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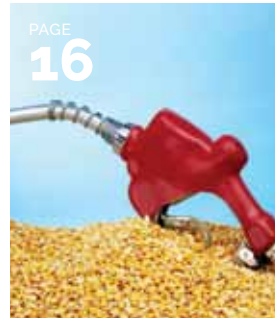
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Published monthly by Charmont Media Global
Unit 17, Northcliff Office Park, 203 Beyers Naude Drive, Northcliff, 2195, P O Box 957, Fontainebleau, 2032, South Africa
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Survival of the **FITTEST!**



I've said it before and I'll say it again: this industry has never been one for sissies – and we've always coped. But ... yikes! Recent developments within our country have left me feeling apprehensive, to say the very least. Having said that, we're determined to hang in there – and at least one other captain of industry shares my sentiments ...



CHARLEEN CLARKE

Torbjörn Christensson, president of Volvo Group Southern Africa, came across as the calmest man on the planet at his annual media conference – despite predicting a tough 2016. "A combination of macroeconomic factors, including a weak exchange rate, pressure on inflation and interest rates and low business confidence levels, contributed to a decline in local truck sales during 2015. With the South African economy predicted to grow by only one percent during 2016, we expect the local truck market to be in for another challenging year," Christensson explained.

Surprisingly, however, he was quite matter of fact about the sad situation in which we find ourselves as a country. "There are worse places to be – such as Angola, where the market is 94 percent down. That country's gross domestic product (GDP) is totally oil dependent and, with the drop in the oil price, the economy has collapsed," he related.

Maybe he's relaxed because the Volvo Group had such a good year, enjoying a 15-percent share of the South African Development Community (SADC) truck and bus market, selling 4 563 units.

In the extra-heavy commercial vehicle segment, Volvo Trucks and UD Trucks both managed to increase their market share within the SADC region. Volvo Trucks moved up from fifth position in 2014 to third in 2015 (1 822 units, 13,6 percent market share), while UD Trucks claimed the fourth spot, up from seventh in 2014 (1 316 units, 9,8 percent market share). Renault Trucks sold 112 units during 2015.

According to Christensson, the Volvo Group is also the leader in the truck-tractor segment within the SADC region, with a 30 percent market share.

Of course, that's all history now. How will the group keep its head above water this year?

"I strongly believe that you have to be service orientated and, if you get that right, your customers will stick with you through good and bad times," said Christensson. "I believe

that this has been one of our group's strong points over the years."

Second, Volvo will focus on cost efficiencies. It has already shed ten percent of its workforce – and the emphasis on keeping costs under control will continue. "We have taken several steps to make the company more efficient, profitable and viable for the long term," said Christensson.

Third, there will be increasing emphasis on cross-border trade. During 2015, the company was assigned increased responsibility for the entire 21-market southern and eastern African region. Christensson said that some African markets – Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, for instance – hold some promise. They won't make up for the South African market, which will be stagnant at best, but at least that will prop up volumes somewhat.

In order to service these markets, Volvo will appoint new importers in Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

The company will also introduce new enhancements to its current product offering, including new specifications for the Volvo FH and FMX ranges. UD Trucks will also launch a new heavy commercial vehicle range later on in 2016. The UD Quester range will also be introduced into Africa from the first quarter this year.

Finally, Christensson believes the quality of the Volvo Group employees bodes well for a reasonable 2016. "I have the privilege to work with some of the most experienced, skilled and passionate people in the industry," he said. "We remain committed to the success of our in southern and eastern Africa. In tough times strong companies get stronger. We are looking forward to this year, but we will have to roll up our sleeves. There will be ups and downs and we will handle it," he said.

I feel exactly the same way about my **FOCUS** colleagues: I work with a wonderful team of people. Is this year going to be tough? Sure. But we are going to hang in there and ride it out! Please join us on our journey ... **F**

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NUMBER'S UP

for NW

Following an apparent name change, the North West Province is due for new, advanced number plates



GAVIN MYERS

Uh-oh ... new number plates are on the cards again. At least, for now, only in the North West (NW) Province – which, just by the by, was quietly renamed Bokone Bophirima (BB) in mid-2015 ...

Yes, I was blissfully ignorant of that as well, so it couldn't have caused the consternation historically associated with high-profile name changes. Maybe the locals let it slide because Bokone Bophirima is simply the Tswana version of North West Province.

Whatever the case, what is more likely to cause an uproar is that, during December, the Bokone Bophirima Department of Community Safety and Transport Management announced that it would be implementing

their existing three-letters, three-numbers plates does NW have to change its plates?

The first reason is the obvious, new BB suffix – but it is the second reason that intrigues me more. The new plates are the first in the country to use a Securitised Number Plate System, the aim of which is to tackle organised vehicle crime and the growing prevalence of vehicle and licence plate cloning.

A methodology for the secure distribution of the plates, the system uses 2D barcode technology to record and control the manufacture, distribution and issuance of the uniquely encoded number plates, matching vehicle registration data with number plate details.

The idea is that every supplier in the value chain – from the material manufacturer, the blanker, distributor and embosser – has accountability for every process in their domain, with auditable traceability and management of the number plates in the system.

It is hoped that this initiative will stem the 40 000-and-growing number of cloned vehicles on South Africa's roads.

"Without accountability for how, and to whom, these plates are issued, duplication is so much easier, leading to fraudulent and criminal activities," says MEC of the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management, Gaoage Molapisi.

"You could face fines and toll fees accumulated by fraudsters using your cloned details. Even worse, if a cloned vehicle is used in a serious crime such as an armed robbery, hijacking or murder, you could find yourself on the receiving end of an arrest and legal action.

"In each instance, the onus will be on you, the legitimate road user, to prove your innocence, usually at significant legal cost, not to mention trauma and frustration. With the new Securitised Number Plate system, we aim to make our roads and communities safer and protect against this form of vehicle identity fraud," he continues.

The new number plates can be acquired at all registered number plate outlets in the North West Province. The vehicle registration or licence papers and acceptable identification, as per the National Road Traffic Act, will be required. It is intended that the number plates are to be replaced every five years to allow for additional enhanced security ...

Here's hoping this'll all be worth it for the good citizens of NW. BB, I mean ... **F**



HOD Bailey Mahlakoleng (left) hands over a set of securitised number plates to MEC Gaoage Molapisi of the Bokone Bophirima Department of Community Safety and Transport Management.

a new number plate system. (Remember the indignation and confusion when Gauteng Province introduced the two letters, two-numbers, two-letters format a few years ago?)

The new plates for NW – now BB – will apply to new vehicle registrations from February and the changeover of number plates for existing vehicles will be set out in Schedule 5 of new regulations, also commencing in February. Why, when GP motorists were allowed to keep

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Employing a new truck or bus driver, without first testing that he or she is capable of driving your vehicle, can place them, your company and the lives of others in peril

I recently had a very unpleasant and frightening experience when testing an incompetent applicant for a truck driver's job. He had an official heavy-duty driving licence and a professional driving permit, but could not drive the vehicle and had probably never been taught to drive a truck ... or even a light motor vehicle.

I had been approached by a company that was in the process of replacing one of its older drivers, who was retiring. There were a number of applicants for the position and I was contracted to test the potential drivers and assist in the selection of the best candidate for the job.

Satisfied that all the potential drivers to be tested had valid licences and professional driving permits, I selected the first candidate to road test his driving proficiency.

Before we started the road test, I asked him to conduct a pre-trip inspection on the vehicle. The poor man had no idea what to do and it was clear that he had never been taught how to do this.

Inside the cab, I pointed to the rev counter and asked him to explain its importance. His answer was that it records the speed that the vehicle is travelling and when the indicator on the counter reaches the red line the driver is going too fast.

Well, I thought this was not too serious, as we could easily teach him how to conduct a pre-trip inspection and how to use the rev counter.

At the start of the road test, he had difficulty in

reversing and manoeuvring the truck out of the yard. His clutch control was very poor and very rough, and he could not start the vehicle without it running backwards, but I decided to proceed; giving him some leeway and making allowance for him being nervous.

After exiting the factory gate, we turned into a main road that was heavily congested with traffic and pedestrians, but he ignored all the potential road hazards. He also ignored the speed limit; racing through first, second and third gears and over-revving in each gear.

In his excited, formula-one, racing-driver style he realised that the truck would not go any faster unless he changed to a higher gear. He battled to select fourth gear and, in his panic, slammed the gearbox back into second. The back wheels locked up and he nearly lost control of the vehicle. It's a wonder that he did not damage the driveline.

By now it was blatantly evident that he was not competent to drive any type of motor vehicle and had never been taught how to drive. He was also a danger to himself and other road users.

The question is: how did he obtain and possess a code EC driving licence and a current professional driving permit?

Remember, as the owner of a motor vehicle, it is your legal and moral obligation to ensure that the person who you allow to drive your vehicle has a valid licence and a professional driving permit for the class of motor vehicle, and is actually competent to drive your vehicle. **F**



One of this country's most respected commercial vehicle industry authorities, VIC OLIVER has been in this industry for over 50 years. Before joining the FOCUS team, he spent 15 years with Nissan Diesel (now UD Trucks), 11 years with Busaf and seven years with International. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit www.focusontransport.co.za and have your say!

TIGHTEN CONTROL AND REGULATION TO CURB ACCIDENTS

Roadside memorials marking the locations of fatal traffic accidents have become a common sight in South Africa. Unfortunately, many of these accidents are caused by professional drivers in the transport industry, and the number of incidents that result from driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs is unacceptably high.

The World Health Organisation has emphasised the need for effective legislation to be implemented to ensure that the transportation industry becomes regulated and monitored, in order to reduce this trend.

According to the South African national injury mortality surveillance system, there were 25 361 fatal injuries registered at 32 of the state mortuaries in 2001. Transport-related deaths accounted for 27 percent of all the fatal injuries.

These statistics show that the transportation sector plays a significant role in the rate of accidents and fatalities on our roads. A more regulated and controlled environment is essential.

A similar practice to that used in the South African mining industry needs to be adopted within the transport sector. Drivers need to be tested before they are permitted to take out vehicles, as well as upon their return, to ensure they have not been drinking on the job.

This process must be audited and enforced to ensure accountability and compliance with legal driving limits. Transporters need to enforce a zero-tolerance approach to driving under the influence, to ensure the safety of road users and comply with the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act.

Education on the dangers of alcohol consumption and of driving under the influence, as well as practical examples of the devastating consequences that drunken driving can have, will also help to reduce the number of fatalities.

Drivers should be educated on how they can drink safely, without being in danger of alcoholism, or of contravening the laws around enforceable limits for professional drivers.

Rhys Evans
Director, ALCO-Safe



LOGISTICS PROVIDERS SHOULD HAVE CUSTOMS PREFERRED-TRADER STATUS

In recent years, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) has embarked on a risk-based approach to managing and enforcing customs compliance, with the aim of being able to spend more time and resources in high-risk areas and on high-risk clients.

For this approach to work, SARS has identified trusted SARS clients (importers and exporters) with the required systems and controls in place to ensure a high level of compliance. These trusted SARS clients have been given a preferred-trader accreditation.

The new Customs Act, implemented in 2015, increases the focus on compliance and the role of preferred traders. There are a number of implications of this new Act:

- There is an increased focus on customs compliance, with more severe penalties for non-compliance and greater clarity on who is responsible for compliance.
- There are responsibilities and accountability of directors and employees; a key area of focus in the new legislation that requires careful consideration.
- SARS will be implementing tests for representatives of companies that wish to register as importers or exporters. This will have far-reaching implications as most companies simply outsource their customs function to their clearing agent.

As a SARS preferred trader we benefit from expedited clearances and movement of product:

- SARS appoints a customs relationship manager, tasked with facilitating the relationship between the client and customs.
- There is also a reduction of the amount of security required for compliance with a customs procedure and there are fewer routine documentary and physical inspections.
- SARS prioritises a request for tariff and valuation determinations, as well as access to non-intrusive inspection techniques, when goods are stopped or detained for inspection.

Detlev Duve
MD, Dachser South Africa

AFRIWAY, coming your way



A new dawn is about to break for Iveco buses. GAVIN MYERS gets the scoop

Iveco South Africa's is ready to surprise bus operators and customers when its new AFRIWAY commuter bus makes its debut at the Southern African Bus Operators Association (Saboa) annual conference in March. Previewed at the 2013 Johannesburg International Motor Show as the 180E, the new AFRIWAY bus has undergone extensive development and testing to make it "a bullet-proof, class-leading product".

