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Published monthly by Charmont Media Global
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Farewell TO FRANK!

Frank Beeton, who has been writing for **FOCUS** since January 2006, is hanging up his hat! We published his last Global Focus last month, but, before we allowed him to go and relax on the beach, I chatted to him about his long and illustrious career – and some other bits and pieces, too



CHARLEEN CLARKE

Frank Beeton was born with diesel in his veins – although this was something that didn't come to the fore until his pre-teen years. That's when he became "seriously interested" in road transport.

Not surprisingly, he went on to join the Port Natal Administration Board, General Motors, Poole Industries and Nissan. In 2000, he became a consultant, working for Econometrix and penning over 100 fascinating articles for **FOCUS** (mostly market reviews and his astute commentary on international events and trends).

During Frank's time in the wheels game (which spans 48 years!), the annual truck and bus market has

Your CV refers to previous experience with truck/bus retail sales in the KwaZulu-Natal area from 1969 to 1975. Can you please elaborate on this? What did you do during this period?

I was a truck and bus salesman. During that period, I sold Leyland, International, Nissan Diesel and Volvo products. On the face of it, I made too many job changes, but I was a young salesman making his way, and it was challenging to find positions where sales management and the senior salesmen left you enough room (in terms of decent sales prospects) to make an impression.

There was also very little mentoring and guidance, with management often hogging the key accounts for themselves. I had periods of success, and some of great frustration, but it was a great learning experience, and it helped me a great deal when I later moved into management positions.

I'm guessing our industry was quite different back then?

Indeed! It's changed a great deal! At the end of the 1960s, the local industry was emerging from a period of domination by British makes (Leyland, Ford and Bedford, for instance). That was when the German, Italian, American and Japanese brands started making inroads into our market.

In the 1970s, we saw these companies grow their market share. In the 1980s, South Africa moved into an era of mandatory high local-content fitment, in the form of Atlantis

Diesel Engines (ADE) and ASTAS transmissions. This resulted in the number of makes active in the market declining from around 30 to only seven or eight! Then, from 1994, the import restrictions were lifted and many of the global brands returned.



ABOVE: The SA press group at Isuzu's Hokkaido testing facility.

RIGHT: Short safari suits were in vogue when Frank delivered this International 1890DA to Western Cape Ferry Services in 1970.



fluctuated from a high of 30 700 units in 1981, to a low of 7 900 units in 1993, and then back up to an all-time record of 37 000 units in 2007.

Last year, it barely scraped over a level of 27 000 units. "That scenario of wild fluctuations in volume and numbers of participants, has made it an extremely challenging industry to work in, and with," he notes. I asked him about these challenges and his other memories of our industry over the past 48 years...





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SCANIA

After six years of sales you moved to the Port Natal Administration Board (from January 1976 to September 1978). I know you were transport officer and assistant transport manager there, but tell us about the Board and what it did. Also, tell us about your experiences there, the highlights of those jobs and lessons learnt during your time there.

To understand the Administration Boards, you need to have a handle on Apartheid politics. Under that regime, Administration Boards were set up to manage the so-called "black areas" outside of the Bantustans. In practice, it meant that they took over the functions previously performed by municipalities in the townships adjacent to major cities.

The Port Natal Administration Board managed infrastructure construction and maintenance, administration, welfare, cleansing services and security, and also operated a sorghum beer brewery.

The vehicle fleet – which consisted of cars, pickups, trucks, tractors and tankers – exceeded 300 units, and my main responsibilities included vehicle procurement through a tender system and setting up a costing system for the fleet. This was also great training for my later career.



ABOVE: Getting to grips with driving an ex-London double-decker at Matjiesfontein.

LEFT: Nissan Diesel SA head office staff, mid-1990s.

You worked for General Motors South Africa (GMSA)/Delta Motor Corporation, from October 1978 to December 1988. What was the company's position within the truck industry at that stage (in terms of its market share). What products did it have? What challenges did it endure? What were its major successes?

At that time, GMSA was intent on improving its truck market position, particularly with Isuzu products. Its earlier main truck brand, Bedford, was becoming increasingly difficult to sell. In 1978, GMSA recruited a group of specialist truck people from outside the company, of which I was one, to act as truck area managers.

Our arrival coincided with the introduction of new Isuzu products, led by the five-tonne SBR422, which found immediate acceptance in the market.

GMSA also took a very positive attitude to local content incorporation, using Mercedes-Benz-derived ADE power units, and, as the 1980s rolled out, a comprehensive range of Isuzu products was jockeying for second position in the market alongside Toyota/Hino, and not far behind leader Mercedes-Benz.

In 1980, I was promoted to government sales manager, and transferred to head office in Port Elizabeth. Over the following eight years, I held virtually every position in truck sales management, ending up as commercial vehicle strategy manager with Delta Motor Corporation in Johannesburg.

This period considerably expanded my range of management experience, and gave me my first taste of involvement with marketing (as opposed to sales), strategy development and product planning.

Unfortunately, following the sad demise of chairman Bob Price, the Delta management was determined to grow its car business, and was less enthusiastic about the commercial vehicle volumes that had kept GMSA alive through the difficult business and political climate of the 1980s. It was time to move on.

Any unusual/fun/crazy/interesting stories you could like to share with us from this time?

Amusing stories were plentiful during the decade at GMSA/Delta. Most of them relate to vehicle launches. In those days, we did everything ourselves such as driving vehicles to launch venues, setting up the displays, building sets and hanging posters. Then we did the presentations and entertained the visiting dealers, press and fleet owners. This was really great for building team spirit. I feel sorry for modern industry executives who seem to waft in when all the work has been done for them by service providers. How boring!

In May 1985, you hosted a press group visit to Isuzu Motors Japan. Which journalists did you host? What was the purpose of the visit? Where did you go? What did you do?

The group, which was hosted by public relations head Mick Killeen and myself, included Mick Collins, Colin



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Haines, Ralph Jarvis, Francois Ebersohn, Neil Bolton, and Alan Trim. The purpose of the trip was to expose these journalists to Isuzu's Japanese production and test facilities, and to generate publicity for the GM/Isuzu operation in South Africa.

The group visited the Isuzu plants in Kawasaki, Fujisawa, and Tomokomai, and had the opportunity to drive trucks on Isuzu's impressive test track on Hokkaido Island. We also visited the traditional Japanese capital city of Kyoto, the Suzuki head office and plant at Hamamatsu, travelled on the Shinkansen (bullet train) and, on the return trip, called at Hong Kong and Macau.

You then worked for Poole Industries from January 1989 to September 1990. That must have been fascinating...

It was, yes, but it was also a sad time. Pretoria-based Poole Industries had been the country's premier truck bodybuilder in the 1980s, but, by the end of the decade, it was suffering, along with the rest of the industry, from the greatly reduced market demand and the resulting severe reduction in throughput.

BELOW: Press visit to Isuzu Motors, Japan, 1985; Front row L to R Messrs. Colin Haynes, Neil Bolton, Takahiko Tsuchida (Isuzu), Tim Norris (GMSA), Alan Trim, Ralph Jarvis, Francois Ebersohn, Frank Beeton (GMSA) and Mick Kileen (GMSA).

RIGHT: In Japan, you get to sing karaoke in your pyjamas!



The founding Poole family had sold the company to Murray and Roberts, and it seemed that, with its long history, well-established plants, diverse product range and skilled people, it was ripe for a return to its earlier position as a highly successful and profitable business.

Unfortunately, the new owners chose, instead, to break up the company, thus eliminating the possibility of a broad-based turnaround. As it turned out, this was completely the wrong decision, and it led to the ultimate demise of what was once a proud company with a long and distinguished history.

Why the move to Nissan in October 1990?

By the end of 1990, it was clear that Poole was going nowhere, so when John Wood suggested that I join Nissan Diesel to fill the vacant role of national fleet sales manager, I was ready to make the move.

Nissan Diesel was, at that time, a heavy hitter in the truck market, and regularly placed third behind Mercedes-Benz and Toyota/Hino. The truck marketing management team in 1990 was minute, with only three of us reporting to Dave Scott, and had a total lack of line responsibility. The team was highly motivated, but the lack of any direct authority to influence our own affairs made the job difficult.

How did things change when Mike Whitfield took over in 1994?

They changed drastically. The management team was expanded exponentially, and was given the authority to take full line responsibility. In the meantime, I had moved from sales management into marketing,



and then on to general management of the product-planning function.

Managing the process of returning Nissan Diesel's product range from ADE to OE power was my main responsibility as the 1990s rolled out, and the longevity of the product range that resulted is a testament to the good job that was done

by my team. This was probably the most rewarding period of my whole career, highlighted by several months when Nissan Diesel occupied the number one position in the local truck market!

In September 1994 you attended IAA Commercial Vehicle Show in Hannover, Germany. How many times have you visited the fair? What were your impressions in 1994? Did you go with a group? What was the highlight of the trip?

I have been to the IAA only once, and I travelled solo on an intelligence-gathering mission. The show was totally overwhelming, especially the multiple stands of major European manufacturers like Mercedes-Benz and MAN, and I was astonished to see how they targeted specific displays at major fleets, smaller fleets and drivers. The huge bodybuilder and supplier

sections were also of great interest.

The event is vast, and places great demands on one's feet, but major lasting impressions include the incredible build quality standards of European luxury coaches, the Mercedes-Benz Unimog stand where a "Mog" regularly won a tug-of-war with a small railway shunting steam locomotive, and the use of "live" airbrush painting to decorate truck cabs.

In May 1995, you were chairman of the Nissan Diesel "FF 95-2" International Product Planning Conference in Japan. Please tell us all about that! What products were you planning? Did they come to South Africa?

We were, at the time, putting the finishing touches to Nissan Diesel's post-ADE product range for South Africa. As this meant that we were returning to OE engines and driveline components, Nissan Diesel was keen to test for greater levels of uniformity between its overseas markets, in an effort to reduce the number of specific models it was building for each of them.

However, the presentations and discussions only served to emphasise the specific needs of each market reflecting legislative requirements and customer preferences. It reinforced the importance of recognising customer priorities, rather than trying to achieve a level of rationalisation within the manufacturers' production



ABOVE: Mother Truckers: The Nissan Diesel boys hard at work! Clockwise from front left: Vic Oliver, Johnny Marx, Dave Scott, Frank Beeton, Peter Merzbacher and John Wood.

and product support systems, which could ultimately lead to reduced overseas market share.

In March 1996 you went on a fact-finding visit to a Nissan Diesel distributor in Malaysia. Why did you go there specifically? What did you learn?

This was primarily a courtesy visit to a fellow distributor who was particularly successful in his own market. However, it was soon apparent that the company's competitive situation was very different to ours, and that the Tang Chong operation was considerably smaller than our own.

The stay was most enjoyable, and the people very friendly. I learned that Malay food is very spicy, that the Malaysian population is made up of Chinese, Indian and indigenous Malay people, and that the Malaysian government had its own "BEE" programme which favoured the latter group.

