, “Bernie’s insight, experience and relationships will help guide us in how we expand dealers’ local fleet and business to business opportunities in each unique local market.”

For more information,

visit [www.worktrucksolutions.com](http://www.worktrucksolutions.com).



*Bernie Brenner*

# B.C. firm wins manufacturing honor

**C**ompressor maker VMAC Global Technology Inc. has won a Manufacturing Business of the Year Award.

Headquartered in Nanaimo, B.C., on Vancouver Island, VMAC won the honor at the 19th annual Annual Grant Thornton LLP Business Excellence Awards, which were presented by the Business Examiner Media Group.

“The VMAC team is excited to be the winner of the Manufacturing Business of the Year category for the second year in a row,” VMAC president Tod Gilbert said in a news release. “In the last quarter of 2018, VMAC was also announced as a 2019 finalist in Canada’s Best Managed Companies. These continued achievements are a testament to VMAC’s dedicated and talented team.”

An independent panel of professionals from local businesses, not-for-profits, and consultants judged the winners. The awards featured 85 finalists in 17 categories.

“Every year there are some amazing success stories told at this event,” the release quoted the Business Examiner’s Mark MacDonald. “There are a lot of hard-working business people who have put everything they have into their companies, and it’s great to have an evening to celebrate their efforts.”

Gilbert said his company is “proud to represent the manufacturing industry on Vancouver Island.” He added, “VMAC’s ongoing achievements are due to VMAC’s culture, spirit of innovation and continuous improvement that our 130 coworkers exemplify every day.”

For more information about VMAC, which stands for Vehicle Mounted Air Compressors, visit [www.vmacair.com](http://www.vmacair.com).



*VMAC president Tod Gilbert (right) and Stuart Coker, director of operations, celebrate receiving the 2019 Manufacturing Business of the Year Award from Grant Thornton LLP.*

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## New 24-volt compressor solves excavator dilemma

**T**he H40 hydraulic air compressor from VMAC Global Technology Inc. is now available in a 24-volt model.

B.C.-based VMAC first built the 24-volt model in partnership with Vancer, an Illinois-based manufacturer of maintenance of way equipment for railroads.

Vancer, which uses hydraulic air compressors on its excavators, was running into challenges during installation, said a news release from VMAC, which is headquartered in Nanaimo.

"Vancer inspired us to innovate," the release quoted Rick Duifhuis, VMAC's original equipment manufacturer development manager. "They pointed out an issue with the status quo and our team was eager to find a way to overcome it."

Installers traditionally use a converter kit to make 12-volt compressors compatible with 24-volt systems. This works well for most equipment but the kits are complicated to install on excavators, which "have multiple pivot points and long wire points" that need to be taken into account.

The problem was "instantly eliminated" by swapping the 12-volt fan in the integrated hydraulic/compressor oil cooler with a 24-volt fan and using a small internal converter for the 12-volt control box, the



Vancer uses a 24-volt model H40 hydraulic air compressor from VMAC on its railroad maintenance equipment.

release said.

"It's a simple improvement but it will save countless hours of work on future excavator installs," Duifhuis said.

Vancer's new compressor also features a black exterior to match the Caterpillar brand.

Hydraulics power VMAC's H40 rotary screw compressor, allowing it to fit in tight spaces. In addition to freeing up six cubic meters, the H40 reduces weight by 260 pounds, while providing 40 cubic feet per minute of "continuous air," the release said.

For information, visit [www.vmacair.com/oem](http://www.vmacair.com/oem).



## More tires fit for vans

**T**he Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company has increased the size offerings of its Wrangler Fortitude HT series tires in response to the growing demand of cargo vans, says a news release from the tire maker.

More than 600,000 full-size cargo vans have sold in the last two years, the news release noted, adding that the Wrangler Fortitude HT "is a rugged tire that is perfectly suited for this changing market segment and its growing business demands."

The current line of 35 SUV/CUV and light truck sizes is expanding with three C-type sizes, the release said. These include the popular 235/65R16C and 10 heavy-duty LT sizes, for a total of 48 sizes.

"We listened to customer feedback and saw an opportunity to meet increasing demand," the release quoted Mike Dwyer, Goodyear's chief customer officer for North America.

The Wrangler Fortitude HT features optimized tread design, tough tread compound, full-depth sipes and wide circumferential grooves which "helps reduce road noise, provides uniform wear and long tread life and helps provide excellent wet traction," according to the company. "It also features many biting edges that enhance traction in the snow."

Vehicle "fitments" for the Fortitude HT include Ford Transit, Mercedes Sprinter, Nissan NV3500, Ram ProMaster, Chevrolet Express, Ford F150, F250, and F350, as well as Chevrolet Silverado 1500, 2500, and 3500.

Goodyear is headquartered in Akron, Ohio, where it has one of its two innovation centers, with the other in Luxembourg. For more information, visit [www.goodyear.com](http://www.goodyear.com).



Goodyear is increasing the available sizes of its Wrangler Fortitude HT series tires to meet growing demand for cargo vans.



## Lube trucks redesigned

**T**exas-based Sage Oil Vac has redesigned its lineup of lube trucks.

The new class 5, 7, and 8 trucks "not only help operators work more efficiently, but add tools that help them better meet the needs of those operating the machinery they're servicing," says a recent posting on the company's website.

The class 5 lube truck, for example, doesn't require the operator to have a commercial driver's licence.