Ray Karshagen, head of the bus division at Iveco South Africa Works, explains that the AFRIWAY has been subjected to ongoing durability testing at the Gerotek testing facility outside Pretoria.

have monitored the 'total cost of ownership' and bus reliability, and the results will pleasantly surprise owners and operators," Karshagen smiles.

The AFRIWAY has been developed for commuter operations, mining services and construction staff transport. The standard 12,3-m long 4x2 bus will accommodate 65 seated and 28 standing passengers. Tare weight comes in at under 10 000 kg in this specification – to the benefit of fuel consumption and licence fees. The chassis carries an 11 500 kg manufacturer-rated rear axle and parabolic spring suspension that enhances ride comfort.

The driveline is based on the Eurocargo truck. The Euro-3 TECTOR 6 engine remains over the front axle as this presents numerous benefits when compared with the traditional front-engine bus configuration.

"In the case of a front-end accident, the engine and cooling system remain out of harm's way, minimising the need for mechanical repair. The engine cooling is also improved, due to more effective air circulation around the wheel arches. Weight distribution is enhanced for better stability, as is the angle of approach – an important consideration for rural applications," Karshagen notes.

A nine-speed ZF manual transmission and a Voith Diwa remote-mounted automatic transmission are available. "The prototype bus fitted with the automatic transmission has shown vastly improved fuel consumption results when compared with other bus models. The market has been moving to automatic transmissions to reduce driver fatigue in stop-start operations," says Karshagen.

The body and chassis are built in the same facility in Rosslyn using specialised manufacturing tools and jigs as well as assembly processes refined by CNH Industrial. The company can, therefore, offer a two-year bumper-to-bumper factory warranty on the complete bus chassis and body. A three-year or 300 000 km (whichever occurs first) warranty covers the chassis driveline.

"We believe that the 'total cost of ownership' of the AFRIWAY bus will be best-in-class and we are confident that the product will benefit operators and passengers alike, as it traverses the city, intercity and rural roads of southern Africa," Karshagen concludes. **F**



ABOVE: The standard 12,3-m long bus will accommodate 65 seated and 28 standing passengers.

"One vehicle has completed 60 000 km of Reliability Growth Testing (RGT), equating to 580 000 km in normal operating conditions. Another of the test buses unfortunately rolled while on test. The structure stood up very well and the driver walked away unscathed," Karshagen says.

Numerous buses have been run with selected customers in arduous unpaved road conditions in the Limpopo and Northwest Provinces, in a mining operation in Zambia, in contract services in Mpumalanga and from sea level to high altitudes in Kwa-Zulu Natal. "We

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Making the Blockhouse OUR HOME

From 1 000 motorbikes to giant long-haulers, it seems the Engen Blockhouse 1-Stop has (or soon will have) seen it all ...

W

ith Truck Test 2016 introducing a new format for the running of all future events, it was of utmost importance to find an appropriate venue (or hub, in Truck Test 2016 speak) from which to base the test.

FOCUS's ongoing partnership with Engen, as sole fuel supplier, has grown since the very first Truck Test event in 2012 and is now well established. With the test trucks visiting many of its Truck Stop facilities throughout the years, the company was again the obvious partner.

"As Engen has been a part of the Truck Test family for some time, the company was only too happy for us to call on its resources again and make use of one of its many filling stations throughout the country as our base," smiles **FOCUS** editor Charleen Clarke.

With Gauteng's R59 highway confirmed as part of the route, the obvious choice became the Engen Blockhouse 1-Stop. The facility is also no stranger to hosting large events like Truck Test.

"For the last three years, the site has been used as the start for the annual 'South Toy Run', which attracts as many as 1 000 bikers," says Ralph Ellis, one of the owners and managing director of Engen Blockhouse 1-Stop.

While you could probably park most of those bikes on the 20-odd entrants expected at Truck Test 2016, that's more or less where the similarity between the two modes of transport ends.

So, how will the Blockhouse Facility cope – especially

given that it is a 1-Stop facility, not a Truck Stop?

As it is, the facility holds two normal-pressure and two high-pressure pumps for 500 ppm diesel under the EDC (Engen Diesel Club) canopy. There are also another five 50 ppm diesel pumps under the main canopy.

Ellis is, therefore, not fazed: "Logistical management will take place during the test, where a dedicated lane will accommodate only the participating large trucks. Smaller trucks will be accommodated in a grassed-up area adjacent to the R59. We will be able to handle the number of vehicles expected."

On an average month, Ellis reckons a number of around 400 trucks, of all sizes, make use of the site, which also offers a Quick Shop, Corner Bakery, Wimpy sit-down and take-away restaurant, and restroom facilities.

"I am very happy to be part of the Truck Test initiative, and trust that we can build on this relationship and be included in future events," Ellis smiles.

Clarke concurs: "The Engen Blockhouse 1-Stop offers the right amount of space, the correct facilities and is ideally located to make it the perfect hub for future Truck Test events.

"With Truck Test 2016 the beginning of a new chapter in the Truck Test story, we expect a large and diverse field of entrants to take the opportunity to show what their vehicles can do. Our publicity of the new format has already raised considerable interest among our readers, and we just know that Truck Test 2016 will not disappoint!" **F**

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Also our new Fleet Management System is the perfect embodiment of our partnership attitude, giving you access to amazing detail on everything from coasting to heavy braking, and then the coaching support you need to help manage not just your fleet, but your entire cost base.

So if you're just buying trucks, we're probably not the supplier for you. But if you believe what you're actually buying is a partnership, a commitment, a total transport solution, then we should talk.

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LOVE AND CARE

from the inside out

As the rand continues to weaken, reducing day-to-day costs and transport expenses is becoming more important. THATO TINTE looks at vehicle maintenance essentials you can apply to the vehicles in your fleet or personal garage in equal measure

Many South Africans find themselves squeezing their budgets as best they can to get the most out of what they have – from reducing electricity usage, opting to purchase previously owned vehicles over new ones, to car pooling to ease rising fuel and transport costs.

Many are also hanging on to their vehicles for longer, extending replacement cycles by months, or even years. While this practice saves the expense of purchasing new vehicles, it does come with risks.

With age comes wear and tear. The risks to consider include the true condition of the vehicle and the associated running and maintenance costs. Older vehicles can be more expensive to maintain, sometimes unexpectedly, which increases their running costs.

If buyers are not prepared for the unpredictable, yet inevitable, running costs, major problems can result. Proper vehicle maintenance is critical to extend the vehicle's service life, as well as to ensure the safety of the driver and that of other road users.

It is, therefore, important that we don't skimp on the little things – which can quickly turn into major expenses if not taken care of – when looking for ways to cut our budgets.

Delaying services, maintenance, or repairs to your vehicles, or ignoring something as small as a rattle or flashing warning light, can do more harm than good. Driving with partially functional items can do serious damage to the bigger, much more expensive, components.

Yes, older vehicles can cost more to maintain, but with the right advice, guidance and care, one can get good value for money. The Kinsey Report, released in late 2015, highlighted the alarming and spiralling costs of replacement and spare parts – indicating the "knock-on effect" these hikes will have on overall costs of vehicle repairs.

How then do vehicle owners ensure that they save money while extending the lifespan of their investment? These are some of the essential "service and maintenance" items that motorists should plan for.

CHECKING VARIOUS COMPONENTS:

Changing the engine oil, oil filter and air filter regularly helps reduce the wear and tear of the engine. According to supplier, retailer and wholesaler of spare vehicle parts, AutoZone, "One of the simplest, most effective and inexpensive ways to help protect the life of your vehicle's engine is to regularly change the oil and oil filter."

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE



of the friction material is uneven or at two millimetres thick, wear on the brake pads is advanced and they need to be replaced.

You should replace fan belts when they start to crack or split.

As age kicks in, it's clear that every kilometre travelled will impact every component of your vehicle. MotorHappy – an aftermarket motoring plan service provider owned by the Imperial Group – suggests the following tips to help slow down the wear and tear process:

GO EASY ON THE PEDALS:

Don't continuously "ride" your brake



It's important to use the correct grade of oil recommended by the manufacturer of your vehicle that is suited to the climate in which the vehicle operates. Change the oil at the specified intervals. Always check for leaks underneath your vehicle and have these repaired without delay.

Lighter grade oils reduce the load on the battery and starter motor allowing for a quicker start. They also reach engine lubrication areas more quickly than their more viscous counterparts – significantly reducing wear.

Regular inspection of your brake fluid is important. Low levels, or leaks, can lead to brake fade, loss of braking power, or complete failure of your braking system.

AutoZone advises checking your brake pads at every service interval and every six months. Once the thickness

and accelerator pedals. This will damage your vehicle's suspension.

AVOID STOP-START DRIVING:

When possible, avoid frequent stop-start driving as this will increase wear and tear on the engine. Opt for routes with fewer stops – such as highways. This will also decrease fuel consumption.

START THE DAY SLOWLY:

Instead of starting your engine and waiting until it has fully warmed up, or dashing off before it's ready, MotorHappy advises that motorists should rather start the car and drive off slowly without putting too much pressure on any of the components.



VEHICLE MAINTENANCE



LEFT: Simple maintenance can prevent advanced, and expensive, wear and tear to high-mileage vehicles.

TYRES:

Keeping your vehicle's tyres at manufacturer-recommended pressures ensures safe braking, reduces wear and tear and ensures good fuel consumption. Over- or under-inflated tyres cause imprecise handling and prematurely wear the tyre tread. MotorHappy recommends (where applicable) rotating a vehicle's tyres every six months so that the treads can wear evenly.

One should not forget the "miscellaneous" extras. These include items such as wiper blades and globes, which can become safety hazards if ignored.

Using worn wiper blades worsens visibility. Check for cracks, dust and wear and replace them annually. Globes should also be regularly checked.

Not everyone will afford to have pre-paid maintenance plans; however, those who do have disposable income should certainly make this a priority, as it will give great peace of mind in times of crisis.

Finally, all motorists should ensure regular maintenance and servicing of their vehicles to avoid sleepless nights when the costs of neglect begin to pile up. **F**

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Fuel, glorious **FUEL**

GAVIN MYERS fires up some info on alternative fuels



We all know that the fossil fuel – diesel and petrol – which we rely on to power our vehicles is finite and will, eventually, run dry. The United States Energy Information Administration suggests that global consumption of petroleum products during 2013 (the most recent statistics available) totalled 91 195 thousand barrels per day! The world is unequivocally fuel hungry.

Thankfully, almost all of the world's vehicle manufacturers have, for some time, been experimenting on vehicle powerplants that can run on other types of energy-generating fuels.

Many of these are also much cleaner-burning than traditional fossil fuels and create a much smaller dent in the environment by their extraction and/or creation. For this reason, this article does not discuss electric options – unless clean methods are used to produce the electricity (for example by wind, solar or hydro energy) – as it, too, leaves an environmental scar.

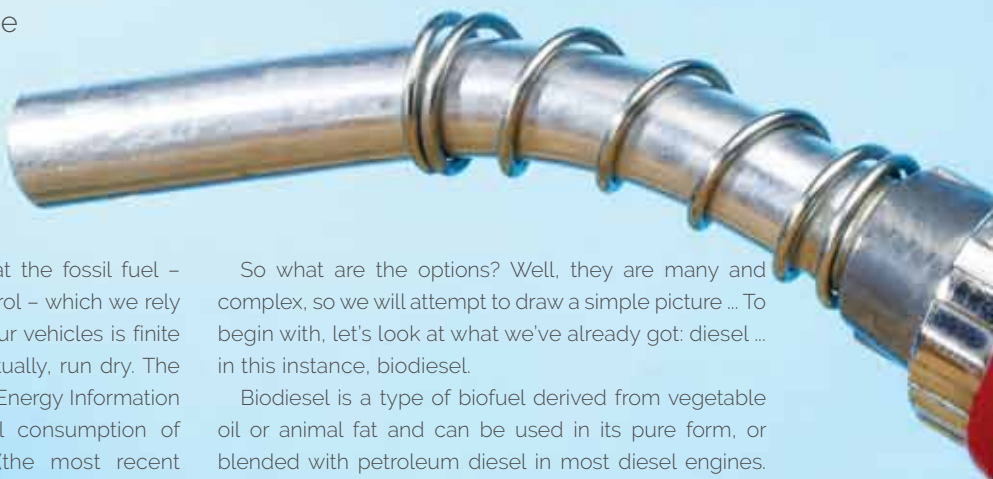
So what are the options? Well, they are many and complex, so we will attempt to draw a simple picture ... To begin with, let's look at what we've already got: diesel ... in this instance, biodiesel.