In November 1997 you travelled to Australia, and met with UD Oceania in Sydney. What was the most interesting thing that you learnt while there? How did its operation compare to South Africa?

This was actually a private visit to Australia, but I used the opportunity to reconnect with people from UD Oceania, who I had first met in Japan. It was mainly social, and the most interesting aspect was the very pleasant seafood lunch enjoyed at a yacht club on one of Sydney Harbour's backwaters!

After your tenure at Nissan you went on to join Econometrix. Why? Please tell us about the highlights of your time at this company?

For the reasons explained earlier, working in this small and intensely competitive truck market is not easy. By the time I had spent 30 years wrestling with its challenges, I was looking to do something a little different, but where I could still use my experience and knowledge.

I had met Tony Twine during 1984 and, knowing that he commanded tremendous respect in the industry, I decided to approach him to discuss the possibility of working together. He immediately suggested that I join Econometrix as a consultant, and explore possibilities for increasing the company's industry footprint, particularly with respect to heavier commercial vehicles.

This led to an extremely happy and productive sixteen-year period, during which I was able to work with, rather than in the industry, doing things differently, but still enjoying the association with a broad selection of trucking people.

You must have loved working with Tony. He was such an incredible man!

I did. The period working closely with Tony, up to his untimely passing in 2012, was extremely enjoyable. We worked well as a team, and I particularly enjoyed his somewhat offbeat sense of humour.

I was absolutely in awe of his ability to work without any obvious handicap from his almost non-existent eyesight. Tony also had enormous credibility in the motor industry, and this resulted in the regular inflow of consultancy work for Econometrix, to the benefit of our department.

One of the most important opportunities to materialise was the cooperative venture with Neal Bruton of Response Group Trendline to develop and market the heavy-vehicle version of its excellent Market Segment Analyser programme. I also started contributing articles to trade magazines, which became an important and enjoyable aspect of my time at Econometrix.

Speaking of incredible people, which people have impressed/inspired you the most during your career? Why?

In an article that I previously wrote for **FOCUS**, I nominated Bob Price (GMSA/Delta), Makoto Hisano (Nissan Diesel) and Tony Twine (Econometrix) as the



most inspiring people that I had met, and dealt with, during my career. They are still top of my list, for the reasons that I fully explained in that article.

There were also people like Dave Butlion, who was truck sales manager at GMSA in 1978, and made my move to that company possible, and Mike Whitfield, who was my boss at Nissan, both of whom had an incredible ability to change the strategic direction of large companies with the force of their personalities.

Dave Butlion's immediate successor was Andre van Rooyen. It was the first time that I had worked for someone who was younger than me. He also became my "champion", and made sure that my career at GMSA took an upward trajectory. I am very grateful to him.

If you had to pick one low point or perhaps the greatest frustration/disappointment of your career, what would it be?

Half-a-century of work experience, including 30-plus years in a corporate environment, has thrown up its fair share of frustrations/disappointments, and I have already spoken about some of them. However, the ability to deal with adversity is very material to the success or failure of an individual in business. It is very important to reflect on these events and understand why they happened.

On reflection, I think that Bob Price's sudden passing before he could steer Delta Motor Corporation towards a more substantial involvement in the truck market, which was his stated objective, was pivotal, and that my subsequent career may have been very different if he had survived for any length of time. However, I can say that none of these events ended up having a long-lasting negative influence on me, and I soon moved on to new adventures and achievements.

If you had to pick one highlight of your career, what would it be?

It would definitely be the product-planning process that I headed up at Nissan Diesel in the mid-1990s. That was undoubtedly the kind of challenging scenario that perfectly fitted my personality and experience.

It was, of course, a team effort working closely with people like Rory Schulz, Vic Capitani and Makoto Hisano, and the OE driveline product range that resulted was to keep Nissan Diesel and UD Trucks competitive in a major chunk of the market for nearly 20 years.

Incidentally, it was my idea to use "UD" badging on the trucks as a model designator, and I believe that the early use of that logo greatly facilitated the transition from Nissan Diesel to UD branding that was to follow.

However, even more important are the good friends that I have made during my years in the industry.

People like John Wood, Peter Merzbacher, Mark Warner, Ian Byers and Vic Oliver have been firm friends since the Nissan Diesel days, and before that I shared many pleasant social times and memories with Rene van der Merwe, Tony Barlow and the late Bill Rossouw from GM.

There is a saying that we truckers have "diesel in the veins", and it is true that we love nothing better than a good meal with a few beers or glasses of wine and the chance to "talk turkey" with colleagues, or even competitors.

Finally, now that you're retiring, will you miss the transport industry?

I will not miss the transport industry, because trucking people never lose interest in the business and I will maintain contact with the trucking friends I have made over the years. Every time that I venture out onto the roads, I will be keeping an eye open for new vehicles, and what they are doing. I also have my extensive collection of model trucks and buses to remind me of my roots,



ABOVE LEFT: A portent of things to come: Frank (aged 19 months) at the wheel of his dad's 1937 Morris 8 Tourer.

ABOVE: Practising hard for retirement!

and I hope that the publications with which I have had an association will continue to send me free copies every month!

And what will you be doing with your time?

During retirement, I will be pursuing my hobbies of birdwatching and playing the guitar with greater frequency, and doing a bit more reading. I have a half-written book on Durban's buses which needs to be finished, although it may not be published, because I have "stolen" so many photographs to illustrate it!

As you know, I am now "back home" in KwaZulu-Natal, and there is a plot to set up a social group of "old truckers" down here. It will be similar to what we used to do in Johannesburg, and we hope to meet two or three times a year for lunch and a natter.

I have travelled extensively during my working life, and must admit that long plane trips are no longer an exciting prospect, but a trip to Okavango and a return visit to Australia are under discussion. We will see what transpires! **F**

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Dodgy drivers and **FOUL OFFICIALS**

Johannesburg's new mayor, Herman Mashaba, is clamping down on corruption. What can we do to improve our own game?



GAVIN MYERS

In the last issue, I discussed some suggestions made by Rory Schulz, marketing director at UD Trucks, who said that there was much to be done to bring South African economic growth back up to speed with the rest of the continent. Furthermore, he made a point that the local transport industry is an important catalyst in this, and there is much the industry as a whole can do to aid the process.



Schulz noted the importance of good drivers, who he described as "brand ambassadors and multitaskers". Any good transport operator will know that this is true. Highly-skilled, professional, loyal truck drivers are an asset to a transport company when behind the wheel and in the customer's yard.

It's sad, then, that so many truck drivers – and so many unscrupulous trucking companies – acquire their licences and registrations through questionable means. This fact has been highlighted by the recent suspension and arrest of traffic and licensing department officials in Johannesburg; for allowing motorists to illegally obtain drivers licences, licence discs, and registrations for their vehicles. This has cost the City of Johannesburg an estimated R14,7 million.

That was the result of the corrupt actions of seven officials – hardly the full picture of the rot. The

municipality's investigation further estimated that fraudulent transactions to the value of R155 million were made nationally between January 2008 and February 2016.

I have no breakdown of how many of these transactions apply to truck drivers or operators, but it's fair to assume the proportion is not insignificant.

What can operators do to ensure that they and the drivers they hire do things by the book? Arnoux Mare, MD of Innovation Staffing Solutions – which provides a turnkey outsource solution for logistics firms, and currently employs more than 5 500 full-time drivers – suggests that no single approach can rid South African roads of incompetent or unlicensed drivers.

He notes that there are, however, solutions to reducing the number of accidents involving commercial vehicles. "It requires a combination of regular driver evaluation and corrective training, fleet technology monitoring systems, and close management of driver schedules to prevent fatigue and negligence," Mare says.

Mare suggests that thorough background-checks are undertaken when recruiting drivers and that driver competency is evaluated and weaknesses addressed through proper training. He also suggests that operators need to be cognisant of how they treat their drivers.

"Our experience is that many logistics firms struggle to fill their quota of drivers, which often forces managers to demand longer working hours from existing drivers, resulting in fatigue. It also means drivers cannot be taken off their shift for necessary refresher training," he explains.

Mare has made a call to all the major role players, such as the Department of Transport, organised labour, logistics and insurance companies and the drivers, themselves, to commit to a strategy that will improve the conditions for everyone.

It seems that the City of Johannesburg is leading the way in this regard, and that responsible members of the trucking industry – such as Schulz and Mare – are doing what they can to motivate the process. Hopefully there's still a lot more to come. **F**

RFA Convention 2017

28 - 30 May 2017
Champagne Sports Resort, Drakensberg

Rolling with the Punches



In recent times the trucking industry has had to absorb many blows but still continues to deliver.

RFA Convention 2017 "Rolling with the Punches", will highlight the many legislative challenges and changes that the road freight industry has to contend with.

This is an annual event that brings together decision makers and executives from the road freight industry to address issues at a strategic level.

This year, the Convention takes place at Champagne Sports Resort in Drakensberg, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Nestled at the foot of the majestic Drakensberg mountain range, Champagne Sports Resort is the ultimate destination for work and play.

The three day event includes two days for conferencing and covers some the following topics:

- Impact of the proposed Truck Ban
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COST CONTROL

Immediate action and rectification must take place to fix any costs that are higher than the set standard. Special attention must be given to all the variable costs. An escalation clause should allow for a rate adjustment when the price of fuel fluctuates.

MANAGE VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

All company vehicles must be well maintained, roadworthy and safe to operate in accordance with the manufacturer's standards. Workshop production, efficiency and effectiveness must be kept at optimum levels.

MANAGE COMPANY DRIVERS

Company drivers should be motivated, controlled and managed. Work that has been well done must be recognised and rewarded. Drivers must be carefully selected and meet all required driving standards for the vehicles that they will be driving.

It is important that drivers do not work excessive hours and that they attend regular training. Driving licences and professional driving permits must be checked monthly to ensure that they are valid and have not been endorsed or cancelled. Action must be taken against drivers who consistently commit traffic offences.

MONITOR VEHICLE LOADING

Ensure that vehicles are not overloaded, that the

mass distribution is correct and loads are well secured.

RECORD ALL ACCIDENTS

All incidents that take place must be recorded, controlled and measured to ensure that any necessary action is taken to ensure that the incident is not repeated.

MONITOR ALL VEHICLE BREAKDOWNS

The causes of all vehicle breakdowns must be analysed, and steps must be taken to ensure that a solution is found to eliminate a repeat of the same type of breakdown. Keeping good records will assist in measuring the effectiveness of the fleet's maintenance programme.

CONTROL AND MONITOR ALL OUTSOURCED WORK

The quality of outsourced work must be completed on time and suppliers must be paid on time once the work has been inspected and approved.

SETTING COMPANY VEHICLE POLICY

All drivers of company vehicles must adhere to the set standards. Vehicle replacement should take place in an optimum timeframe to ensure that the company gets the full expected economic life from the vehicle. Regular and accurate vehicle management reports must be submitted.