"It's harder to find CDL drivers, so a lot of companies — especially in the oil fields in West Texas — are looking for non-CDL applications," company president Aaron Sage says in the article. "So, if you're looking for a lube-only truck, these Class 5 trucks can help meet the same need without that licence."

The class 5 lube trucks are built on a Ford F-550 or Ram 5500 chassis, notes Sage, whose company is based in Amarillo, Texas.

"A lot of the big OEM dealers are using these trucks for oil, but not fuel, to conduct maintenance for rental fleet customers," Sage says.

The new lube trucks also better manage weight over the axles, by integrating more aluminum into the chassis and components, and shifting the location of certain parts and components.

Meanwhile, a touchscreen monitor enables the operator to track the distribution of fluids and fuels to each machine on a jobsite, "eliminating a step in the process and adding efficiency," the article notes.

For more information, visit [sageoilvac.com](http://sageoilvac.com).



Sage Oil Vac has redesigned its class 5, 7, and 8 lube trucks.



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<http://www.worktruckshow.com>

**March 18-21, 2019**

**TMC Annual Meeting  
& Transportation Technology Exhibition  
Georgia World Congress Center,  
Atlanta, Ga.**

"TMC's exhibition makes available to attendees the best minds on equipment issues in the trucking industry."

<https://tmcannual.trucking.org>

**March 26-28, 2019**

**Mid America Farm Exposition  
Tony's Pizza Events Center, Salina, Kansas**

"Over 300 exhibits are on display representing approximately 275 companies from around the United States."

<https://salinakscoc.wliinc24.com/events/54th-Annual-Mid-America-Farm-Exposition-9567/details>

**March 28-28, 2019**

**National Heavy Equipment Show  
International Centre, Mississauga, Ont.**

"Bringing together the industry leaders in Canada's heavy equipment, road building, construction, crushing & screening, and infrastructure sectors."

<http://www.nhes.ca>

**March 28-30, 2019**

**Mid-America Trucking Show  
Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, Ky.**

"See the newest technology, learn from the experts, connect with peers and more."

<https://www.truckingshow.com>

### APRIL 2019

**April 2-4, 2019**

**Precision Machining Technology Show  
Huntington Convention Center,  
Cleveland, Ohio**

"PMTS is an international gathering of the manufacturing professionals who are moving the industry forward."

<http://www.pmts.com>

**April 8-11, 2019**

**ProMat**

**McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill.**

"Discover the latest solutions to move your business forward as the industry's leading innovators showcase their latest manufacturing, distribution and supply chain equipment and systems."

<http://www.promatshow.com>

**April 8-13, 2019**

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**Indiana Convention Center & Lucas Oil  
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**Georgia World Congress Center,  
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**NAFA 2017 Institute & Expo  
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<http://www.nafainstitute.org>

**April 23-25, 2019**

**AEM Annual Statistics Conference  
Tempe Mission Palms Hotel, Tempe, Ariz.**

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<https://www.aem.org/events/>



*Hundreds of thousands are expected at Bauma, the world's largest heavy equipment trade show, taking place in Munich, Germany this April.*

**April 23-26, 2019**

**Alternative Clean Technology Expo  
Long Beach Convention Center,  
Long Beach, Calif.**

"Connected vehicle technologies, fuel efficiency improvement strategies and equipment, and drivetrain electrification will be key focal points for the 2019 show."

<http://www.actexpo.com>

**April 23-27, 2019**

**Specialized Carriers & Rigging  
Association  
Annual Conference**

**Omni La Costa Resort, Carlsbad, Calif.**

"Highlights include education sessions by well-known authors and speakers, committee meetings, receptions and numerous networking opportunities."

<http://www.scranet.org/meetings>

**April 29-May 2, 2019**

**Auvsu XPonential 2019  
Association for Unmanned Vehicle  
Systems International  
McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill.**

"Join 8,500 technologists, regulators and users across commercial and defense sectors for the largest, most comprehensive trade show for unmanned and autonomous systems."

<http://www.xponential.org/>

### MAY 2019

**May 6-8, 2019**

**Web Sling & Tie Down Association  
Annual Meeting**

**Casa Magna Marriott Resort,  
Cancun, Mexico**

"These meetings provide information and discussion on the issues important to the

web sling and tie down industry."

<http://www.wstda.com/meetings/>

**May 20-23, 2019**

**AWEA Wind Power  
Conference & Exhibition**

**George R. Brown Convention Center,  
Houston, Texas.**

"Check out the hottest, most innovative products, services and technologies coming to the industry."

<http://www.windpowerexpo.org/>

**May 24-25, 2019**

**Canada North Resources Expo  
CN Centre, South Prince George, B.C.**

"This biennial show focuses on Northern Canada's varied resource sectors — including forestry, heavy construction, infrastructure development and more."

<http://www.cnre.ca>

### JUNE 2019

**June 5-8, 2019**

**Crane Rental Association of Canada  
Annual Conference**

**Delta Prince Edward Island,  
Charlottetown, P.E.I.**

"The CRAC Conference is a unique annual event giving the opportunity to meet with the leaders of the Canadian crane industry."

<https://www.crac-aclg.ca/welcome/>

**June 17-20, 2019**

**Government Fleet Expo & Conference  
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.**

**New Orleans, La.**

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*The Mid-America Trucking Show comes to the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville in late March.*

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