Biodiesel is a type of biofuel derived from vegetable oil or animal fat and can be used in its pure form, or blended with petroleum diesel in most diesel engines. However, the mix is generally kept low – between two and 20 percent biodiesel – as it can degrade natural rubber components.

An advantage to using biodiesel is that it contains virtually no sulphur content, yet has good lubricating properties and cetane ratings (an indicator of the combustion speed of diesel fuel). As such, it's often used as an additive in ultra-low sulphur diesel.

Biodiesel should not be confused with the vegetable and waste oils sometimes used to fuel converted diesel engines.

Another option is bioethanol, which is related to biodiesel in that it is also a biofuel. It is an alcohol made



by the fermentation of carbohydrates and sugars of certain (preferably non-food) crops.

Ethanol can also be derived from fossil fuels or methanol. This alcohol is the world's most common biofuel and can be used as a fuel in its pure form, or mixed with petrol (in any percentage) to increase octane and improve vehicle emissions.

However, ethanol has roughly one-third lower energy content per unit of volume compared to petrol, so fuel stops are required 30 percent more often.

Yet another biofuel with promise is biogas. Comprising primarily of methane, but including other gases, biogas results from the breakdown of organic matter in the absence

of oxygen. The energy released, when it is combusted or oxidised with oxygen, allows biogas to be used as a fuel.

As it can be produced from agricultural, municipal, green or food waste, sewage, manure and plant material, biogas is a renewable energy source that exerts a very small carbon footprint. When using biogas as a fuel, CO₂ reductions of up to 88 percent are possible.

Another significant biofuel is made from algae. Because it is full of energy-rich oils, algae can be converted into various fuels, including biodiesel, bioethanol and biobutanol. Like fossil fuel, algae fuel releases CO₂ when burnt. This is, however, not additional CO₂ as it had already been removed from the atmosphere via photosynthesis during the plant's growth.

The advantages of using algae as a source of biofuel are numerous. It grows much faster than food crops (it has a harvesting cycle of one to ten days), and can produce hundreds of times more oil per unit area than conventional crops. It can also be grown almost anywhere.

While natural gas, in its compressed (CNG) and liquefied (LNG) forms, is used to power vehicles, it is also a fossil fuel and thus falls outside the scope of this feature. However, it is worth noting that the combustion process of natural gas produces 15 to 25 percent fewer harmful emissions than traditional petroleum products.

Likewise, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is also a fossil fuel, often derived from the refining of petroleum, or extracted from natural gas streams emerging from the ground.

However, when used in an automotive application (commonly referred



Another significant biofuel is made from algae. Because it is full of energy-rich oils, algae can be converted into various fuels, including biodiesel, bioethanol and biobutanol.



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FUELS

RIGHT: Hydrogen-powered commercial vehicles have returned some impressive fuel economy figures.



to as autogas), it produces 15 percent fewer CO₂ emissions than petrol.

Finally, hydrogen has excellent potential for powering vehicles. It is the most abundant gas in the universe and produces zero emissions when used as a fuel. Hydrogen can either power internal combustion engines, or be used to power a fuel cell in battery-powered electric vehicles.

When used to power an internal combustion engine, the resultant power is 20 percent higher than with traditional petrol. However, while these engines burn fuel in the same manner, the modifications required for hydrogen makes them about 1,5 times more expensive.

An option increasingly under the spotlight is that of hydrogen-powered fuel cells, which are used to drive an

electric motor. There are more than 100 buses operating globally today using hydrogen-powered fuel cells. They have returned varying fuel economy figures that better their diesel and natural gas counterparts by between 30 and 140 percent.

Of course, none of these options are completely without drawbacks. While many are commercially available in various regions, the biggest problem remains that of retail availability and infrastructure development.

Further, certain production processes – for example, in the case of hydrogen – can, themselves, be energy intensive and have some impact on the environment.

Nonetheless, the potential for a mobile world without fossil fuels is real and attainable – long before they run out. **F**



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Saving six minutes when loading a distribution truck might not sound like much, but, when 50 to 80 vehicles are loaded, per shift, those six minutes turn into great gains in efficiency and savings. This is exactly what Coca-Cola's Dongen production plant, in the Netherlands, has achieved with the help of supply chain solutions provider, Zetes.

At the plant, 16 forklifts drive back and forth to collect pallets from the conveyor belt and load them into the correct lorry. The scanning process, though, was a challenge. The forklifts were able to load up to three pallets, but were only able to automatically scan two of these.

If a third pallet was picked up, the driver had to get out of the forklift and scan in the third pallet manually with his handheld scanner. This resulted in time loss and dangerous working conditions.

Zetes equipped each forklift with three moveable, robust scanners and sensors. The scanners are able to read the labels on the pallets while being driven up to them. The forklift driver then gets a message with the

number of the vehicle onto which the pallets must be loaded.

With this new system, one type of forklift can carry up to three Euro pallets, two block pallets, or 12 dollies. All data is automatically forwarded to the Coca-Cola SAP system as well, using the application developed by Zetes.

"The scanners can now read the labels regardless of their position to the pallet – the accuracy has improved from 98 to 99,9 percent," says Kees Kroes, logistics-warehouse-transport manager at Coca-Cola Enterprises Netherlands.

"When picking up three pallets, the driver of the forklift no longer has to get out, in order to manually scan the third pallet. The risk of accidents has, therefore, been reduced to an absolute minimum," says Kroes.

THE SWEET SMELL OF CITRUS STORAGE

Lemons, oranges and grapefruit need to be handled under optimal conditions to preserve their freshness. This is why citrus fruit distributor FPT contracted APC Storage

Load it, store it, **COOL IT**

What do a Belgian supply chain solutions provider, a South African logistics storage specialist and a global mobile temperature-control giant have in common? They're leading the way in logistics solutions for the food and beverage industry ...



Solutions SA to optimise the operations of its facility in the Durban harbour district.

For six months of the year, in line with the seasonal citrus fruit produce it exports, FPT runs a 24-hour, seven-days a week operation with two cold-storage chambers. For the remaining months, the facility is used to accommodate smaller, diverse stock inventories – each with individual dispatch requirements. APC's solution thus had to temper the facility's cold-storage requirements with an ability to quickly and efficiently retrieve each load unit.

The company's Movirack solution was chosen for the task. Each chamber was equipped with seven mobile racks, which are over eight meters high and eight back-to-back bays deep, to accommodate over 1 200 pallets.

"Movirack was the most suitable storage solution for the FPT warehouse, as it offers maximised pallet density, while retaining direct access to each stowed pallet; thus allowing immediate retrieval and the facility to accommodate diverse secondary stock inventories when it's not storing fruit," explains Etienne Meyburgh, general manager – KwaZulu-Natal, APC Storage Solutions SA.

To accommodate the Movirack system, structural modifications were made to configure the warehouse for mobile cold storage down to 0°C. APC also installed a new reinforced sub-base and strip footing system, incorporating the Movirack embedded rail system and a new FM2 super-hardened floor to handle the stresses of cold storage applications and the harsh movements of material-handling equipment.

MOVING STOCK THE COOL, ECOLOGICAL WAY

Moving products efficiently and storing them correctly are critical to a good warehouse operation, but what about moving them to their destination with as little impact to the environment as possible?

Thermo King – a division of Ingersoll Rand – has taken this to heart. Since January 1, its trailer and self- and vehicle-powered refrigeration units have been available with the next-generation, lower global-warming potential (GWP) refrigerant as standard.

The new Chemours Opteon XP44 (R-452A) refrigerant has about a 50-percent lower GWP value than the refrigerant it replaces.

"Thermo King is committed to delivering climate-friendly temperature-control solutions," says Karin de Bondt, vice president and general manager for truck, trailer and bus at Thermo King in Europe, Middle East and Africa. "Every new truck and trailer unit will be high performance and feature R-452A and, in addition to new units, our customers can opt to retrofit this solution in existing systems."

The implementation of R-452A refrigerant follows the first anniversary of the climate commitment made by Ingersoll Rand in September 2014. It contributes to the EcoWise portfolio of products designed to lower environmental impact and improve efficiency with next-generation, low GWP refrigerants.

The climate commitment includes reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions related to Ingersoll Rand's operations by approximately 35 percent by 2020; reducing GHG emissions related to its products by 50 percent by 2020; and investing US\$ 500 million (R8,3 billion) in product-related research and development over the next five years to fund the long-term reduction of GHG emissions.

In the first year, the company's commitment led to the avoidance of about 1,5-million metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions, which is equivalent to the CO₂ emissions from burning more than 725 747 t of coal and the electricity use of more than 200 000 homes for one year. By 2030, the company expects to reduce its carbon footprint by 50-million tonnes.

R-452A is available locally through the GEA Refrigeration Africa network. The company is also able to assist with an expert assessment of the impact of the legislation on a refrigerated transport operation, as well as to actively reduce the environmental impact of a fleet. **F**

LEFT AND BELOW: High-tech equipment saves Coca-Cola six minutes of loading time per vehicle.

BOTTOM: Citrus distributor FPT's advanced storage facility (left). A new Thermo King refrigeration unit equipped with R-452A refrigerant (right).



Big NUMBERS

GAVIN MYERS recently joined Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) as it celebrated the 125 000th truck off its East London production line

Ask anyone in the industry and they'll agree that trucking is a numbers game. For MBSA, the end of 2015 brought about some rather large numbers – the biggest of which was 125 000, as the company celebrated the production of this number of trucks at its East London plant.

After 53 years of producing Mercedes-Benz trucks at the plant, the vehicle marking the milestone was an Axor 3335. In 1948, the then Car Distributors Assembly (CDA) opened its doors. In 1958, the company was contracted by Daimler-Benz to assemble Mercedes-Benz products.

The company was to evolve into MBSA and, over time, has assembled the Unimog, Mercedes-Benz buses, as well as Fuso, Mercedes-Benz and Freightliner trucks locally. According to Clinton Savage, head of Mercedes-Benz Trucks, the plant has received six consecutive awards as one of the best manufacturing facilities in the world.

Coinciding with truck number 125 000 leaving the assembly line, was its handover to Aqua Transport and Plant Hire. If there's a Mercedes-Benz client in this industry that knows about large numbers, Aqua is it ...

"Aqua has a truck fleet of roughly 1 800 Mercedes-Benz vehicles and the largest fleet of water tankers in the country, at around 700. We run 24-hours a day and have our own accredited workshops, which ensure 95 to 98 percent availability of our fleet," says the company's director, Donovan Naicker.

He continues: "We have built a solid relationship with MBSA and there is great synergy between Aqua and the MBSA team, which is what has sustained this relationship. As a company that operates in the essential services sphere, we need equipment that is extremely reliable and we receive more than this. We treasure the reliability of these trucks and the fact that parts are readily available."

The 125 000th truck (which is destined to become another water tanker) forms part of a bigger order by Aqua for 165 Mercedes-Benz trucks. "This is one of the largest single orders for our trucks," notes Savage.

"This is only possible because the quality measures and processes at our plant are remarkable. It is fitting for us to do this handover here at our plant – an impressive facility that reinforces our legacy of reliability, safety and outstanding workmanship.



MBSA and Aqua Transport celebrate truck 125 000 as it reaches the end of the production line.

"This product generally operates in a very tough environment, which is also part of one of the industry's most competitive segments. The fact that Aqua put its trust in MBSA and our product makes us very proud. It shows that it's not all about price, but also about reliability and up time," concludes Savage.

That's what large numbers – in this case 53 years and production of 125 000 vehicles – will do for you. **F**



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STOP ON SIGHT!



Since November 2015, new European trucks with a gross vehicle mass (GVM) above eight tonnes have been required to be fitted with an Autonomous Emergency Braking System (AEBS). BRIAN WEATHERLEY, of *Fleet Transport*, explains what's involved

It only takes a frighteningly brief period of inattention for a driver to run a fully laden truck into the back of a stationary queue of traffic or a slow-moving vehicle ... with catastrophic results. Fortunately, the latest safety laws from Brussels will play an increasingly major role in reducing such potentially horrific tail-end collisions.