TRANSPORT BUDGET

The transport budget for the company must be monitored and controlled. All transport costs must be kept within the budget limits.

MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM

The team should be happy and motivated. They should enjoy their work and respect and maintain the vehicles that they drive. **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!

CODE 14 NOT UP TO SCRATCH!

This is the second time I am writing to you (I asked for the MAN TGX 26.540 pic. and am chuffed to see them running around the country) and again I commend you for the quality and content of your magazine. I feel it could be a bit meatier with news from the rest of Africa, but keep on doing what you're doing.

I have a question for you and your team; having seen the proposed amendments to the Road Traffic Act, and seeing the kinds of discussions being held on social media – particularly among truckers (the likes of SA Long-distance Truckers, or SALT, on Facebook come to mind) – there seems to be little being done by the industry to change the code-14 licence in terms of the content of the training and the scope of the test.

Having also written my heavy-truck learners, and started the driver training on a Volvo F8 with a six-metre trailer (the bare minimum spec for the test in its current guise), and having watched my brother complete his test and undergo subsequent professional driver and off-road training, the code-14 test comes up lacking.

I have seen countless posts on Facebook of drivers asking for advice on gear selection for downhill descent, use of retarders and interlink reversing, simply because this is not covered in the code-14 training and test.

Why is gear selection not covered? Why are we still teaching people to drive a heavy truck of yesteryear, when the current trucks are more often than not interlinks with no less than 400 hp and auto gearboxes?! Why is the use of engine brakes and retarders still not included in the current code-14 specs?

On a positive note, what is also becoming clear on social media is the professionalism and enthusiasm among truckers, and the fact that pride in the industry is improving. It's so great to see truckers proud of their rigs and occupation and eager to help one another.

While it seems that the trucking industry isn't pushing for a revision of the code 14, I believe you may have the inside track, and know something I don't?

Stefan van Veenendaal
Liesbeeck Gardens Academics Coordinator

Thanks so much for writing to us again, Stefan. We love hearing from our readers.

*Thanks also for the kind words about the magazine. We welcome all feedback. I would love to include more news about the rest of Africa but it's challenging DELIVERING the magazine into Africa (if we write about those markets then we really need to distribute there, too ... and the post into Africa is just a nightmare!) Specifically, what sort of articles would you like to see in **FOCUS**? We can certainly endeavour to run more!*

I share your concerns about code-14 licences; it's so bad that it's bordering on scary. You have not even

touched on the bribes that are paid to secure licences. I wonder how many drivers actually end up on our roads with licences they have bought? I think the figures (if ever divulged) would be downright terrifying. Personally, I think that we need to do a lot when it comes to the subject:

- 1. The process needs to be revised – extensively.*
- 2. Bribery and corruption needs to end.*
- 3. We need better policing of the drivers who are on the roads.*
- 4. Transport operators need to focus more on driver training.*

I see (4) happening – although more training would obviously be great. I see very little happening when it comes to 1, 2 and 3.

I wish I knew something that you didn't – and that I could give you good news. Alas, I cannot. All that we can do is to lobby the authorities ... and then sit back and hope and pray.

I am sorry that I am not giving you more positive news! – ed.

SALACIOUS SALES FIGURES

Having recently moved from passenger cars to trucks, I'm scouting all avenues to familiarise myself with the trucking industry. Having "studied" your great magazine lately (dating back to 2013), I realised you report on the actual sales figures monthly.

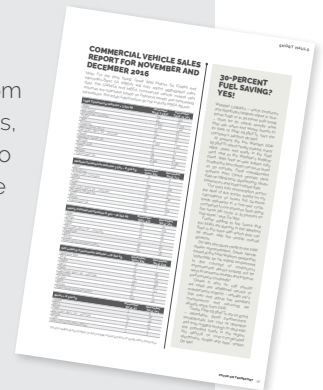
Please be so kind and send me the results for 2015 and 2016 (I do not have all the monthly copies).

Leon Potgieter
Dealer principal, UD Trucks NWT
Rustenburg

Hi Leon

Many thanks for your email and welcome to our wonderful industry! You can find all our back issues online: www.focusontransport.co.za/index.php/emag-issues.html

So, you will find all the sales figures there – plus a whole lot more too! – ed.





A test for the **INDUSTRY**

The number of participants, sponsors and supporters of Truck Test 2017 has increased dramatically over the last few weeks. We find out why it's important for them to be involved



With Truck Test 2017 just around the corner, the excitement is mounting. So, too, is the number of companies involved in this industry initiative!

HYUNDAI

Truck Test has never served solely as a test bed for vehicles off the showroom floor, but also for concepts that are not yet available to the market. This is why, in Truck Test 2017, Hyundai Commercial Vehicles has opted to run its Xcient 6x4 truck tractor – a vehicle currently under consideration for the local market.

Wade Griffin, director for commercial vehicles at Hyundai Automotive South Africa, explains: "Trucking is a competitive space in South Africa. We need to know that our truck can do the job in the South African market. This is the first time we're testing this truck

in South African conditions (it will also be tested by Imperial Logistics, Imperial Holdings being the parent company of Hyundai South Africa). The test will allow us to get some credible, real-world information."

Griffin is keeping mum about the exact spec of the vehicle, save to say that it'll haul an interlink trailer and will be representative of the most common vehicle combinations on the N3 route.

"Hyundai Motor Corporation has developed this truck for the world. Although South Africa is a small market with many competitors, the Koreans are excited about it and we'll look at the results with them and figure out our market entry and what specs would make the vehicle most competitive. We want to compete with the best," Griffin says.

DAF

Following its fantastic performance at Truck Test



2015, DAF will return in 2017 with the hopes of a repeat performance by its XF105.460 FTT.

"This model features hypoid axles and air suspension and we will be hauling the flat-deck tridem trailer," explains Wilna Steyn, CEO of Babcock Africa's Transport Solutions Division. "This vehicle was previously entered into the links category and returned the best results in that category. We want to further establish DAF as one of the top-performing trucks in the country by looking at a new category."

"This is the only independent truck test in South Africa where vehicles currently sold in the country are tested. It eliminates most variables that influence a truck's performance, placing everyone on an equal footing. This allows transport companies to make an assessment on a truck's performance without the biased views of the original equipment manufacturer.

"It allows us to prove that a DAF truck will give the transporter the best overall cost of ownership," Steyn says proudly.

N3TC

As it did during Truck Test 2012, the N3 Toll Concession (N3TC) is once again backing Truck Test. Of course, the test will be run on this most crucial South African transport route.

Con Roux, commercial manager at the N3TC, explains that the trucking industry is critically important to the N3. "The N3 is an economic arterial route linking Gauteng and the port in Durban. Trucks constitute 35 percent of traffic on our route," Roux says.

While the N3TC is sponsoring the tolls for the test, the Concession will also place a great emphasis on road safety; which must be a critical component of any campaign in which the Concession is involved.

"Despite accounting for about a third of traffic, trucks are involved in about half of all the collisions on the N3. One way to address this is by advancing our relationship with the trucking industry to create greater awareness about the N3TC and its roles and responsibilities," Roux explains.

QUANTUM CONCEPT

A new sponsor in Truck Test is corporate gifts and clothing supplier Quantum Concept. The company will supply all the mandatory reflective jackets – as well as some Truck Test 2017 caps – which will be worn by the drivers, co-drivers and support staff.

"With more than a decade of experience in marketing, promotional items and gifting, Quantum Concept knows that customers value efficient service, personal attention and the right advice. We're not simply order takers..." explains Quantum Concept director, Geoffrey Campbell.

"Many companies are currently biting down hard as a result of the economic downturn, but their marketing and promotional endeavours don't have to take a back seat. Quantum Concept aims to enable companies' efforts by offering high-quality goods and services at competitive pricing." ➤



DAF hopes its XF105.460 will deliver a repeat performance of its 2015 results.



One of our key priorities is to promote items created and produced in South Africa and to support small, medium and micro enterprises," Campbell elaborates.

"Among the range of products that Quantum Concept supplies is personal protective equipment, which is why we jumped at the chance to supply Truck Test 2017 with its own, uniquely branded high-vis jackets, as well as some caps to match," says Campbell.



ABOVE: Besides sponsoring the tolls for Truck Test 2017, the N3TC will use the opportunity to promote road safety on the route.

BPW AXLES

Although, in this year's test, no axles made by BPW Axles will be fitted to the trailers (as they were in 2015), Andre Cilliers, MD, BPW Axles, explains that the company's presence is, nonetheless, important.

"We are a systems and mobility partner to transport fleets. This means that, as a systems partner, apart from just axles and suspension, we can also support our customers with a whole range of ancillary products and services.

"At the same time, as a mobility partner, the transport operator has piece of mind with superior product support through widespread availability of spare parts, excellent training courses on maintenance,

and an extended warranty period of three years for on-road use," he says.

Cilliers explains that BPW customers will have access to some exciting new product ideas during the course of this year. These will include:

- In June: A clamped (as opposed to welded) spring seat assembly for the Ecoplus 3 range of axles, which will lead to significant weight savings.
- In the second quarter: An upgraded warranty, extending the current three-year term even further for specific conditions.
- In the fourth quarter: An upgraded Airlight 2 (AL2) air suspension, capable of axle loads from nine to 12 t per axle, which means the current heavy-duty SL suspension would be reserved only for extreme off-road conditions. This will mean the lighter AL2 suspension could also be fitted to vehicles such as side tippers, again leading to significant weight saving.

VAN WETTENS

"The annual Truck Test is growing from strength to strength each year and provides invaluable information back to the trucking community. Van Wettens identified Truck Test as an event in which we wanted to participate," explains Morne Fourie, group tactical manager, Van Wettens Breakdown Towing Services.

"Unforeseen accidents do occur, so why not have the best in the business at the event?" he adds with a smile.

"Van Wettens is celebrating its 50th year in business," says Fourie. "The company has built up a base of reputable sub-contractors throughout the country to offer better towing solutions. It has grown from strength to strength and would like to continue to offer the industry cost-effective towing services.

"Involvement in Truck Test 2017 will allow us to assess valuable information on future purchases and to be associated with the best in the business," Fourie concludes.

LOADTECH

Following on from its association with Truck Test in 2015, Loadtech is again partnering with the event.

"As a leader in the supply of on-board weighing



equipment, Loadtech is continually developing new and better products to meet the requirements of the trucking industry. Truck Test is the ideal platform for us to show the intrinsic benefits of our products," says MD John Harrison.

This year, Loadtech will showcase new wireless technology used in its OnBoard Weighing systems. "Wireless technology allows us to reduce the cost and long-term maintenance of the system, and we expect it to be adopted by a much wider user base," Harrison says.

ELF TRANS

Even transport operators are getting in on the action surrounding Truck Test 2017. Andre Diedericks, MD at



ABOVE: The Loadtech OnBoard weighing system now operates wirelessly.