In November 2015, AEBS became mandatory on most newly registered two- and three-axle rigid trucks and tractors with air suspension above a GVM of eight tonnes. The move is part of the ongoing European Safety Directive, which also sees the adoption of Electronic Stability Control (ESC) and Lane Departure Warning (LDW) systems on heavy commercial vehicles. Only four-axle and off-road vehicles are exempt from AEBS, for now.

AEBS is being rolled out in three stages (referred to as "Levels 1, 2 and 3") requiring progressively improved automatic-braking performance from a truck approaching both stationary and moving "targets".

Under ideal conditions, with AEBS operating, a truck should either avoid a tail-end collision altogether, or else have its impact speed reduced to such an extent that the AEBS acts as a "collision mitigation system" – significantly

lowering the risk of serious injury to vehicle occupants.

Level 1 AEBS (the minimum standard) applies to new registrations from November 1, 2015, (and new Type-Approvals since November 2013) and must reduce the impact speed of a truck by ten kilometres per hour, when travelling towards a stationary vehicle at 80 km/h.

Level 2 AEBS (mandatory on new Type Approvals from November 1, 2016, and all new registrations from November 2018) must reduce the impact speed of a truck by 20 km/h when travelling towards a stationary vehicle at 80 km/h.

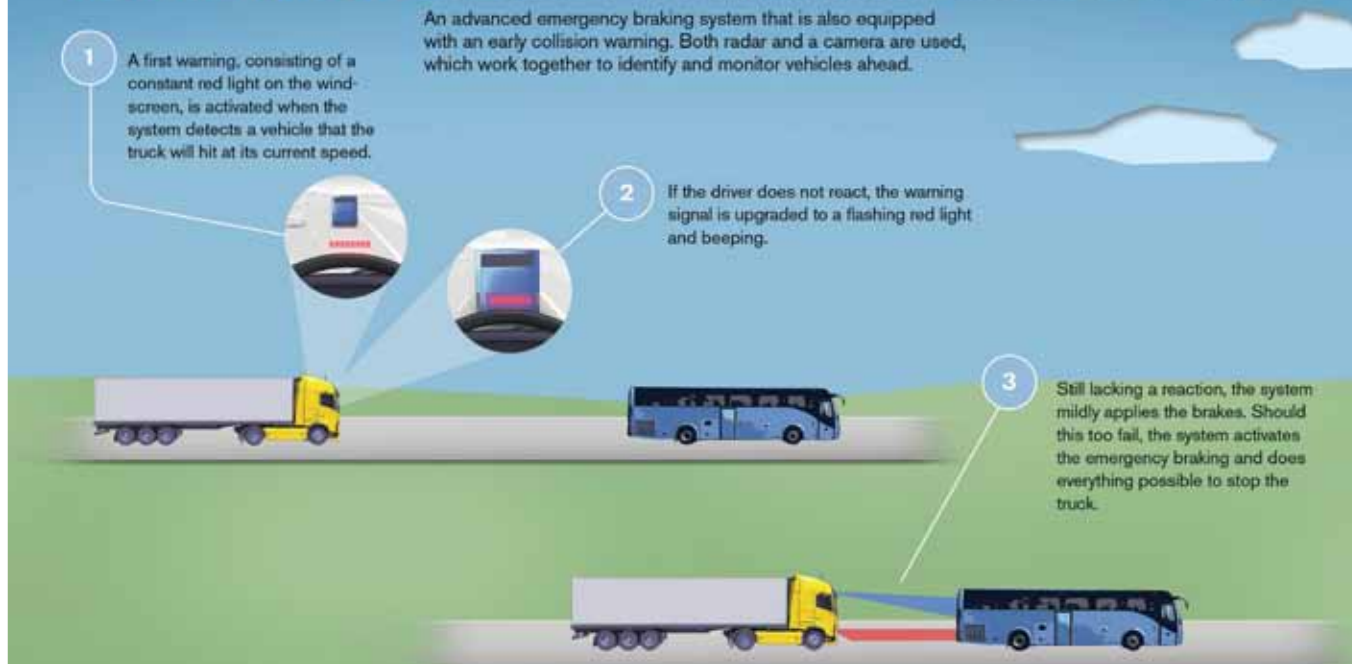
Under AEBS Level 1, the moving vehicle should avoid a collision if a target vehicle is moving at 32 km/h and truck is travelling at 80 km/h; for Level 2, the threshold speeds are ten kilometres per hour and 80km/h respectively (i.e. a speed reduction of 70 km/h).

Standards for AEBS Level 3 have yet to be confirmed.

Meanwhile, the good news for operators, safety organisations and insurers is that a number of truck builders, including Volvo Trucks and Mercedes-Benz, have long offered AEBS as an option on their respective ranges ahead of the 2015 deadline.

These vehicles also have a braking performance well in

HOW IT WORKS: COLLISION WARNING WITH EMERGENCY BRAKE



RIDING SHOTGUN WITH AEBS

Fleet Transport recently experienced AEBS from the passenger seat of both a rigid and a fully loaded articulated truck, provided by Dennis and Volvo Trucks respectively, at a safety technology event held by Thatcham Research – the organisation funded by United Kingdom motor insurers.

The "target" was a dummy car travelling at slow speeds on an extended towing rig behind a Range Rover. As the test trucks approached from directly behind at speeds of 80 km/h, the AEBS on both vehicles detected the slower-moving car and provided an early warning of the obstacle ahead.

When the demonstration drivers deliberately ignored the initial alert, a second warning was given, before the AEBS started braking with impressive results. In both cases a rear-end collision was avoided as each truck stopped dead before hitting the dummy car.

excess of that required under AEBS Levels 1 and 2.

Volvo's Collision Warning Emergency Braking (CW-EB) is typical of the AEBS genre and uses a forward-facing camera and radar scanner (the latter developed from its existing adaptive cruise control) to detect and identify an object directly in front of the truck – whether stationary or travelling at a slower speed.

As with other AEBS products on the market, CW-EB provides a pre-warning alert to the driver – in this case a solid red light shone on the bottom of the windscreen in the driver's line of sight ... which advises of an obstacle ahead.

As the object gets closer, and if the driver does nothing, the alert status is raised: the red light flashes and an audible warning sound will be activated. If the driver still doesn't react to the warnings, CW-EB then automatically activates the truck's brakes, first with a mild, or "pre-braking", application and then with full-pressure braking.

All the manufacturers that *Fleet Transport* has talked to confirmed that, where possible, their AEBS systems will prevent a collision. However, none (quite sensibly) claim they will be 100-percent effective. That's because road conditions (for example, rain or ice) will obviously affect maximum braking distances in the event of an emergency stop triggered by AEBS.

The important point to remember with AEBS, though, is that it can significantly mitigate the likely outcome of a rear-end collision by greatly lowering the impact speed; thereby helping to reduce serious or fatal injuries to vehicle occupants. **F**

As regular readers of **FOCUS** know, this magazine has been appointed an associate member of the International Truck of the Year (IToY)! **FOCUS** is the sole South African magazine to have joined this prestigious body. One of the advantages of this association is access to exclusive articles, specially written for **FOCUS** by ITOY jury members. This is one such article.





Coming up to
EX(S)PECTATIONS

Isuzu has upgraded its popular KB series of bakkies. GAVIN MYERS took the new KB250 D-TEQ 4x4 double cab LE for a spin

Do not think yourself fooled. Isuzu really has upgraded the KB (and added three all-new models), despite few immediate tell-tale signs. The changes are not too obvious on anything other than the top LX-spec double cab models. However, the subject of this test – the KB250 LE 4x4 double cab – is perhaps one of the most significant of the revitalised range.

That's because the KB250's 2.5-litre D-TEQ diesel engine has, finally, been upgraded. You may remember that, when the KB was launched during 2013, the 2.5 litre was carried over from the previous generation and produced a not-too-significant 85 kW and 280 Nm. The new version's headline figures are much healthier, and its feels it, too.

This direct-injection, common-rail turbodiesel powerplant now produces 100 kW at 3 600 r/min and 320 Nm between 1 800 and 3 200 r/min. Mid-range lugging ability is strong, even though drive is still sent through a five-speed manual gearbox.

Requiring low-sulphur 50 ppm diesel, this unit is claimed to consume fuel at 7,9 l/100 km on the combined cycle. Our time with the vehicle confirmed this fuel-sipping ability.

Thanks to the upgraded powerplant, the KB250 D-TEQ now boasts improved loading capacity; the payload has been increased from 971 to 1 000 kg. Its gross vehicle and gross combination masses are 3 000 and 5 000 kg, respectively.

Another upgrade, made to all but the base-spec single cabs, is that of electronic stability control (ESC). The system fitted to the KB can be activated in three stages (stability and traction engaged, only stability engaged, or all systems disengaged) and operates unobtrusively.

Other safety equipment includes antilock brakes with electronic brakeforce distribution and brake assist, driver and passenger airbags and ISOFIX child-seat anchorage.

The LE-spec equipment list has also seen the addition of cruise control and, lifting the ambiance of the cabin, new seat trim.

While these seats are comfy, one gripe we have is that Isuzu missed the opportunity to refine the KB's ride quality. Sure, these bakkies are made to work, but the KB falls well short of its rivals in terms striking a good ride comfort/loading capacity balance. It rides very harshly over poor road surfaces – to the discomfort, especially, of passengers.

Included in the R457 400 purchase price is Isuzu Complete Care. Adding great value, this package covers all routine maintenance and regular servicing for five years/90 000 km and roadside assistance for five years/120 000 km. It also includes extensive warranties: a five-year/120 000 km new vehicle warranty and a five-year/unlimited mileage anti-corrosion warranty.

While the recent series of upgrades to the KB – especially the 2.5-litre diesel engine – address many early criticisms and make it a more appealing option, it still feels more "old school" than its class-leading stable mates from Ford and Volkswagen. **F**



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HAPPY, HEALTHY, H1

Hyundai's H1 has been refreshed and the final package is rather appealing, writes GAVIN MYERS

As part of the Associated Motor Holdings group, Hyundai Automotive South Africa never publishes comprehensive sales results. Compiling monthly vehicle sales figures for this magazine, I've often wondered how certain of the brand's models perform compared to their rivals.

Thanks to marketing director Stanley Anderson, I now know that, in 2015, the H1 sold almost 600 units in bus guise, giving it a (leading) share of 21,5 percent in the

wheel design and Bluetooth connectivity.

The bus offers both the 126 kW, 224 Nm, 2.4-litre petrol engine and the 2.5-litre diesel. The former is available only with a five-speed manual and the latter a five-speed auto.

The range-topping, diesel-powered bus now features full leather upholstery, automatic climate control, side airbags, electronic stability programme, cruise control and a cooled glove box – among other niceties – to help cement its leading position.

Our test route took us from the dairy farms of Irene to the diamond mines of Cullinan and back, via smooth freeways and some rather undulating and pockmarked back roads. The H1 bus impressed with its ride comfort and, with the strong diesel engine and smooth-shifting autobox, ease of acceleration.

Thanks to an upgraded central fascia (with Hyundai's now standard blue backlighting) and light-grey upholstery, the spacious interior environment looks much more modern and has a more premium, quality feel.

Any gripes? The autobox tends to chase the red line when overtaking, instead of making full use of the available torque, and the driver's seat doesn't drop low enough. Oh, and, unless you're rather keen-eyed, you'd probably look twice to tell the revised model from its predecessor ...

Not that that should matter much, with pricing between R441 900 and R579 900, the H1 presents great value compared to its main rivals. Consider also that Hyundai's Five Year Triple Care roadside assist, warranty and service plan is thrown into the mix and it would be no surprise if the revised H1 brings about some more impressive sales figures. **F**

large multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) market. In the panel-van segment it recorded 76 sales (5,1 percent) and in the multi-cab segment 59 sales (6,3 percent).

It's little wonder then that the only model available to drive at launch was the top-of-the-range 2.5 diesel automatic, nine-seater bus.

Hyundai has cut its losses and dropped the petrol-powered panel-van and multi-cab models from the range. According to Anderson, these accounted for only ten percent of sales. Both are now available exclusively with the 125 kW, 441 Nm 2.5-litre diesel engine.

Cruise control has been added to both models, while the multi-cab also benefits from the new 16-inch alloy



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Tippers

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4x2 3.5m³

15.180 FD
4x2 6m³

16.240 FD
4x2 6m³

28.280 FD
6x4 10m³

35.340 FD
8x4 15m³

Mixers

33.330 FC
6x4 6m³

35.340 FC
8x4 8m³

All FAW vehicles are durable and tough, built locally in Coega to international standards. FAW tippers can handle the toughest of environments with ease - dust, stones and uneven terrain, challenging entry/exit slopes. Supporting FAW's uptime promise is a host of aftersales back-up services, and maintenance and parts supply through a wide dealer network.

FAW provides purpose-fit mixer trucks that can conquer the rigors of any building site. There are few mixers to match FAW strength and long-lasting working capability. FAW mixer models are easy to drive and offer exceptional durability because of a strong chassis frame, the robust materials and quality standards applied in the manufacture of the truck, the drivetrain and the mixer body.



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SCANIA TRUCK RENTAL: providing a total-solutions package

In tough economic times, renting a vehicle can make better financial sense than buying one. The risks associated with truck ownership are always high – more so in a volatile and unpredictable business landscape. THATO TINTE discovers how Scania Truck Rental provides a solution

Perhaps your company has a large fleet that needs to be expanded in the peak season, or you may be a small operator requiring extra vehicles to service a short-term contract.

If these scenarios are familiar, long-term financial commitments are not feasible. Enter the alternative: Scania Truck Rental – a revolutionary off-balance-sheet solution, fully supported by a wide-ranging services portfolio – which can bridge your trucking gap.

“Scania Truck Rental offers a full-service solution based on our customer’s business needs. Our fully maintained rentals provide the perfect opportunity for operators to free up cash flow without long-term commitment, or risks,” says Patrik Glas-Crommert, Scania chief financial officer overseeing the rental division.

According to Nicola Engelbrecht, national manager at Scania Truck Rental, the total-solutions package comes with full maintenance, comprehensive insurance and additional options, such as driver training from the Scania Driver Training Academy.

“Our training educates drivers on the most effective driving techniques – helping each driver to maximise the efficiency of their Scania vehicle, as well as improve and optimise driving habits and fuel efficiency,” says Engelbrecht.

Scania’s Fleet Management System (FMS) features on each truck and customers have full access to the fleet management information services. This is an added plus for companies with smaller fleets that may not want to invest in their own fleet management service.

Truck rental periods range from one week to 12 months. Flexible tailor-made solutions are also available – enabling customers to predict their costs upfront.

Standard credit checks and feasibility assessments are conducted before rental agreements are signed. Before the delivery of a truck, a deposit is payable and upon return, an assessment is conducted to establish that the condition of



ABOVE: Scania Truck Rental national manager, Nicola Engelbrecht.

the truck complies with the terms of the agreement. If this is acceptable and the account is up-to-date, the deposit will be refunded.

Glas-Crommert says: “The rental offering is competitively priced and comes with the benefits of access to Scania Southern Africa’s extensive service network. This enables us to maximise the vehicle uptime and, as a consequence, the customer’s overall profitability.”

He adds: “Customers are able to concentrate on running their business, while we take care of the risks. We provide the vehicle and the service back up, while the customer adds a driver and gets a predictable monthly bill. It is a plug-and-play solution.”

The Scania rental fleet comprises mainly low-mileage trucks, which are no older than three years. Scania adds that models in its range are easily adaptable across many applications – customers with specific applications can discuss these with Scania for a solution to fit their needs.

Engelbrecht explains that Scania Truck Rental is unique in that it forms part of the original equipment manufacturer. “We only rent Scania’s; we manufacture them, so we really understand our products and know how to influence the uptime for our customers.”

Scania Truck Rental can be obtained nationally through the Johannesburg head office, Durban and Cape Town rental offices, or through Scania’s countrywide dealerships. **F**



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HSC1



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HTC1

Durability, high mileage, long service life – three features that now take you even further. Developed for mixed applications, these tyres set new benchmarks in terms of tread pattern, compound and design. The result is increased resistance to the extreme conditions experienced at construction sites, together with enhanced operating efficiency.



From Cape Town TO CAIRO

Africa is rife with opportunity, but the continent's development is stifled by its lack of transport infrastructure ... all hope is not lost, however, as plans are set in motion to change this narrative

Boosting tourism and positively impacting ordinary lives in diverse ways – such as aiding the transportation of goods and raw materials and ensuring that people get to the hospital quickly during emergencies – are just some of the advantages of improved road and rail systems on the continent.

Most of Africa's railway lines and roads are in bad condition and need huge investments, according to the Africa Development Bank (AfDB). The proportion of paved roads on the continent, today, is five times less than those in developed countries, the bank points out.

"As a result, transport costs alone are 63 percent higher in Africa than in developed countries, hampering its competitiveness in the international and local markets," notes The New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad).

The AfDB further points out that transport costs represent between 30 and 50 percent of total export value in Africa. These costs are even higher in the continent's 16 landlocked countries and constitute up to three quarters of their total export value.

"Poor roads and railways also have a negative impact on intra-African trade, which is currently just 11 percent

of total trade," notes Nepad. "Development experts believe this figure might have been higher with better roads and railway lines. Trade among Southeast Asia's ten countries, at 37 percent, is much higher than in Africa, for example."

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

The African Development Bank Transport Forum 2015 – the first of its kind, which was held at the AfDB headquarters in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire – ended on November 27, 2015, with the AfDB reiterating its support for transport infrastructure development to ensure economic growth on the continent.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the two-day event, attended by several African transport ministers, Solomon Asamoah – the Bank's vice-president for infrastructure, private sector and regional integration – emphasised that Africa's transport challenges need to be addressed urgently for the continent to become competitive.

He underlined the need for an integrated approach to the development of transport infrastructure systems within countries. This was supported by Angela Cassell-Bush, Liberia's Minister of Transport, who called for an





African master plan to help build a road network connecting Africa.

"We need to review our various regulatory frameworks and come up with one for the whole continent. It will help to facilitate movement of people and boost trade," she noted.

The damage to Africa's road infrastructure was attributed to overloading of heavy commercial vehicles. This, coupled with the high maintenance costs, makes the situation worse.

"We spend huge sums of money establishing infrastructure, and run it down without maintaining it," Asuman Kiyingi, the State Minister of Works in Uganda, pointed out. "In some places some roads do not even last for three years. There is a need for a cultural paradigm shift in how we manage our infrastructure."

Investing in public transport was cited as key to tackling congestion in cities. Alexis Nzahabwanimana, Rwanda's Minister of State in charge of transport, said development of public transport would reduce the number of vehicles entering the city, at the same time "increasing

the mobility of citizens." This, he added, would reduce vehicle emissions, which are a health hazard.

A SUCCESS STORY

The Abidjan-Lagos Corridor, the flagship project of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), is a stellar example of how Africa can be integrated through infrastructure.

The 1 028-km road, which is under construction, connects Abidjan, Accra, Cotonou, Lagos and Lome. These are considered to be western Africa's largest and most economically dynamic cities – with a combined population of more than 35-million people.

The six-lane corridor also links vibrant sea ports and serves the whole region's landlocked countries, facilitating intra- and inter-regional trade. "The corridor is one of the most important developments in the region; it accounts for about 75 percent of trade in the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) region", said Edy Anthony, a transport expert with the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Organisation.

"When you connect one country with another and one region with another, you reduce transport and trade barriers, and expand business opportunities between countries," Anthony emphasised. "The corridor is perceived as an instrument for driving the implementation of Ecowas's flagship protocol on free movement of people and goods."

The presidents of the five countries – Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria and Togo – approved the facility, which is a pilot project under the PIDA Service Delivery Mechanism.

The AfDB is considering a US\$ 16 million (nearly R257 million) support package to finance preparatory studies for sections of the corridor.

According to Chris Appiah, a transport and policy expert at Ecowas, the road is the most travelled corridor in western Africa. "It will ensure a more efficient border-crossing system and facilitate regional integration," he said.

Efforts to establish the corridor were lauded by Silvester Kasuku, the director-general of Kenya's Lamu Port Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (Lapsset) Corridor Development Authority.

"You cannot go wrong with creating synergy to achieve bigger socio-economic change on the continent," he noted. When completed, the Lapsset corridor will connect Kenya through Lamu Port to southern Sudan and Ethiopia, making it the gateway to the eastern African sub region and Great Lakes region.

It might be some time before inter-regional cooperation will allow trade to move freely across the whole continent, but plans are being made and the foundations laid ... might intra-Africa trade, one day, flow without restraint from Cape Town to Cairo? **F**





Isuzu to take Gaz **TO THE WORLD?**

In his monthly review of global news for local truckers, FRANK BEETON reports on an interesting new alliance between GAZ of Russia and Japan's Isuzu Motors; expands the story on Iveco's "Truck of the Year" Eurocargo; and notes Daimler's increased investment in its Detroit operation to manufacture transmissions and mid-range engines for the United States (US) market

It has been reported that Isuzu Motors Limited, and Japanese trading house Itochu Corporation, have signed a memorandum of understanding with Russian Machines Corporation and the GAZ Group (both subsidiaries of giant Russian diversified business conglomerate Basic Element) involving possible product-based cooperation.

This arrangement is to focus initially on the redevelopment of the GAZelle van range and the lighter Sobol truck models with Isuzu engines, for sale in Russia and the 65 countries where Itochu is active. It also includes the possibility of developing a right-hand-drive GAZelle variant to access additional global markets where that steering configuration is a legal requirement.

Isuzu and the GAZ Group have already been involved in the joint development of the Vector-3 small bus for city and suburban applications. Other projects reportedly under consideration include contract manufacture of Isuzu products at the GAZ plant in Nizhniy Novgorod, and the development of heavy-duty trucks with gross vehicle mass (GVM) ratings from 26 to 48 t, using Isuzu components, at the Ural Automobile Works.

GAZelle in South Africa

Readers may remember that GAZelle minibus taxis first entered the medium commercial vehicle (MCV) segment of the South African market in 2005, through a joint venture between Russian Automobile Investments, McCarthy Motors and Santaco Trading, the latter being an arm of the South African Taxi Council. One year later, reports emerged of premature mechanical failures and lack of vehicle serviceability.

These issues were not satisfactorily resolved, and the final local GAZelle sales were recorded in October 2007. GAZ subsequently announced a switch from the original Russian-made engines to Cummins units, imported from China, for the diesel models in the GAZelle Business line-up.

During 2012, GAZ also entered a formal agreement with Daimler to produce previous-generation Sprinter vans and OM 646 2.4-litre diesel engines in Russia.

In April 2013, production of the slightly heavier GAZelle NEXT, with GVM ratings from 2.8 to five tonnes, commenced at the upgraded Gorky Automobile Plant. This range was powered by a Cummins ISF engine



ABOVE: Will the GAZelle be better with Isuzu power?

and technical features included independent front suspension, rack-and-pinion steering, a double-redundancy braking system, programmed cab crumple zones, and safety-belt pretensioners.

The GAZelle NEXT range was marketed alongside the Russian-built Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, despite the obvious market positioning overlap suggested by the former's GVM envelope.

It was noted, at the time, that indigenous Russian vehicle manufacturers were facing intense competition from imported and locally assembled products carrying global nameplates, which were recently accounting for more than half of the total market sales in that country.

New opportunities for Isuzu?

We have frequently commented on the desirability of Isuzu Motors forming global partnerships to increase its ability to compete across the entire product spectrum with truck manufacturers that are members of broader alliances.

Just recently, we recorded the renewal of an earlier North American truck marketing arrangement between Isuzu and General Motors. This potential alliance with GAZ is likely to have a positive influence on Isuzu's global sales volumes, especially when the Russian market returns to normality, following the current economic difficulties being faced by that country.

(Production of trucks over 1,5 t GVM in Russia totalled 58 852 units during the period January to June 2015, which was 25,4 percent down on the 78 891 units

produced during the equivalent six-month period of 2014.)

However, it is also notable that this partnership with GAZ has the potential to provide Isuzu with access to an integral panel van model, which it currently does not have, and to build heavy-duty truck volumes to the point where Isuzu could economically justify more aggressive development of its multi-axle products, such as the Giga range.

IVECO'S LATEST EUROCARGO IS "INTERNATIONAL TRUCK OF THE YEAR 2016"

While we have commented on the recent revival of interest by Ford in its Cargo truck line-up as built in Brazil and Turkey, the direct descendant of the original Ford Cargo is, in fact, Iveco's cruiserweight Eurocargo range.

Iveco's purchase of a controlling interest in Ford's European truck interests in 1986 brought the "Cargo" name into the Italian manufacturer's fold, and this was developed into "Eurocargo" branding.