LEFT: The Wabco team helps distribute refreshments at Truck Test 2015.



dry-bulk haulier Elf Trans, says: "We use DAF trucks in our fleet and this brand returned the best results in 2015, so we are excited to see what results DAF will return in 2017.

"Elf Trans will be watching the performance of the participants in Truck Test 2017 closely and will use the fuel consumption standards set in this test as a benchmark for its own fleet," Diedericks comments.

WABCO

Enoch Silcock, MD, Wabco Automotive South Africa, says: "The company is supporting Truck Test 2017 because most of the vehicles in Truck Test 2017 will

have some Wabco vehicle control-system components installed, if not perhaps the entire brake system."

"Wabco is a company that believes in constantly striving to improve performance and therefore we want to stand beside the participating brands in Truck Test 2017.

"Wabco Automotive SA is fully committed to offering the fleet operator, trailer builder and independent distributor the very best in technical support, information and training. This will ensure that our products provide the ultimate in safety, reliability and braking efficiency with a low cost of ownership," Silcock says. **F**



Fuelling the trucks of the **FUTURE**



For the fifth consecutive event, Engen is continuing its fuel sponsorship of the Truck Test. Mike Stead, commercial sales manager at Engen, explains why the company remains committed to this initiative

Engen, as the leading fuel supplier to the transport sector, has numerous strategically located truck stops throughout South Africa that cater specifically for trucks and drivers. It also offers rewards to regular customers through its Engen Truck Stop Loyalty Plus programme. "The trucking industry is an important and key focus sector for Engen," explains Stead.

"We have the largest refuelling network of Truck Stop and retail One Stop outlets with Dynamic Diesel available around the clock. Engen Truck Stop offers long-distance drivers a break with specially designed amenities. Drivers are also encouraged to join the loyalty programme. The Roadside Wellness Clinic,

with on-site medical facilities, is also available to all truck drivers at selected Engen Truck Stops," says Stead.

Engen has been a proud sponsor of the Truck Test since the event's inception. "Since 2012, Engen has sponsored all the Dynamic Diesel used by the truck manufacturers during the various Truck Tests. These events are always eagerly anticipated by the industry," Stead comments.

"Our involvement provides the opportunity to strengthen our relationships with various original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), while allowing them to showcase their technology," he notes.

"Transporters value this initiative, since this provides them with extensive insight for optimum fleet



ABOVE: Mike Stead, commercial sales manager at Engen, says the Truck Test is an opportunity to build and maintain relationships with original equipment manufacturers.

LEFT: Vehicles arrive at the Engen Lebombo One Stop during Truck Test 2015.

selections," Stead says.

Engen will once again be sponsoring all the Engen Dynamic 50 ppm diesel used in the event. "Truck Test gives Engen the opportunity to promote its Dynamic Diesel 50 ppm technology and quality. It makes sense for us to sponsor the diesel," Stead comments.

"Engen Dynamic Diesel 50 ppm is formulated with additive fuel technology that has the potential to maintain all diesel engines at their peak design conditions. The multifunctional detergent additive package in Engen Dynamic Diesel contains a combination of deposit-control chemistries that restore and maintain power.

"Engen Dynamic Diesel 50 ppm also contains anti-foam components, which reduce the tendency of foaming usually associated with standard diesel, and provides for spill-free, cleaner, faster and more-efficient refuelling, keeping the vehicles and equipment working for longer periods. We want all

trucks to perform at their peak by refuelling with our best technology," explains Stead.

"Engen has the technical experience to provide transporters with across-the-board solutions. Our Engen Diesel Club (EDC) card and E-fuel cordless tag system provide convenient, cashless refuelling at Engen's network of truck stops and service stations. This holistic fuel-management and control solution has been specially designed to make refuelling simpler, more convenient and more cost effective," he notes.

"At our Truck Stops and One Stops we also offer a range of high-performance lubricants that are purpose-suited for the transport industry. We also stock AdBlue under the trade name of Air1 for truck technology that requires emission fluids. We have seen phenomenal growth in the use of emission fluids as more and more Euro-5 and Euro-6 vehicles are released locally," Stead explains.

This year, Truck Test will be a one-day event taking place on March 29. In previous years it was up to a three-day event. "We have already started planning and allocating the necessary resources to make this event a success," says Stead.

"We believe that it is important that we demonstrate our commitment as a major player in this sector. Truck Test will, therefore, remain a priority for us in the long term," Stead concludes. **F**



At last! Some **POSITIVITY!**

Despite concerns about the future of the Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, his annual budget speech for 2017 was remarkably upbeat. GAVIN MYERS reports

Gordhan was never going to have it easy in the lead-up to the 2017 budget, but it appears as though he managed what is essentially a juggling act. As Azar Jamine, CEO and chief economist at Econometrix, points out: "On the one hand, the political pressures for 'radical economic transformation' and the notion of state capture have threatened the treasury. And, on the other hand, there are the ratings agencies to consider."

"However, the most positive aspect of this budget is that it was the first time in several years that Treasury was not obliged to reduce its economic growth forecast or revenue collections. There are also encouraging factors boosting economic growth," he adds.

"Government has been able to sustain fiscal discipline and stick to its programme of reducing budget deficits over time, and, in that way, cap the

rising trend of public debt; which should be well received by the ratings agencies," Jamine comments.

Of course, by now, it is known that the increased tax burden to provide additional revenue of R28 billion will fall to the wealthy; with the introduction of a new super tax bracket of 45 percent. Furthermore, the fuel levy will bring in R3,2 billion more than what would've been received from inflation alone. In real terms, if inflation rises to just over six percent, then overall tax revenue is set to rise by 10,5 percent.

Jamine says he was encouraged by the fact that Gordhan allocated two thirds of the budget to social development "and not fancy projects", as well as by the fact that there has been some improvement in the management of state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

"There wasn't anything in the budget to make one think that structural reforms are coming to lift the economic growth point way beyond two percent per annum, but there was continuous emphasis

on some of the economy's structural weaknesses that do need to be overcome, such as: education, the need to improve the competitive nature of South Africa's economy and encourage small business activity (to which R3,9 billion was allocated). South Africa's labour-relation tensions also need to be defused, however, and we need to improve the relationship between the private and public sectors," Jamine notes.

According to Jamine, there are still certain things that have to happen to ensure a much rosier picture. "A key requirement is to tame public debt (currently at R2,2 trillion), and it is vital to improve the running of SOEs – R475 billion in guarantees by government to SOEs is outstanding. If parastatals were to go belly up, public debt would rise by a further 20 percent.

"There is a positive development, however. Return on equity of SOEs turned positive in 2016, and the ratio of liabilities to assets of SOEs is decreasing.

"In the long term we will need to lift our growth rate significantly; the budget deficit, at 3,1 percent, is still higher than the expected 1,5 percent economic growth rate in the year ahead."

Encouragingly, says Jamine, government has succeeded in sustaining the downward trend in its budget deficit ratio to gross domestic product. "For first time in six years, tax revenue will overtake non-interest expenditure – we're no longer chasing after our own tails," he smiles. Furthermore, the highest allocation in expenditure is set to debt servicing costs, which will rise by 10,5 percent per year.

Regarding the rand, Jamine says it is still a fairly competitive currency, which creates a wonderful environment for exporters.

"Don't get totally hung up on this budget alone, the other important driver that should not be underestimated is the global economy. There is an incredible correlation between that and South Africa's economic growth rate; both are projected to improve over the next few years.

"We must be grateful that we (currently) have a treasury that is holding the fort, and we should be confident that the economy is not going down the tubes. In the short term, there will be at least some marginal improvement," he concludes. **F**

"This article was based on a presentation by Jamine at the 2017 Budget Review Breakfast, hosted by Econometrix and Grant Thornton.

WHAT DOES INDUSTRY SAY?

The Automobile Association (AA) has commented on an additional 30 cents per litre to be added to the general fuel levy, and an additional nine cents per litre to be added to the Road Accident Fund (RAF) levy, saying that this "is cause for great concern". The levies come into effect on April 1.

"For every litre of petrol, motorists will pay paying R4,78, or 35 percent, on indirect taxes. South Africans, who are already buckling because of the weak economy, will now have to dig even deeper into their pockets, at a time when many are questioning government spending," the AA says.

"Motorists remain easy targets for revenue collection. These levy increases are particularly prejudicial to motorists, especially in the context of a lack of proper, reliable public transport.

"These increases will not only impact on transport costs – including bus and taxi fares – but are also putting inflationary pressure on other commodities that rely on road transport to be delivered across the country," the AA notes.

"We have long called for a portion of the fuel levy to be ring-fenced and used for projects such as Gauteng's tolled roads. Instead, motorists must pay extra taxes for the use of the roads. The Association believes the time is right for a review of the fuel and RAF levies."

Meanwhile, the National Association of Automotive Component and Allied Manufacturers (Naacam) has commended Minister Gordhan on the delivery of the 2017 budget, under what is still a very challenging economic environment.

"There is a concern that the higher tax implications for consumers may negatively impact demand for higher-end consumer products (such as motor vehicles) at a time when the domestic vehicle sales sector is not strong. This could impact on component manufacturers that supply vehicles built for the South African domestic market," Naacam says.

"However, on a macro level it is reassuring to note a continued focus on industrial growth. The R9,6-billion medium-term allocation for manufacturing incentives, coupled with the R4,2-billion industrial park and special economic zone spending continues a trend of spending on productive investment.

"Similarly, the R95-million allocation to a Steel Development Fund, intended to improve the competitiveness of foundries and steel fabricators, is cognisant of the support needed in one of the manufacturing sub-sectors, which has experienced significant decline in the recent past," Naacam notes.

GETTING FLEETS BY

in 2017

With both fixed and variable operating costs increasing throughout 2016, ANLERIE DE WET explores how fleet managers can make the most of their vehicle finance and insurance in 2017



Operating costs increase every year, but fleet managers and owners need to continuously think of ways to keep their trucks running without cutting corners that could cost lives and loads. Martin Dammann, director at TruckScience, says the composition of fleet operating costs hasn't changed much over the last year, and that, overall, the costs increased by about five percent.

He says minor changes in the composition of operating costs can be attributed mainly to the increased price of vehicles and vehicle parts, which went up by between ten and 15 percent. This has influenced the minor increase in percentage (one percent) of vehicle finance within the operating costs to 21 percent.

Sid Beeton, divisional transport manager at ONE Insurance, agrees that the high inflation rate on new parts – which are mainly imported and therefore

subject to rapid devaluation – is one of the biggest contributors to the overall increase in operating costs.

"Extended truck warranties on new vehicles also impact on claims outlay for repairs, as we cannot achieve cost savings for alternative and second-hand parts. The large pool of uninsured motorists on our roads also means that recovery of costs from the guilty party in an accident is hard to achieve, so this opportunity to recover accident outlay is severely restricted," Beeton says.