The Eurocargo line-up, which covers the GVM spectrum from six to 19 t, has been a great success in Europe, where it is the medium truck market segment leader in a number of countries. The range has, to date, raked up half a million sales globally.

In South Africa, Eurocargo has been a relatively minor player in the local truck market over the past 15 years, with average sales of just more than 70 units per annum, including multi-axle derivatives and bus conversions.

While European-sourced trucks were a powerful force in the cruiserweight area of the local market until the 1970s, Japanese brands started progressively establishing dominance from that time.

In more recent years, products from a number of European manufacturers have suffered from a perception of being expensive and highly sophisticated, in an area of the local market that typically prefers a mix



of affordability and basic durability. This contrasts with the greater level of sophistication that is more generally welcomed by local operators of heavier line-haul and premium-payload vehicles.

New power units

With the general implementation, in January 2014, of Euro 6 as the ruling emissions system in Europe, Iveco has progressively rolled out enhancements to the Eurocargo range to ensure that it is compliant, and retains its high market profile.

During 2013, it adopted new Euro-6 Tector diesel engines, supplied by associate FPT Industrial, in four-cylinder 4.5-litre Tector 5 and six-cylinder 6.7-litre Tector 7 formats, providing seven power output options ranging from 118 kW to 235 kW (160 hp to 320 hp).

More recently, a compressed natural gas (CNG) fuelling option has been added to the Eurocargo range, which utilises a six-cylinder engine with a rated output of 150 kW (204 hp) and delivering 750 Nm torque.

Iveco has made much of the exclusive HI-SCR emissions system used on the Tector 5 and 7 engines that power the latest Eurocargo models. This system employs a passive particulate filter, a 1 600-bar, second-generation, common-rail, multi-event fuel injection

system and an electronically governed exhaust flap. It is configured to adaptively administer AdBlue dosing in line with the requirements of electrically monitored exhaust gas conditions.

The manufacturer claims that this is the only Euro-6 medium-range vehicle to use a single anti-emission system, without resorting to exhaust gas recirculation. The Tector engine also employs a new turbocharger, which is claimed to improve fuel consumption by up to eight percent.

Restyled “family look” cab

During September 2015, the latest range was officially launched to the international market, and it was notable that the fairly conservative cab styling, that has typified the Eurocargo range under Iveco patronage, had been replaced by a much more striking appearance, bringing it in line with the latest iterations of its heavier Stralis and Trakker siblings. The range offers a choice of day, low-roof or high-roof sleeper, or crew cabs.

Onboard safety systems include lane departure warning, advanced emergency braking (which reacts to the proximity of obstacles in front of the vehicle), adaptive cruise control, LED daytime running lights, and steering-wheel controls for Bluetooth devices.



The direct descendant of the original Ford Cargo is, in fact, Iveco’s cruiserweight Eurocargo range.



Iveco’s latest Eurocargo has taken on the corporate look of its larger Stralis and Trakker siblings.

Truck of the Year

The retardation systems deploy disc brakes all round on 4x2 models, activated through air/hydraulic or full air control systems (the latter applies above the ten tonnes GVM mark).

Suspension choices include reinforced parabolic steel, semi-elliptical/air combinations, or electronically controlled pneumatic springing. Specification options include enhanced vehicle stability control, hill hold and hands-free driver communication.

On November 18, 2015, a panel of leading road testers, from 25 countries across Europe, named the new Euocargo "International Truck of the Year 2016". The criteria for the award include technical innovation, comfort, safety, driveability, fuel economy, total cost of ownership and environmental footprint. You can read all about the award in the December 2015 issue.



The Mercedes-Benz OM934/936 engine family, as part of Daimler's Medium Duty Engine Generation, will carry Detroit DD5/DD8 branding in North America.



family of smaller displacement engines would emerge to cater for the needs of distribution and vocational truck operators across the globe.

MDEG emerges, and goes Stateside

The basis of the Medium-Duty Engine Generation (MDEG) family first emerged with the launch of the latest generation Mercedes-Benz Atego short-radius distribution truck range, prior to the final implementation of Euro-6 emission standards at the beginning of 2014.

The new power unit line-up consisted of the four-cylinder, 5.1-litre OM 934, and six-cylinder, 7.7-litre OM 936 diesels, which in initial Euro-6 trim occupied the power spectrum from 115 to 260 kW (156 to 354 hp).

This in-line engine family utilises a multiple-event, common-rail fuel injection system with operating pressures up to 2 400 bar, single or two-stage turbocharging, and twin overhead camshafts with four valves per cylinder. It features emission mitigation by means of cooled exhaust gas recirculation, selective catalytic reduction and a diesel particulate filter.

Although the initial manifestation of the OM 934/936 line-up was clearly aimed at European applications, it was fully expected that versions complying with North American and Japanese requirements would also be in the offing.

The announcement, during November, 2015, that an investment of \$US 475 million (R 7,816 billion) was being made in Daimler's Detroit plant at Redford, Michigan, to initiate production of additional engines, together with an automated truck transmission, therefore came as no great surprise.

Readers may recall that, back in 2011, Daimler Trucks North America had replaced "Detroit Diesel" with "Detroit" branding for all its powertrain-related components, indicating that the abbreviated name

DAIMLER TRUCKS UPS INVESTMENT IN DETROIT

Since it was initially revealed back in 2007, Daimler's Heavy Duty Engine Platform (HDEP) has been frequently featured in Global Focus articles. Ultimately, this concept developed into a universal range of 10.7, 12.8 and 15.6-litre diesel engines for fitment into European, North American and Japanese source family products from Mercedes-Benz, Freightliner, Western Star and Fuso.

Technical development reached its recent zenith with the announcement of the improved Mercedes-Benz OM 471 12.8-litre unit for the European market, with five output options ranging from 310 to 390 kW (421 to 530 hp), and torque ratings from 2 100 to 2 600 Nm.

However, the pre-eminent position of Daimler Trucks in the global truck market has been built on a far wider spectrum of product than just the premium payload category. It was, therefore, to be expected that a similar

would be used for axles and transmissions, as well as engines.

This latest investment in Redford will add some 330 new jobs to the existing workforce of 2 200 employees, and the expansion will enable the immediate production of the DT12 automated transmission, and, from 2018, mid-range diesel engines carrying DD5 and DD8 designations.

The DT12 transmission.

The Detroit DT12 branding will be applied to the 12-speed, lightweight aluminium single-countershaft automated transmission, derived from the Mercedes-Benz Powershift unit used in the European Actros long-distance hauler, which has, until now, been sourced from Daimler's Gaggenau/Baden plant in Germany.

This aggregate has already established an enthusiastic following in North America. When fitted to the Freightliner Cascadia and Western Star 5700 XE truck models, it features a choice of direct or overdrive gearing, two-pedal operation, helical gears, a kick-down facility, Hill Start Aid, eCoast efficient coasting, cruise control as well as driver selectable power or economy shift modes.

Local production will allow the growing Stateside demand to be more fully exploited, while shortening delivery lead times.

The DD5 and DD8 engines, derived from the European OM 934/936 power units described earlier, will be launched on to the North American market, in limited volumes, in 2016. They will initially be sourced from Mannheim, in Germany, until US production ramps up from 2018.

Initial application for the DD5 will be the Freightliner "Business Class" M2 range, followed by additional models from the Freightliner, Western Star, Thomas Built Buses and Freightliner Custom Chassis Corporation catalogues.

Shifting American truckers' mindsets

Daimler has never hidden its intention to convert American truckers to the "integrated drivetrain" philosophy, that is standard practice in Europe, but relatively new to North America, and the use of common Detroit branding for engines, transmissions and axles should facilitate this strategy.

After decades when a highly standardised selection of outsourced driveline aggregates, supplied by specialist manufacturers (including Cummins, Detroit Diesel, Caterpillar, Eaton/Fuller, Spicer, ArvinMeritor and Dana) was to be found in the vast majority of American trucks, a new era is becoming increasingly entrenched.

Once European manufacturers such as Daimler started taking control of the North American supply chain, the motivation to spread the amortisation of development and production costs across the largest possible global volume footprint, and to take increased control of aftermarket and parts business, became very powerful.

With the trend to integrated drivelines now well entrenched, Daimler points out that this has the added benefit to the operator of interactive management of the engine and transmission, to the advantage of durability, performance and fuel economy. **F**



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DEFENCE VEHICLES TO TAKE SWIMMING

Combining their experience in designing and manufacturing amphibious, multi-purpose and armoured vehicles, BAE Systems and Iveco Defence Vehicles will deliver 16 prototypes to the United States (US) Marine Corps for the Engineering, Manufacturing, and Development (EMD) phase of the Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) 11 programme.

The solution will be built from the ground up to be an amphibious vehicle and will provide significant capability improvements to satisfy the current and future needs of the US Marine Corps.

It is an advanced 8x8 open-ocean-capable vehicle based on a platform developed by Iveco Defence Vehicles, which will be equipped with a 522 kW (700 hp), six-cylinder motor that provides a significant power increase over the current Assault Amphibious Vehicle.

The vehicle performs best-in-class mobility in all terrains, has a suspended interior seat structure for 13 embarked Marines, blast mitigating positions for a crew of three, and improved survivability and force protection over currently fielded systems.

The team has conducted extensive risk mitigation testing and evaluation for swim, land mobility and survivability capabilities.

"We are proud to start a new chapter of our history in this industry. Our platform was designed to be fully amphibious with exceptional ground mobility and protection. It will provide the Marine Corps with a mature, cost-effective solution with significant growth capacity," says Vincenzo Giannelli, president and CEO of Iveco Defence Vehicles.

BAE Systems has more than 70 years of experience designing and building amphibious vehicles, having produced over 100 000 systems for customers worldwide. Iveco Defence Vehicles has designed and built more than 30 000 multi-purpose, protected and armoured military vehicles that are in service today.



WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE

Despite tough economic conditions, Scribante Concrete – a division within the larger Scribante Construction Group – has taken a calculated risk "flavoured with a touch of foresight" and added 35 FAW mixers and tippers to its fleet. This brings FAW's representative total in that fleet to 89 units. The order has also had some positive spin-offs for FAW's offerings.

Going into operation at the company's West Rand batch plants, the new FAW units include 27 FAW 35.340FC, 8 m³ mixer trucks, six FAW 33.330FC, 6 m³ mixer trucks, and two FAW 28.280FT side-tipper trucks.

Troy Petzer, operations manager for Scribante Concrete, explains: "We've been running FAW mixers and tippers in our fleet for close on three years now. Scribante Concrete will continue to attend to basic service and maintenance on site. To this end, we've appointed two technicians.

"All technical training, driver orientation and testing, as well as 24-hour parts supply, is provided and guaranteed by FAW SA – a company that we've come to trust. This was a crucial element in our purchase decision."

The specialised truck modifications, required and designed by Scribante, have been incorporated by FAW SA into its offering. They can also be applied to the benefit of other FAW clients for their ready-mix concrete mixer trucks.

"This continuous improvement once again underpins the value of pursuing and maintaining a close relationship with a customer. They know their business best and we know our trucks best. Together we can improve and provide solutions that satisfy our customers' needs," explains FAW regional manager, Vernon Rudman, who is the main point of contact for Scribante Concrete.

"Together with Scribante Concrete, FAW SA has literally 'refined' our robust and durable mixer trucks to provide even stronger and longer-lasting operational efficiency. This serves the interests of both companies. It really is a win-win situation," he concludes.



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COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2015

Note: For the time being, Great Wall Motors SA (GWM) and Mercedes-Benz SA (MBSA) will only report aggregated sales data. The GWMSA and MBSA commercial vehicle market split volumes are estimates based on historical trends and forecasting techniques. The totals listed below do not include MBSA figures.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	November Total: 15 242	December Total: 13 711
AMH	481	521
Fiat Group	19	21
Ford Motor Company	2 719	2 970
GMSA	2 535	3 060
GWM	171	110
Jaguar Land Rover	45	49
JMC	45	13
Mahindra	174	151
Mazda South Africa	96	63
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	20	16
Mitsubishi Motors SA	6	23
Nissan	2 714	1 862
Peugeot Citroën SA	6	3
Renault	2	2
Suzuki Auto	3	3
TATA	157	80
Toyota	5 514	3 868
Volkswagen SA	508	896

Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	November Total: 1 028	December Total: 955
AMH	19	13
Fiat Group	12	10
Ford Motor Company	22	31
GMSA	223	345
Iveco	54	77
JMC	15	7
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	214	184
Peugeot Citroën SA	34	32
TATA	50	31
Toyota	287	126
Volkswagen SA	89	98
Volvo Group Southern Africa	9	1

Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	November Total: 533	December Total: 533
FAW	54	33
GMSA	139	228
Iveco	1	12
MAN	5	9
Powerstar	6	–
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	58	49
TATA	54	42
Toyota	167	70
Volvo Group Southern Africa	107	75

Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	November Total: 841	December Total: 603
Babcock DAF	13	9
FAW	13	11
GMSA	53	83
Iveco	36	16
MAN	110	84
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	404	338
Powerstar	37	30
Scania	287	178
TATA	24	7
Toyota	34	22
Volvo Group Southern Africa	234	163

Buses > 8 500 kg	November Total: 91	December Total: 82
MAN	61	50
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	21	18
Scania	19	28
TATA	5	1
Volvo Group Southern Africa	6	2

*Source: National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa).