"Increased traffic flows and deteriorating road surfaces also contribute to an increase in road accidents," he adds.

Dammann says: "Along with price increases of vehicles and parts, interest rates have gone up by about 1.2 percent, while costs for maintenance, tolls, crew and insurance are up by 7.03 percent."

He says although the fuel price went down for a while, it came back up again. The same applies to



tyres, as they are linked to the fuel price. Compared to operating costs in 2016, the percentage spent on fuel has gone down by three percent and should comprise only 40 percent of the overall operating costs in 2017.

Dammann gives the operating cost estimate per annum for the MAN TGS 26.480 6x4 BLS (D26) (LX) as an example of what can be expected from the five-percent increase in the overall rate of operating costs. If the MAN TGS travels 144 000 km per annum, carrying 8 880 t, its total operating costs can amount to R2,5 million.

With these increases, Beeton advises fleet managers and operators to "buy into technology". "As ONE Insurance, we enter into partnerships with our transport clients by encouraging retention of risk for predictable losses, and subsidising their spend on risk management tools – such as on-board camera installations, tracking and load-recovery devices, driver training and a full bureau of services for driver monitoring and other such initiatives," says Beeton.

He says that ONE Insurance is expecting some developments in 2017 that may create an increase

in operating costs in terms of vehicle finance and insurance. "The threat of a downgrade by rating agencies and the volatile political landscape could spike a downward trend on the rand, which could have far-reaching consequences in terms of the price of repairs in the trucking industry," says Beeton.

He notes that although local sales and repairs will be negatively affected, the weak rand could allow manufacturers and owners to sell second-hand trucks to other African and Asian countries that still use Euro-3 emission standards. He also advises fleet managers and truck owners to prepare themselves to cover costs if a change in insurance regulations increases running costs.

Beeton says: "In the insurance industry itself there are a number of regulatory changes, due to be introduced in 2017, which will increase costs for brokers and insurers. As a consequence, insurers may be exposed to greater capital costs – which may result in them passing on these costs to insured clients."

Truck operators are advised to prepare, plan and be ready for the year ahead to make sure that they can keep their trucks running in 2017. **F**

Topical TYRE NEWS

The year has started with a bang for South Africa's major truck-tyre manufacturers

BRIDGESTONE

Bridgestone South Africa is growing its truck and bus radial (TBR) offering, as well as its trailer range of tyres, with two recent additions.

The company's Firestone FS404 range of heavy-duty TBR tyres receives a 12 R22.5 size to complement the existing 315/80 R22.5 sizing; opening the FS404 to a wider market.

The FS404 is optimised for duty on steer, drive and trailer axles, and is able to deliver exceptional mileage and durability in its original life, and also further once it has been retreaded.

"Bridgestone is currently the only tyre maker to manufacture TBRs in South Africa," explains Tony Burns, Bridgestone Commercial general manager marketing. "The company performs ongoing research to optimise the manufacture of tyres that perform better in South Africa's demanding operating conditions, which include wide temperature ranges and challenging road surfaces," he adds.

Some of the main contributors to the FS404's wear resistance are equaliser ribs in the tread pattern that reduce the effects of irregular wear, and stone ejectors that give greater resistance against stone trapping, reducing damage to the tread surface and steel belt package.

Bridgestone's TBRs are distributed through Bridgestone Commercial South Africa, which provides numerous services including tyre management and monitoring systems.

"A tyre like the FS404 will spend its initial service life on the steering or drive axles. It will then be moved to a trailer, or kept on a drive axle once retreaded," Burns says.



The company has also announced the introduction of a new heavy-duty vehicle tyre designed especially for trailers and semi-trailers: the Firestone FT505 Trailer-only General Use Tyre, which has been optimised to provide a low cost per kilometre on free-rolling axles on trailers.

"Our key areas of focus with the FT505 have been extending tyre life, reducing irregular wear and providing a self-cleaning action to ensure good road contact," says Burns. "Trailer tyres must continue to provide good lateral stability and economical service across a very broad set of operating weights and speeds, and the FT505 has been engineered to meet those goals," he adds.

Available in 315/80 R22.5, the FT505 has a maximum per-tyre load of 3 750 kg at an 850 kpa inflation pressure in the single role, and 3 350 kg at 825 kpa in the dual role.

"In initial comparative tests performed by Bridgestone against popular imported competitor tyres, the FT505 achieved a ten-percent longer tyre life. Preliminary data from the tests indicate that the tyre will have covered 270 000 km by the time the tread wears to four millimetres.

Bridgestone remains the only tyre maker to manufacture truck and bus radials locally.

CONTINENTAL

Continental Tyre South Africa (CTSA) has had a busy start to 2017. The company has celebrated 70 years of operations in South Africa, appointed a new non-executive director, and, has been named the 2017 International Tire Manufacturer of the Year by *Tire Technology International*.



Officially registered in January 1947 as the General Tire and Rubber Company South Africa, the local operation was acquired by Continental AG in 1998 and renamed Continental Tyre South Africa.

"Over the past seven decades, the company has expanded significantly, meeting the growing demand for Continental and General Tyre-branded products in the crucial original equipment and replacement tyre sectors," says Shaun Uys, MD of CTSA.

One does not grow such a reputation without advancement, and in the past five years CTSA has invested almost R1 billion in technology and tooling at its Port Elizabeth plant. This has enabled it to improve environmental sustainability by lowering its CO₂ emissions, cutting back on energy and water consumption and reducing the amount of waste generated.

"As we develop and grow our business, it's essential that we embrace and actively pursue the overriding concept of sustainability and effective corporate governance for the company, our employees, the communities in which we are active and the South African economy in general," Uys says.

GOODYEAR

Goodyear South Africa held its annual Group Conference at the Boardwalk Hotel in Port Elizabeth, in February. In line with this year's conference theme:

Building Together, teams had to plan, design and paint building blocks for children in the Nelson Mandela Bay community.

"Goodyear is committed to growing in South Africa and therefore believes in contributing meaningfully towards the social development of communities close to our operations. We believe these building blocks will contribute towards the children's early childhood development, which is recognised as one of the most powerful tools for breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty in South Africa," says Goodyear MD, Jean-Jacques Wiroth.

Goodyear South Africa is one of the Top 50 companies in Nelson Mandela Bay, and has been recognised by the municipality as a Top Employer and Long Standing Investor in the region.

Internationally, too, Goodyear has been recognised as the world's most admired tyre maker by *Fortune* magazine.

Among companies in the Motor Vehicle Parts category in the magazine's World's Most Admired Companies, Goodyear was also the top ranked United States-based company and ranked second overall. In the Motor Vehicle Parts category, Goodyear was ranked second in six of the nine key attributes measured, and third in three others.

Goodyear finished ahead of its key global tyre competitors in the overall score and in seven of the nine categories. **F**



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**PUTTING TRUCKS TO
THE TEST SINCE 1994**

**STILL BRINGING YOU THE
NUMBERS THAT MATTER**



Retreading is **RECYCLING**

Retreading of tyres is a common practice in the trucking industry worldwide. What are the benefits and how do consumers know that they are fitting a quality product? GAVIN MYERS finds out from Monal Naik, marketing manager of Bandag South Africa

South Africa has a waste-tyre problem. The Retail Motor Industry (RMI) Organisation claims that approximately ten million tyres are sold in South Africa each year – all of which will eventually become waste. By its very nature, retreading commercial-vehicle tyres conforms to the “reduce, reuse, recycle” principle of waste minimisation; thus helping in a small way to reduce the waste-tyre problem.

“For every casing that is retreaded, one less new tyre is used and one less tyre is added to the growing scrap heap. Beginning with a premium new tyre could yield more than one retread life, and so the above benefit is multiplied. In this way, fleet operators are able to amortise their investment in new tyres over multiple lives – the environmental and financial benefits are significant enough to invest in a proper retreading policy,” Naik explains.

Retreading a premium casing, he adds, has shown to be more beneficial in the long run than replacing the tyre with a cheaper, imported alternative. “Our data shows that, while the initial cost saving of cheap new tyres might look attractive, the long-term outlook is quite the opposite. Since retreads cost a fraction of a new tyre, investing in a premium new tyre that could deliver multiple retread lives is a sure way to optimise a cost-per-kilometre benefit,” Naik says.

Whether retreaded or new, tyres are an investment that needs to be looked after. It’s for this reason that not any old tyre can be retreaded.

Before a tyre is retreaded, the casing is inspected

according to strict qualifying criteria. Naik says that Bandag technicians will reject a casing if it has severe bead damage or multiple repairs that overlap. Tyres that have become fatigued do not get retreaded. Furthermore, he explains, Bandag technicians use an ECI Machine to detect any missed nail holes.

“Any casing needing major repairs, those with chemical contamination, run flats and those that have been re-belted are not retreaded through the Bandag process. Safety is a non-negotiable factor in the Bandag end product,” Naik reiterates.

Casings that qualify for retreading are prepared for the application of a new tread and then cured in a chamber. “Bandag uses a lower curing temperature than most other retreaders to maintain the integrity of the casing,” Naik says. Final inspection is part of the quality-control process and every retreaded tyre goes through this process.

Companies, such as Bandag, conduct regular audits on its franchisees that conform to its global manufacturing standards. “These audits look into all aspects of the Bandag retreading process including the manufacturing, environmental and quality aspects,” Naik explains. Bandag also adheres to ISO standards in its own manufacturing facility.

“Fleets need to benchmark and make informed decisions on the right product for their specific needs,” Naik explains. There’s no doubt that using retreaded tyres can meet many needs – including reduced costs and lowering the environmental impact of waste tyres and the carbon footprint of fleets. **F**

Parade of EXCELLENCE



The relationship between a transport operator and its client is one that can never be taken for granted. They both need to speak the same language ... and occasionally indulge in some loud, proud vehicle branding

Dry-bulk haulier, Elf Trans, has for the last ten years had exactly this relationship with its client Lafarge South Africa. Now, a new long-term contract between them – for the countrywide distribution of bulk ash and cement – has signalled the time for celebration.

And that's exactly what the two parties did – with a reveal parade of some newly branded vehicles at the Lafarge head office in Johannesburg.

However, some eye-catching vehicle branding alone does not create a good working relationship, as André Diedericks, Elf Trans MD, and Dirk Odendaal, industrial sales head, Lafarge South Africa, explain.

"We look for integrity. We want a transport partner that can represent the Lafarge brand in the market, and that we can rely on to go into the customer's space and represent Lafarge South Africa and Ash Resources as a business, and leave the customer with an exceeded expectation," says Odendaal.

Diedericks can attest to this. His fleet of 60 Lafarge-dedicated vehicles has covered more than 66-million kilometres over the last ten years.

"Elf Trans takes pride in its hands-on approach to client partnerships. Our aim is to be the most competitive and productive haulier. We continuously work on educating and improving ourselves to be the best in our class.

"To be a dynamic organisation, Elf Trans applies both reason and instinct to decision-making. Elf Trans wants to create synergies with its clients, particularly providing services and resources in the market that allow it to excel. The company will invest in individual elements of the supply chain to create business solutions for Lafarge South Africa where required," Diedericks says.

Elf Trans has numerous core competencies which

include: a well-managed fleet with continuous driver training that ensures fuel consumption of 2,21 km/l, and safety, both on the road and in everything undertaken by its people.

"Every person that comes to work in our company must go home, and everything with which they come into contact must also be safe. It's about the whole circle around the Elf Trans trucks and its drivers," says Diedericks.



"We are also embarking on learnership programmes to get young talent, especially women, into trucking. We regard this relationship with Lafarge as ongoing. In order to fulfil it in the long term we need to train people up and get them the experience they need behind the wheel," he adds.

Odendaal agrees fully. "Lafarge is committed to transformation. The fact that Elf Trans is going to run this programme and focus on women drivers is in line with what we expect from our suppliers. Truck driving is not known for female drivers, so it's a good step in that direction."

In a relationship that is never taken for granted, Elf Trans and Lafarge South Africa are clearly speaking the same language. Here's looking forward to the next vehicle parade which will reinforce just that. **F**

SCANIA TURNING SOUTH AFRICA GREEN

Scania Southern Africa is committed to assisting customers and government departments when it comes to the importance of environmental stewardship. It's also working towards the establishment of long-term biofuel suppliers

Mark Templeton, key accounts manager for alternative fuels at Scania South Africa, says that Sweden (Scania's home country) is buying waste from other countries to meet requirements to generate biogas for various sustainable projects across the country.

"We are taking the sustainable philosophy of Scania Sweden and adapting and reshaping it to suit the South African environment, thus forming the core backbone of our sustainable strategy for southern Africa," says Templeton.



He adds that sustainability must work efficiently to make economic sense. The company is, therefore, developing biofuel solutions that meet the global carbon-reduction objectives. It is doing this using the latest Scania engine technology, which meets and exceeds its customers' financial performance requirements, thus complying with their objectives of profitability, availability and achieving sustainability targets.

Scania South Africa is currently at the final stage of market analysis, and the company has already entered into the necessary dialogue with municipalities, fleets and key customers around various biofuel solutions.

Furthermore, to help establish and develop the local supplier base and create jobs, the company has aligned projects with various universities, thus keeping the skills within the country.

"We are looking at various biofuel solutions for the local and southern African market. The biofuel options currently being offered by Scania are: ethanol, biogas, compressed natural gas (CNG)/liquefied natural gas (LNG), biodiesel, and hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO)," says Templeton.

He adds that the distribution footprint of these products is still limited as CNG is currently available only in Gauteng and the northern Free State, with limited distribution in KwaZulu-Natal. This is expected to expand as biogas plants come on line from various sources including waste-water treatment plants and biodigestors.

Templeton notes that many municipalities have waste-water plants that can be used to generate biogas. "We are encouraging them to go the biogas route. We want to prove to them that it is sustainable and the bi-product can also be used successfully," he says.

Jonas Strömberg, sustainability director at Scania Group, says that out of all the markets in the world with which the company has to work, South Africa has the greatest potential to support biofuels.

"South Africa has so much organic material and waste from landfills that is not being utilised. We can take this and turn it into very clean, low-carbon fuels that can be sold at a lower cost than fossil fuels," says Strömberg.

Templeton says that Scania's Biogas/CNG Euro-6 engine solution is world class, while the new Euro-5 diesel engines can run on 100-percent biodiesel

BELOW: Carel van der Merwe, trainee key accounts manager of alternative fuels; Mark Templeton, key accounts manager of alternative fuels; Jonas Strömberg, sustainability director, and Urban Löfvenberg, sustainable solutions product manager of buses and coaches.



with a small added cost, and green diesel is ideal for Euro-5 and Euro-6 engines.

"Over the years, people will become more aware of the benefits of the various biofuel solutions. Accordingly, investments in local plants are likely to follow as demand increases," explains Templeton.

Natural gas emits between 50- and 60-percent less carbon dioxide (CO₂) and advanced biodiesel emits up to 90-percent less. "South Africa has some of the dirtiest air in Africa. It is, therefore, important for our health, environment and sustainability that we switch to alternative fuels," he adds.

The company has already introduced a CNG/biogas Euro-6 engine and biodiesel Euro-5 engines. It plans to bring more products into the country to prove that its biofuels solution works and is as economical in southern Africa as it is in Europe.

"We already have ten biogas buses running in Virginia in the Free State. These are doing very well. We also have a 100-percent biodiesel-powered waste compactor truck running in the Western Cape. This year, we will start introducing a lot more products into the country for fleet owners and major metro municipalities. These products will be suitable for bus rapid transit (BRT), inner-city buses, waste-collection and distribution trucks," Templeton concludes. **F**



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Drone technology **TAKES FLIGHT**

Drone technology is one of numerous technologies impacting the transport and logistics sector. MARISKA MORRIS looks at what is happening in this field

Amazon successfully delivered its first parcel by "air mail" on December 14, 2016. This was after it won approval from the British government to lift flying restrictions for drones. The company delivered an Amazon Fire TV and a bag of popcorn in 13 minutes from the moment of order. The drones are able to carry up to 2,27 kg and fly for up to 30 minutes.

While this is a big advancement in drone technology, Stefan Stroh, global leader of transport and logistics at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), argues that economic viability will be the determining factor in the future of drone delivery.

"In a metropolitan area where you have a driver who can deliver 20 packs in an hour, this is probably more effective than a drone that can transport only two to four kilograms, and has to fly back and forth all the time," Stroh says.

Using drones for parcel delivery might not be all that practical, but other areas, such as surveillance, maintenance and accessing hard-to-reach places, are ideal for the use of drones. United Parcel Service, along with Zipline, a robotics company, and Gavi,

a non-profit organisation, are delivering blood to remote parts of Rwanda.

The first successful delivery took place on October 14, 2016. Fixed-wing drones are used, which can make up to 150 deliveries per day.

Legislation on the use of drones will determine what technology is adopted. Stroh believes Poland is a good example of a country with well-defined, comprehensive drone legislation. "It is very clear that Poland is one of the key drivers for drone adoption," he says. South Africa also has very comprehensive drone legislation, which is currently being amended.

In South Africa, a company operating drones will need an air service licence (ASL) and a remote operator certificate (ROC) which can be obtained from the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA). The issuing of the ROC costs R3 710 with a R2 490 annual renewal fee.

Every additional aircraft registered on the ROC would add a yearly cost of R640. Companies need to have third-party liability worth a minimum of R500 000 per drone. Pilots manning the drone will need to obtain a remote pilot's licence (RPL). The



issuing of a RPL costs R500, as does renewal every second year.

These fees exclude administration, registration of the drone and other examination fees. Currently, there are numerous SACAA-approved flight schools that offer drone-pilot certification. The course has a theoretical and practical component. Taking this course at a flight school will cost around R22 850. A radio licence and English proficiency exam is also required.

"The theory instruction covers drone-related information such as batteries, data links and components – as well as aviation-related information such as navigation, flight planning and aerodynamics – and a whole range of subjects that manned pilots also study in order to become accredited," explains Rick Bosman from Cranfield Aviation Training in Gauteng.

Students also need a Class-4 medical certificate from an aviation-accredited medical practitioner. "Practical instruction includes flight planning, radio communication, safety and basic flight," says Jacques Lourens from EasyUAV in Krugersdorp.

There are different ratings for certification according to aircraft and operation. "For example, standard rating is for a small craft (less than seven kilograms) flying no

Despite this comprehensive legislation and training, drone technology is still somewhat restricted. It is, for example, illegal to transport goods using drones in South Africa.

Special permission is also needed to operate over roads, buildings or people. Despite these restrictions, the use of drone technology continues to develop. "Drone technology as a form of delivery is still in the developmental stages," says Lourens.

"Drones are more commonly used as an added layer of security for high-value cargo. Another trend that is starting to pick up is the use of drones for inventory management. This is, however, also still in the development stage," he comments.

Melamed mentions the use of tethered drones for high-value cargo. "This is a drone that is connected directly to the vehicle and provides 'real time' view of the vehicle in motion. In South Africa, the company Fleet Protect has access to this technology," he says.

A leader in the use of drones in South Africa, RocketMine, which provides surveillance and data collection, has been promoting drone technology since last year.

"In 2016, we used our role to provide a more cost effective and safer means of conducting mining inspections, and to spread the word about drone applications in the mining, agricultural, construction, water and forestry industries," says Vera Khumalo, junior marketing and events manager at RocketMine.

"RocketMine is planning to position itself as the leader in survey and mapping applications in mining, and as a thought leader educating the African market on drone applications," Khumalo comments. With 11 pilots, RocketMine is open to collaborating with transport companies.

Stroh says: "The use of drones makes sense in maintenance of railway tracks. You don't always want someone with a car driving along to inspect the tracks." In 2015, drones were used to monitor railway tracks in New Mexico, United States (US). German railway operator Deutsche Bahn also used drones to help stop graffiti artists defacing the trains in 2013.

Khumalo agrees that drones can be useful in the railways. "There are a number of solutions that can help with passenger safety, emergency response, theft and inspections," she says.

Although drone technology continues to grow in popularity, she warns that drones will be limited by technical capabilities such as battery capacity and drone laws.

With the continued innovations, and an increase in demand for services using drones, there will also be a demand for policy makers to improve the laws applicable to drones. **F**

LEFT AND BELOW: Drones are proving their worth in an increasing array of applications.



more one kilometre away from the operator," he says.

Depending on the rating of the certification, different restrictions will apply. "Beyond visual line of sight is one of the forms of certification, for example," Bosman explains.

Pilots can also be certified according to the aircraft. "There are three possible certification ratings namely: multi-rotor, fixed-wing and helicopter," says Ian Melamed from ProWings Training in Bronkhorstspuit.



More efficient with better TECHNOLOGY

Supply chain management is changing faster than ever before! What does the future hold? MARISKA MORRIS asks PricewaterhouseCoopers's global leader of transport and logistics, Stefan Stroh, and head of transport and logistics for Africa, Andrew Shaw, to take a peek at their crystal balls

The transport and logistics sector is changing rapidly. Both Stroh and Shaw believe there are five big changes taking place. The first of these is a change in the demands of customers.

Customers now want to order and receive products on the same day, which is eroding the difference between business-to-consumer and business-to-business models. "Customers are used to specific service levels in their personal lives and they expect the same kind of delivery in business-to-business transactions," Stroh explains.

He doesn't believe the industry is prepared for this change. Stroh mentions the Adidas factory in Germany that is changing its manufacturing method – it now has a store where customers can design their own shoes. The specs are sent to the factory and the shoes are produced within one and a half hours and delivered to the customer's house on the same day.