GEYER TAKES THE REINS

Markus Geyer has been appointed as MD of MAN Truck and Bus Southern Africa, assuming responsibility from Geoff du Plessis, who left his position at the end of December 2015.

Geyer is well known to the South African market from his previous position as regional head of Middle East and Africa, a position he held for five years. Until recently, he was also responsible for the 22 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Geyer also served as a member of the board of directors of MAN Truck & Bus (SA) since 2004.

According to the company, "Geyer's extensive experience of the local business environment, coupled with solid relationships with customers within the African region, will be instrumental to his success, and of huge benefit to MAN customers throughout the region.

"In addition, he holds a solid knowledge of processes within the parent company, and is backed up by a network of support within the Munich headquarters."

"Markus has my full support and the supervisory board of MAN Truck & Bus AG wishes him the best of success in his new role in South Africa, a country with which he is very familiar," says board member for sales and marketing, Heinz-Jürgen Löw.





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Reliability is a huge deal as well. So you won't be surprised to hear that Scania coaches deliver the highest levels of uptime in Southern Africa, and our wholly-owned dealer network focuses all its energy on minimising downtime.

Driver capability is another big cost area, which our driver training programmes are tailored to help you manage and develop. The same goes for our finance and insurance approach. We believe in understanding the daily needs of your business, rather than just looking at the risk.

Also our new Fleet Management System is the perfect embodiment of our partnership attitude, giving you access to amazing detail on everything from coasting to heavy braking, and then the coaching support you need to help manage not just your fleet, but your entire cost base.

So if you're just buying coaches, we're probably not the supplier for you. But if you believe what you're actually buying is a partnership, a commitment, a total transport solution, then we should talk.

There is a better way.





WHAT MIGHT 2016 HOLD?

From a fleet management point of view, the most obvious characteristic of 2016 will be slow new-vehicle purchases and fleet expansion in line with weak economic growth, predicts David Molapo, head of Standard Bank Fleet Management.

"One would expect that, in such difficult conditions, fleet managers would embrace the many tools available to increase fleet efficiency and reduce costs, yet the uptake of these cost-saving tools is subject to the same budget constraints vis-à-vis the replacement of vehicles," says Molapo.

The seriousness of an incident is amplified with economic uncertainty, Molapo adds. "Concerns include road safety and crime; especially around

truck hijackings, which showed an eye-watering 29 percent increase in the most recent official crime statistics.

"However, a total of about 1 300 truck hijackings per year shows that the scourge remains below previous peaks."

Perhaps the most optimistic aspect of the coming year is the rise in the status of fleet management itself.

"A new generation of fleet managers is tech-savvy and unencumbered by traditions that inhibit economically sensible practices, such as full maintenance leasing. Fleet management is increasingly seen as a professional speciality in its own right, rather than an administrative sideline," says Molapo.

TWO UNITS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

GPS Tracking Solutions, a company in the Eqstra Holdings Group, has introduced an enhanced back-up GPS tracking unit to aid vehicle recovery in the event of theft.

The back-up unit is installed in an unobtrusive area of the vehicle, away from the primary tracking unit. It is battery operated (the battery has a life of three years) and incorporates anti-jamming technology for both GPS and GPRS signals.

Coupled with market-leading primary unit technologies, vehicle immobilisation, in the event of theft, provides for an even higher recovery rate.

"Our thieves are fairly sophisticated and immediately rip out the tracking unit, or jam the signals, making the vehicle difficult to trace. This back-up unit will go on sending out signals without their knowledge, making it much easier for tracking companies to find the stolen vehicle," says Dwayne Porter, operations manager for GPS Tracking Solutions.



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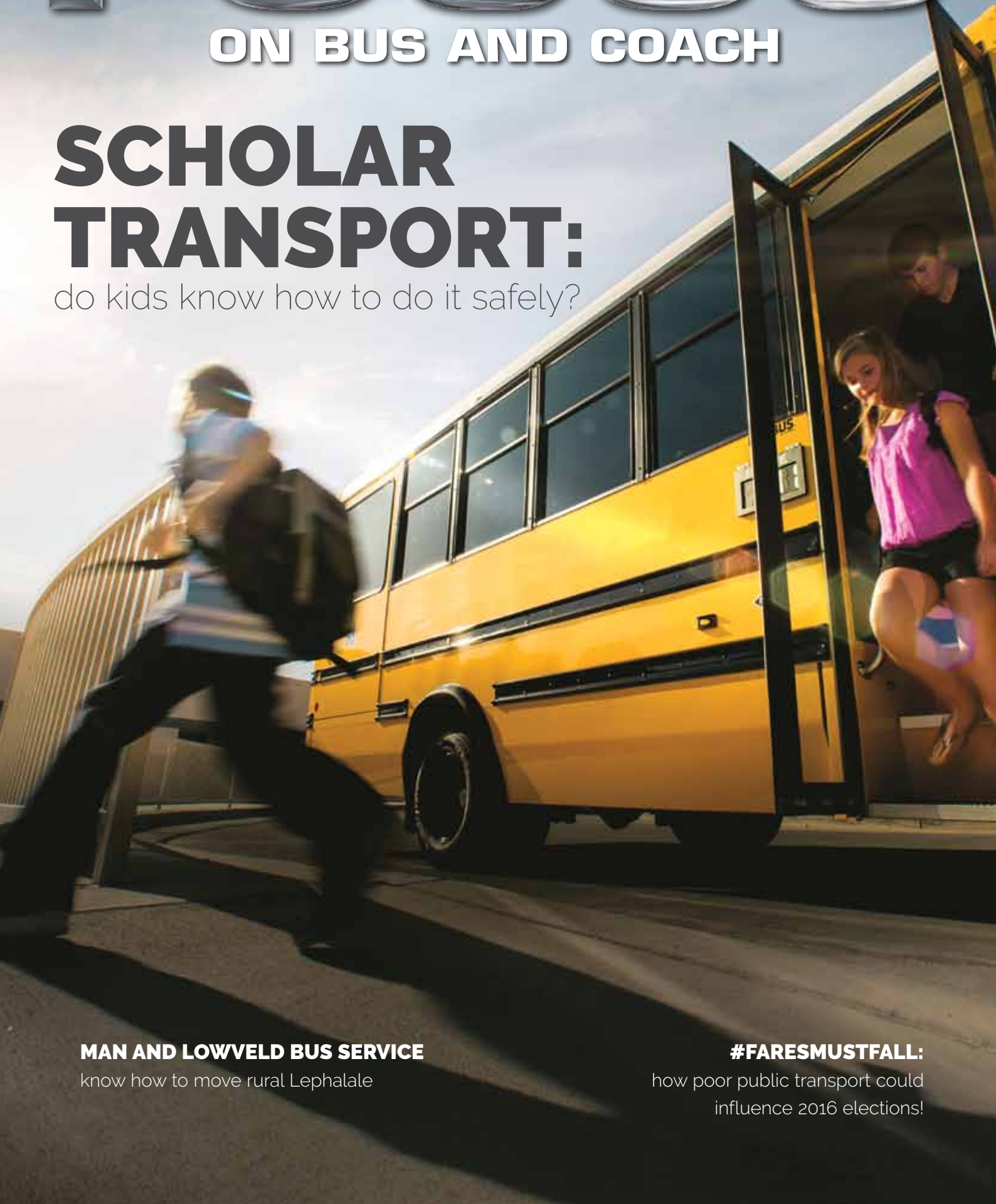
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FOCUS

ON BUS AND COACH

SCHOLAR TRANSPORT:

do kids know how to do it safely?



MAN AND LOWVELD BUS SERVICE

know how to move rural Lephalale

#FARESMUSTFALL:

how poor public transport could
influence 2016 elections!

BUS SAFETY

rules

Millions of school children are transported daily to and from schools. They need to be reminded about safety – both on the street and on the school bus itself. CLAIRE RENCKEN buses in some tips



On South African roads, we have one of the highest chances in the world of having an accident. This fact is backed up by both local and international statistics, which, flawed as they are, agree that travelling South African roads is a gamble.

Horrific collisions reach the headlines of various local news publications on a frequent basis – from trucks overturning on top of family cars, to informal taxis colliding with school buses and killing children. Transport-related accidents are the third leading cause of unnatural death in South Africa.

You face these odds every time you travel to work, walk to the shops, or simply take a stroll around the block – so does your child if he or she makes use of school bus transport.

Primary school children, in particular, are at high risk of being hit by a car when crossing the street because they:

- Cannot judge the speed or distance of moving vehicles;
- Are easily distracted and can focus on only one thing at a time;



- Cannot determine the direction from which a sound is coming;
- Have a visual field that is one-third narrower than that of an adult;
- Do not understand how much time and distance is necessary for a vehicle to stop; and
- Are often hidden by parked cars and bushes.

Parents are encouraged to teach their youngsters these rules for getting on and off the school bus:

- Dress appropriately – make sure all drawstrings, ties and straps on all clothing, backpacks and other items, are shortened or removed, to lessen the likelihood of them getting caught in bus doors, railings or aisles;
- Get to the bus stop at least five minutes early;
- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic and



SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

avoid roughhousing or other behaviour that can lead to carelessness. Do not stray onto streets, alleys or private property;

- Line up away from the road as the school bus approaches. Wait until the bus has come to a complete standstill and the door opens before stepping onto the roadway;
- Wait for the signal from the driver before approaching the bus;
- Enter the bus in single file;
- Use the hand-rail when stepping onto the bus;
- When on the bus, find a seat and sit down. Loud talking or other noise can distract the bus driver. Passengers should never put their heads, arms or hands out of the window.
- Always listen to the driver's instructions. Be courteous to the driver and other students;
- Listen carefully when the driver or teacher shows you where the emergency exits are;
- Keep aisles clear – books or bags are tripping hazards and can block the way in an emergency;
- Before you reach your stop, get ready to leave by getting your books and belongings together;
- At your stop, wait for the bus to stop completely before getting up from your seat. Then, walk to the front door and exit, using the hand-rail;

- Never crawl under a bus;
- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least ten feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road, until you can turn around and see the driver. Make sure that the driver can see you. Wait for a signal from the driver before beginning to cross. When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes;
- Do not cross the centre-line of the road until the driver has signalled that it is safe for you to begin walking;
- Stay away from the bus's rear wheels at all times; and
- Never run back to the bus, even if you dropped or forgot something.

It is also suggested that parents review with their children the correct way to cross the street. Youngsters should always stop at the curb or the edge of the road and look right, then left, and then right again, before crossing. They should continue looking in this manner until they are safely across.

If a student's vision is blocked by a parked car, or another obstacle, they should move out to where drivers can see them and they can see other vehicles, then stop, and look right-left-right again. **F**



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Passenger transit operators located in South Africa's rural areas face challenges quite different from their metropolitan counterparts. As such, a well-defined business approach is required to satisfy the diverse transport needs of the local populace

By nature, country towns are hubs of business activity servicing remote villages. People living in these villages require reliable transport to and from the towns, in order to work, shop and socialise.

The Limpopo municipality of Lephalale (formerly Ellisras) is such a town. Despite its remote location, it is something of a boom town – with the “under-construction” Medupi Power Station located only a few kilometres away. Expanding mining operations in the region are also creating an ongoing demand for labour and related services, not least of which is public transport.

Lephalale's Lowveld Bus Service was established in 1983 and has grown to become the top bus operation in the Waterberg region.