There are also significant technological developments taking place in the supply chain management industry. Shaw says: "We've seen a significant amount of automation of robotics moving into that space. From fully automated warehouses to self-driving cars, utilising technology is increasingly important for logistics to remain competitive and efficient."

Stroh adds: "Even more importantly, I think that there is a huge push towards self-driving trucks. You will probably see these in the next three years."

When asked when South Africa will see self-driving trucks on the roads, Shaw explains that it comes down to economics.

"In Europe, there is a big drive for it to happen quite

quickly, because there is a shortage of truck drivers. In South Africa, the economics are different. You will probably find that it is still considerably cheaper to continue to use normal trucks with a driver," he says. "South Africa will probably be a late adopter, because it will take some time for the economics to favour the change."

Shaw notes that in South Africa technological changes are taking place more on the digital platform. New platforms are being developed that offer more data and improved transparency. The logistics industry is also considering innovations to improve its inventory handling and warehousing.

"This is the area of technology that companies have embraced more quickly – mainly because they often have to service quite complex sectors with relatively small amounts of inventory compared to some of the big global companies," Shaw explains.

There has also been a continuing growth in e-commerce. "We identified a 30-percent growth in e-commerce in the past year in South Africa," Shaw says. He explains that this is driving a new business model where logistics is key. "The ability to get a product to somebody's door very quickly is actually our competitive advantage," he says.

Drones are another important innovation. They are used in warehouses and recently Amazon launched a pilot project using drones in last-mile delivery. Shaw believes that the use of drones for deliveries might not be feasible, as a driver, who can deliver 20 parcels in an hour, will most likely be more effective than a drone that can only carry two or three kilograms.

The technology is available. "The question is simply, does it make economic sense?" Stroh asks. Instead of Amazon's last-mile delivery drone, Stroh believes

drones are more efficient when used for surveillance, or for delivery in hard-to-reach places. He gives the example of the German delivery firm DHL.

The company uses a "parcelcopter" to deliver pharmaceuticals and other goods to the North Sea, which is 12 km from the coast of Germany. There might be a market for this type of application in Africa. "I suppose there is a great opportunity in Africa to use drones where road transport is difficult, due to poor infrastructure," Shaw comments.

Drone technology might make Africa more appealing to South African logistics companies. Like South Africa, many countries in Africa have a reduced growth forecast. Local logistics companies are looking to other markets to achieve a greater return.

"Service delivery in Africa is difficult; the distances are long, the infrastructure is challenging and border posts can be unreliable and often do not provide required service," Shaw says.

The transport and logistics sector is also in flux. Stroh notes: "We see a continuous process of consolidation in this industry. Other industries have top players that command half or more of the industry. In trucking, 15 percent is commanded by the top five players worldwide. There is a huge fragmentation in the industry."

"Logistics companies will soon have no other

choice but to consolidate. Otherwise, they will not be able to invest in the automation and the technology deployments that will be required in the future," says Stroh. "The market has also changed with customers becoming competitors by in-sourcing logistics functions."

There are also new competitors emerging. "We see a huge advancement of pure tech companies that go to the logistics market by taking specific elements of the logistics value chain and disrupting them with technology," says Stroh, who adds that these companies are often more efficient than existing ones.

In order to stay ahead of the new developments, Stroh believes two main changes will happen within logistics companies. They will look into managing their portfolios and strive for operational excellence.

"It has been a very opportunistic business. In the future, these companies will make much more educated choices about which markets to support and in which sectors they want to do business," he says.

All this will make little difference, however, if companies aren't efficient. "If you want to compete in that market you have to be operationally excellent," Stroh comments, "You can digitise as much as you want to, but if you are not operationally excellent, it won't make a difference." **F**

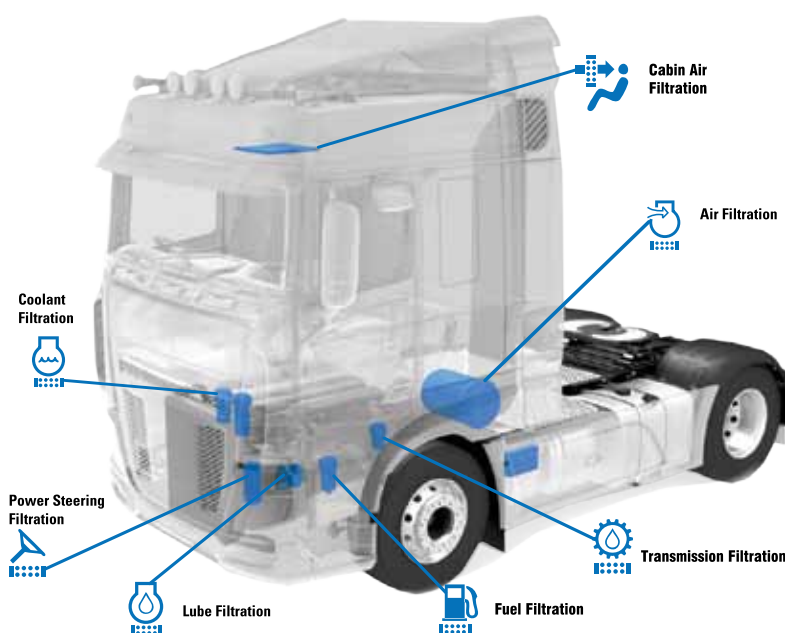
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have been set up all over Africa, and Sinotruk has already set up a very good network of dealerships, after-sales service stations and spare parts centres in Africa with more than 100 dealers, four knocked-down assembly plants, five spare parts centres, and numerous after-sales service stations.

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Mozambique	Maputo, Beira	Djibouti	Djibouti
Zimbabwe	Harare, Bulawayo	Nigeria	Kano, Kanduna, Lagos
Namibia	Windhoek	Cameroon	Douala
Botswana	Gaborone	Chad	N'Djamena
Mauritius	Port Louis	Benin	Cotonou
Madagascar	Tananarive	Niger	Niamey
Tanzania	Dar-es-Salaam	Ghana	Accra, Kumasi, Tema, Takoradi
Zambia	Lusaka, Kitwe	Cote d'Ivoire	Abidjan
Malawi	Lilongwe	Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou
Angola	Luanda	Liberia	Monrovia
Congo(R)	Brazzaville, Pointe Noire	Togo	Lome
Congo(D)	Kinshasa, Lubumbashi	Senegal	Dakar
Gabon	Libreville	Mali	Bamako
Kenya	Nairobi	Guinea(R)	Conakry
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ABOVE: In the Republic of Guinea, 55 mining tippers were delivered to one of the clients. In total, there are 1 500 Sinotruk trucks in service in Guinea.



ABOVE: In Angola, Sinotruk sells more than 2 000 trucks every year. In 2012, 1 000 truck tractors and 1 500 trailers were delivered for use in Angolan government projects.



ABOVE: In 2008, the Ethiopian government purchased 2 000 Sinotruk trucks. From 2010 to 2016, an average of 3 000 units per year were sold in the Ethiopian market. So far, Sinotruk accounts for 90 percent of the market in Ethiopia, with more than 30 000 units and a local assembly plant.

RIGHT: In Nigeria, a joint-venture company with the ability to produce 5 000 trucks annually has been established by Sinotruk and the Dangote group.





Return of an **OLD FRIEND**

After a virtual disappearance from the local market (despite still being on sale) over the last few years, the new Mitsubishi Triton is here ... and it's impressive! GAVIN MYERS drives it at the launch

It's difficult for any brand to re-enter its market segment after not having had a presence for so long. Mitsubishi Motors South Africa is aware that it will have to work hard to regain customers in the South African bakkie market with its new Triton. It's off to a very good start, however...

The new Triton has been engineered to meet the increasingly diverse needs of this segment – offering interior quality and comfort, versatility and durability, sophistication and economy. That's no easy feat ... so, how has Mitsubishi managed it?

In all, more than 185 improvements have been made over the new model's likeable predecessor.

To begin with, the new Triton will be available only in double-cab guise (more variants will be introduced in time), offering both 4x2 and 4x4 (electronically selectable, with diff-lock), as well as automatic (five speed) and manual (six-speed), drivetrains.

Only one engine is available – the company's 2,4-litre MIVEC four-cylinder turbodiesel engine. The need to wait for this motor to become available to the South African market was the reason for the new Triton's delayed local launch.

It's a great motor, though; smooth, refined and punchy with its 133 kW/430 Nm output. In fact, refinement is something the new Triton does very well ... it's surprisingly quiet and exceptionally stable at highway speeds, while its ride – that old Achilles heel

of the bakkie – is now up there with the best; even off the beaten track.

These improvements are thanks to a class-leading aerodynamic drag coefficient of 0,40 and suspension that has been improved by way of stiffer front springs and expanded stabilisers, finely tuned shock absorbers and the extension of the rear leaf springs. Another noticeable improvement is the quicker steering rack, tuned to just 3,8 turns lock-to-lock for a compact 5,9-m turning radius.



More than 185 improvements have been made over the new model's likeable predecessor.

In fact, once behind the steering wheel, you'll notice that the Triton's interior environment has been moved considerably upmarket. The seats and all touchpoints are leather covered, while a piano-black centre console finish frames the touch-screen infotainment system and dual-zone automatic climate control.

The Triton is definitely not short of features... Notable as standard are: electric driver-seat adjustment, dual

RIGHT: The new Triton impresses both off and on road. The wait has been long, but worth it.



front airbags, anti-lock brakes with a full suite of electronic braking and stability aids, keyless entry, a rear-view camera, and – interestingly on a bakkie – a rear-window demister.

A major plus point of the new Triton double cab is its interior space, which has been improved all round. Cab length, for example, has been increased by 20 mm while the rear bench has been reclined by 25°. Overall, Mitsubishi claims that the cab is more

than 30 cm longer than that of its rivals.

It seems then that the new Triton has all bases covered, but what about price? The range starts at R479 900 for the 2.4 Di-D 4x2 manual and ends at R559 900 for the 2.4 Di-D 4x4 auto. All models include a five-year/90 000 km service plan and three-year/100 000 km manufacturer's warranty.

Look out for a more detailed analysis in a future issue of **FOCUS!** **F**



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GIANENRICO GRIFFINI speaks to Dakar 2017 champion, Russian Eduard Nikolaev, from the Kamaz-master team, about the trials and tribulations of his road to the podium

Two Kamaz drivers on the podium in Buenos Aires and another Kamaz truck in fifth position in the final ranking... As it states on the Kamaz-master website, "The Blue Armada is back". Did you expect this result?

Last year was not a winning one for our team and we took only second place. We knew that the Kamaz-master team had won the Dakar several times, and our mixed-age team had brought the golden trophies to the motherland.

We wanted to thwart our competitors' attacks this year, thereby returning the Dakar gold to the team. In order to take the highest position, we prepared the vehicles ourselves.