According to Frans Rossel, general manager of Lowveld Bus Service (and son of co-founder and current CEO/ chairman, Louis Rossel): “Our operation is characterised by the diversity of both the business activity and the terrain in the area we service.

“Our contracts define our bus procurement policy. With each contract having unique requirements, our choice of bus to service these contracts is determined in a way that delivers optimum benefits for our clients, our passengers and the company.”

With a 51 percent empowerment shareholding, Lowveld Bus Service remains a family-managed business that prides itself on its mix of youth and experience, as well as its ability to adapt swiftly to dynamic market demands. The fleet now numbers 270 buses – almost 50 percent of which are MAN – carrying some 30 000 passengers a day.

“We run a mixed fleet because of our ‘horses for courses’ procurement approach. Ever since our introduction to MAN in the early 1990s, though, we have continually increased our MAN component, because of its unmatched product range.

“Our contracts are diverse and include workforce transport for Medupi contractors, mine labour and private-sector commuters. We also offer private hire to schools, churches and other social organisations,” explains Rossel.

“Our choice of buses reflects these diverse applications and ranges from commuter specification units to semi-luxury coaches. With lead distances of up to 160 kilometres and at least 30 percent of our routes being on gravel



Options to boost
BUSINESS AGILITY

OPERATOR FOCUS

roads, our 45 new Volkswagen 17.210 buses from MAN are proving extremely successful in terms of reliability, fuel economy and ease of maintenance.

"Our 40 MAN bus trains service our labour transport contracts perfectly, bringing economies of scale that no other bus supplier can offer," he elaborates.

The MAN HB Lion's Explorer range is well represented in the Lowveld Bus Service fleet, with 114, 80 and 65-seater configurations demonstrating the versatility of MAN's Olifantsfontein bus bodybuilding plant.

Thys de Beer, technical manager at Lowveld Bus Service, states: "MAN offers a complete package, which makes the entire process of buying and maintaining a bus fleet easier and more cost-effective. Our technicians receive ongoing training from MAN and are equipped with all the necessary tooling and diagnostic equipment.

"Furthermore, our four MAN-accredited workshops are

supported by our parts department, which is managed on a daily basis by MAN's Hatfield dealership. This keeps our parts inventory at optimum levels and helps speed up our servicing turnaround times."

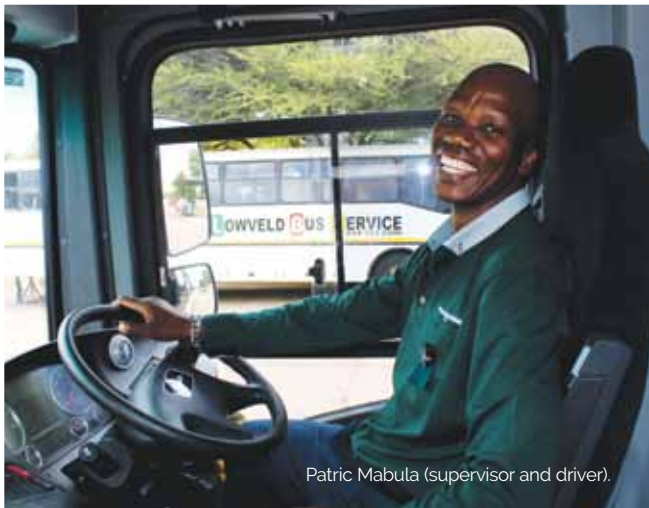
As South Africa's market-leading bus supplier, MAN values the relationship it has with entrepreneurial operations like Lowveld Bus Service.

"Our product portfolio is broad and application-specific," says Philip Kalil-Zackey, head of bus sales, MAN Truck & Bus SA. "As a bus supplier in southern Africa, MAN has the ability to supply drivetrain and chassis platforms to suit unique passenger-transit operations and to customise bus bodies to perfectly complement MAN's proven diesel technologies.

"MAN customers get exactly what they need to realise sustainable return on investment. Lowveld Bus Service is a perfect example of how MAN's products and after-sales service capacity serve one-of-a-kind bus operations."

Despite operational challenges, including difficulties in obtaining route permits, external labour unrest (20 Lowveld Bus Service buses were burnt during local community unrest in 2015) and its remote geographical location, the company is "in the right place at the right time", says Rossel.

"We are a streamlined operation and, although we employ over 400 people, we carry no fat. We have the energy, experience and versatility to be agile in a highly dynamic and competitive environment in which passengers will demand enhanced transport services in the future.



Patric Mabula (supervisor and driver).



Frans Rossel (left) and Thys de Beer with the 'ace-in-the-hole' VW 17.210 commuter bus.



ABOVE: Team work, family style: (from left) Frans Rossel, Elizabeth Ngoepe (admin), Lucas Lebudi (driver), Esme Pepler (health and safety manager), and Thys de Beer.



ABOVE RIGHT: MAN and Girl Power – Lowveld Bus Service technician, Francina Manaka.

"We keep our ears close to the ground and know what our customers want – reliability, safety and comfort, at the right price. Lowveld Bus Service is extremely price-sensitive and our relationship with MAN enables us to match customer needs with business imperatives. This win-win situation makes us think twice before looking at competitor models," he concludes. **F**



UD BUSES

on trial in India

FRANK BEETON reports on important UD bus news from India

In May, 2014, we reported on the re-entry of the UD brand into the global bus market. Somewhat surprisingly, the parent Volvo Group had elected to launch this initiative in India, and not in the brand's home market of Japan, or Thailand, which is the initial production base for the new UD Quester truck range.

UD (formerly Nissan Diesel) had exited the bus business in 2010, after a history of bus chassis manufacture that extended back into the middle years of the 20th century. Since then, UD has become a fully integrated member of the global Volvo Group, which is currently rolling out its strategy to fully utilise the strengths of its constituent companies, and reduce the geographic and product footprint overlap that has characterised its corporate structure until now.

Interestingly, the UD Buses project is being managed by Volvo Buses India, and does not appear to be directly connected to the VE Commercial Vehicles joint venture that operates between Volvo and Eicher, although it was apparent that engines built at VECV's Pithampur plant would be used in the new generation of UD buses.

In the initial announcement, it was mentioned that the range of UD buses and coaches, described as 12-m "value" products, would be built in a joint venture with local company SM Kannapa Automobile, in a facility located near Bangalore.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: UD celebrates the first SLF city bus to enter trial operation in Bangalore.





The right-hand-drive configuration used in that country will facilitate the marketing of these UD buses in other areas where the left-hand rule of the road is the norm.

It was appropriate, therefore, that the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation, which operates 700 Volvos in a total fleet of 6 500 buses, would carry out the first operational trials of the new UD buses, and the first unit entered service for a two-month period starting in June, 2015.

This 36-seater, air-conditioned vehicle – designated UD SLF (semi-low floor) – is powered by a rear-mounted Volvo Group GH8 eight-litre turbocharged/intercooled

diesel developing 171 kW (230 hp), driving through a six-speed ZF fully automatic transmission.

Other features include an anti-lock braking system, utilising front disc and rear drum brakes, a hydrodynamic retarder, full air suspension, roll stabilisers, and on-board diagnostics.

The prototype body was constructed by Volvo Buses India at its nearby Hoskote plant, although subsequent production units are, reportedly, to be built at the Volvo/SM Kannapa JV plant mentioned above.

It was not clear from the publicity related to the trials whether the UD SLF is of monocoque or separate chassis/body construction, although the “semi-low floor” designator does suggest the latter.

The Indian-manufactured engine is Euro-4 compliant, and the right-hand-drive configuration used in that country will facilitate the marketing of these UD buses in other areas where the left-hand rule of the road is the norm.

In the initial UD Buses launch announcement, it was stated that India would be the central focus for the brand, but that export to “growth markets” was also part of the strategy. **F**

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How about #FARESMUSTFALL?

Observers are warning that, in 2016, the economy will either go into free-fall, or somehow start to claw back some of the ground lost through mismanagement and incompetence. Can public transport play a part?

Yes, it can; both politically and economically. This is an election year, and, once again, the opportunity presents itself for the electorate to have its say. Writing in the *Sunday Times* of December 20, 2015, Xolela Mangcu, professor of sociology at UCT, predicts that "the mass desertion of voters from the ANC is only going to get worse in 2016".

I don't think that he had public transport in mind, where there surely has to be a significant overlap between the approximately 11 to 12 million South Africans, who vote for the ANC, and the seven to eight million South Africans, who make (reluctant) use of minibus taxis every day.

The ongoing tolerance by these passengers, of a government that subjects them to such "unequal" travelling conditions, baffles me. Taxi users outnumber bus and train users by three to one, but pay up to four times more to travel the same distance. When is someone going to wake up to this carry over from the apartheid era and start a #FaresMustFall campaign?

Why do opposition parties have so little to say about public transport issues? The DA is doing a reasonable job in the Western Cape, but elsewhere it is ineffective. I am even more surprised at the silence of the EFF on this topic. Even a modest stay-away from voting by disgruntled public transport users could result in a major re-alignment in South African politics.

It should, however, be more about economics than politics. All South Africans could start focusing on how improved public transport can help to ward off the

economic hardship that is on its way. We are uptight about spending R1 trillion on a nuclear programme, but we get exactly the same figure if we multiply the eight million cars on our roads by a modest R125 000 each.

A power station lasts at least 40 years, but we have to replace cars every ten to 12 years. We need R600 billion a year to pay off these cars and to pay for their parking, maintenance, insurance and fuel ... even the banks have now started to warn our "maxed-out" community – specifically would-be car owners – of the risks of overreaching in these uncertain times.

Even a more modest three to four-percent growth in car usage is unsustainable if the rest of the economy is growing at less than two percent. My guess is that some of the abnormal growth in traffic is due to minibus taxi passengers switching to cars – as there are no suitable bus or train services to which they can turn, even if they are cheaper to use.

We need to take a robust view of every public transport organisation that receives a subsidy from any level of government.

To reduce waste, duplication and underperformance, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa), the Gautrain, all the BRT schemes, as well as provincial and municipal bus operators should come under one management in each metropolitan area.

All the fares and service levels need to come into line, and bus routes need to be rationalised immediately. Sadly, taxi issues will take a little longer to fix.

Meanwhile, pray that oil stays below US\$ 40 a barrel! **F**



Vaughan Mostert lectured on public transport issues at the University of Johannesburg for nearly thirty years. Through Hopping Off, Mostert leaves readers with some parting food for thought as he continues his push for change in the local public transport industry.

Future Urban Mobility.



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The Lion's City LE embodies a versatile bus concept that cuts a fine figure on any city thoroughfare. Proven quality and technology have enabled this low-entry bus to win not only the hearts of passengers, but also the minds of the fleet operators and transport company directors. Definitely a head-turner on any city street, the Lion's City LE always leaves a striking impression of composed self-assurance. It has a future-proofed design that integrates tangible benefits such as improved serviceability with striking good looks. No less attractive are the levels of comfort, the handling characteristics and the cost effectiveness of the Lion's City LE. With its low consumption, clean burning common-rail engine and low life-cycle costs, the Lion's City LE sets new standards for dependability, economy and efficiency.

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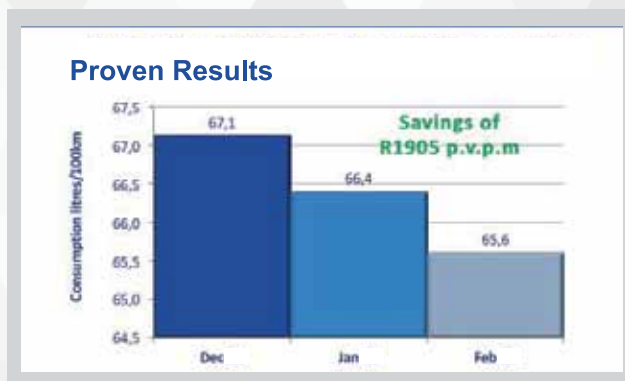


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The control room monitors various events including speeding, entry into no-go areas, driving without a rest break and unauthorised stopping en route. Depending on the type of event triggered, the highly trained agents will either call the driver or fleet controller (in English or isiZulu) and escalate repeat offenders to senior management.

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A bulk transport operator with 63 vehicles achieved a 1,6ℓ/100km reduction in fuel consumption. Incidents of speeding and excessive idling was significantly reduced by using the MiX Track And React bureau service.

The MiX Track And React bureau service is managed by Compass FM, a division of MiX Telematics. For more information please contact info@compassfm.co.za or phone +27 31 580 2400.