Can you explain the main reasons for this performance? Is it as a result of the tests before the rally, the trucks, the team, the tactics and the strategy of your team manager Vladimir Chagin, or the reliable V8 Liebherr engines?

All of these factors are important, but, in addition, you have to have luck on your side. For example, last year we had bad luck throughout the race, I was constantly hindered, and I wasted time correcting my mistakes.

This Dakar, I realised that less wheels were

punctured, we weren't stuck as many times and we didn't have any serious technical problems. This all reflects our skills, our well-coordinated teamwork and the experience of our leader, but it also shows the undoubtedly significant role played by luck.

Was your team manager Chagin crucial to your team's success, even this year?

Chagin's role is simply colossal because he is our chief in all fields, including piloting and the production of our vehicles. We often see his vast personal experience shine through in his work: showing us how the marathoner should behave and live in everyday life.

You sometimes forget your humility once you've competed in the Dakar, won it, and come second and third a few times, and you start to think that you know everything, but someone like Chagin makes you realise there is still a lot to learn.

Can you tell us the story of your Dakar this year? Was it more difficult than last year's edition, due to the fact that, until the tenth stage, only a few minutes separated the first three drivers?

It was difficult to be in the leading position from the first stages. The spectators and our supporters want us to stay ahead from the beginning. However, one should



always remember that this is a marathon and the final result is what's important.

We didn't aim to lead from the first day, but it was hard to hold back. In sand, mud and difficult off-road tracks, where many competitors fail, one must drive wisely. We tried to be cool-headed, but this was not always easy, and on an especially difficult stage we lost 20 minutes on navigation.

In this situation, you realise that, as a driver, you are completely dependent on your co-driver, relying on their navigating skills. We struggled to find the road, but managed to pull ourselves together and get back on track, continuing despite the lost time.

In the second half of the race, when the gap between leaders was mere minutes, Chagin's guidelines and support helped us very much. I am very happy that we didn't disappoint him and that we fought fairly and won in the right way.

In which stage were you pretty sure that you had won the race?

That kind of confidence only comes when you drive through the last road section and the podium is five metres away – only then do you understand that the victory is really in front of you and your crew.

Can you describe your driving style? Are you aggressive, cool, or a tactician?

This year we were driving tactically and thoughtfully. Where it was needed we drove fast, and in other places we were careful.

Where do you feel at your best as a driver – on rocky stretches, soft desert sand, dunes, or narrow and windy routes?

We are strongest on the off-road sections and in mud, sand and "fesh-fesh", but, nevertheless, this year we also had good sections on fast roads.

Last year, we drove too slowly in the fast sections, and so we improved on it this year and upped our speed, which made a huge difference.

Can you outline the major steps in your career as a rally truck driver? Where and when did you start driving a rally truck?

My fate has always been to be involved in motor sport. My father was a Russian autocross champion, and he introduced me to karting. I took part in Russian competitions, and after one of them the chief of the Kamaz-master team, who at that time was Semen Yakubov, invited me to join the team.

Despite being an active, sporting child, rallying was like nothing else. At my first Dakar in 2006, when I was a mechanic, I lost 12kg. Every day we were stuck in sand and needed to dig out the vehicle. Later, one of the mechanics entrusted me with the steering wheel, to drive the truck home. My first race as a driver was in a Russian Championship, where we took second place.



BELOW: Truck 505 of the Kamaz-master team was Nikolaev's weapon.

RIGHT: A thumbs-up from the 2017 champion.



In the final press release, published on your website after the victory, it was said that to keep the Champion title, the team needed to work hard to develop a new bonneted truck. Why was this important?

This vehicle allows us to drive faster off-road, because we feel more comfortable than in a cab-over truck. We tested the bonneted truck on a Silk Way Rally, and saw the potential, but also saw that the truck is not nearly ready to take on the Dakar.

This year, we will work hard at it, as our end goal is for the truck to take part in both the Silk Way Rally and the Dakar Rally. **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.





A tool for **TRUMP'S SUCCESS**

The international media has cautioned the world to prepare for the “unknown” actions and decisions of the newly elected United States (US) President, Donald Trump, and his administration. However, the transport community seems to “know” what Trump holds in store for the sector. ANLERIE DE WET investigates

During Trump's election campaign he promised to create jobs and do so, in part, by improving the country's infrastructure – which he believed would strengthen the US economy. He spoke of spending US\$ 1 trillion (R13 trillion) to rebuild and fully modernise the country's decaying infrastructure, which, according to the Senate Budget Committee, would create 13-million jobs.

One of Trump's other key campaign promises was to prioritise his tax reform initiatives, which include reducing tax brackets from seven to three and reducing corporate tax rates from 35 to 15 percent.

With regard to foreign policy, Trump has vowed to rewrite the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to make “fair trade more fair to America”, and withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in order to keep business in the US.

Many vehicle parts are made in China and new policies may make attaining these parts much more expensive. However, Trump argues that the reason

behind his plan is to build manufacturing plants in the US to create jobs and to make the transport sector (one of the biggest in the country) more independent.

Trump believes that by cutting out China and making the US transport industry more self-sustainable, there would be a massive flow of goods circulating throughout the country. This could be more cost-effective for logistics companies, while providing faster delivery times and the opportunity for warehousing spaces to expand.

After Trump won the US election on November 3, 2016, the American Trucking Association (ATA) told *Logistics Magazine* that it had already started meeting with the new administration and was looking forward to working with Trump on array of issues that are challenging the trucking community.

“As the industry that moves nearly 70 percent of our nation's freight, it is a key economic driver, and we look forward to working with President-elect Trump on a host of issues, including long-term, sustainable infrastructure funding, tax reform and fair and free



LEFT: With US President Donald Trump now in office, the American transport industry is expecting changes.

trade," said ATA.

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) is also looking forward to working with the new administration, especially with regard to policy-making, according to Edward Hamberger, president and CEO of AAR.

"We hope Trump will move quickly on issues such as comprehensive tax reform that reduces the corporate rate, a review and reform of the broken

confidence increased from 90,6 index-points in June to 102,6 in December. However, this is an expected trend after US elections, according to the University of Michigan's 2016 final index of consumer sentiment report.

Although the US transport and logistics sector is mostly optimistic about the administration's policies, there are still some concerns. Professor Alan McKinnon, a transport and logistics specialist at the Kuehne Logistics University, says he attended two transportation conferences before Trump's inauguration and found the testimonies he heard alarming.

"I found it disconcerting to listen to senior officials from the transportation departments of several states explain how little they could say or do about climate change. The constraint is partly linguistic. One official explained how, in promoting transport initiatives to politicians and the public, they had to avoid using the words sustainability, environment and climate change," says McKinnon. "Another claimed that the only way to get carbon-reducing measures accepted in his state was to emphasise the 'co-benefits' such as fuel savings, better health and fewer accidents."

There are also some concerns about the effect of increased fuel tax on the sector, as state legislators approved an immediate increase in the fuel tax. For truckers, however, it has meant an increase in the price of diesel since the legislation came into effect on January 1.

Only time will tell if Trump will actually see his promises through. Although, when one looks at the pro-active way he has already made policy changes in line with his campaign promises, the US transport and logistics industry may well benefit tremendously by becoming the key tool to achieve his administrative goals. **F**



Although the US transport and logistics sector is mostly optimistic about the administration's policies, there are still some concerns.

regulatory system and an embracement of fair and open trade," said Hamberger in a statement. "These policies, as well as the steady presence of America's privately owned freight-rail network, are critical to enacting much of Trump's agenda, including public infrastructure investment."

The transport community also seems to be calmed by Trump's nomination of Elaine Chao, former Secretary of Labour under the most recent Bush administration and an experienced member of the shipping and logistics industry, on November 29. The US Senate voted her in as Secretary of Transportation on January 31 with an outright majority of 93 votes out of 99.

American consumers also seem to be excited about Trump's promised policy changes, as consumer

GLOBAL FOCUS NEWS

MAKING ELECTRIC MORE VERSATILE

It may only sell in small numbers on local shores, but in Europe the Peugeot Partner rocks!

According to Peugeot, its new Partner Tepee Electric is a van-based people carrier that offers comfort for five passengers with a generous, flexible interior, which has been developed for the growing clientele wanting to reconcile electric mobility with a multiplicity of everyday activities; whether personal, professional or both.

Set to be launched this March at the 2017 Geneva International Motor Show, the Partner Tepee Electric will join the existing Partner Electric Van.

Despite its electric-drive componentry, cargo volume is among the best in its category, with up to 1 350 litres with five passengers, and 3 000 litres with two passengers and the seats in the second row removed.

It has a certified range of 170 km, but for added peace of mind the new Peugeot Partner Tepee Electric offers features that can be remotely controlled from a smartphone or tablet; including the ability to see the battery charge, estimate the duration of the recharge, and program the heating or air-conditioning.

The new vehicle is also claimed to be about 30-percent less costly to run than an internal-combustion vehicle. Its traction battery is guaranteed for eight years or 100 000 km, and its electric power chain is guaranteed for five years or 50 000 km. Maintenance is due every two years, or 40 000 km after the first year.

Furthermore, the energy cost per kilometre of electric recharging is about four times less than that of fuel for an internal combustion vehicle.



GEAR UP FOR NACV

The inaugural North American Commercial Vehicle Show (NACV), taking place from September 25 to 28, is off to a cracking start and heading for a packed house.

Atlanta, Georgia, will be certainly abuzz with all things commercial vehicle during September, as, by the end of 2016, approximately 70 percent of the show's exhibition space had already been snapped up.

Some of the big names include: Daimler Trucks North America, Navistar, Volvo Trucks and Mack Trucks; trailer manufacturers include: Great Dane, Utility, Hyundai and Manac; while suppliers include: Continental, Meritor, Eaton, SAF Holland and DANA.



"The inaugural show is off to a very promising start," says president and CEO of Hannover Fairs United States of America, Larry Turner. "We expect to fully book all of the exhibition space, as the North American commercial vehicle industry has responded favourably to this dynamic new event and how we have positioned it to meet the industry's evolving needs."

All visitors to the biennial NACV Show will be able to explore the latest commercial vehicle products on display.



FORD PRIORITISES ELECTRIC

Ford has released details on seven of the 13 new global electric vehicles (EVs) it plans to introduce in the next five years. The brand's commercial vehicles feature prominently; including hybrid versions of the iconic F-150 pickup, and a plug-in hybrid Transit Custom van.

The moves are part of a US\$ 4.5-billion (R58,8 billion) investment in EVs by 2020, offering customers greater fuel efficiency, capability and power across Ford's global vehicle line-up.

The hybrid version of the best-selling F-150 pickup will be available by 2020 and sold in North America and the Middle East. The F-150 Hybrid, built at Ford's Dearborn Truck Plant, will offer powerful towing and payload capacity and operate as a mobile generator.

A Transit Custom plug-in hybrid will be made available in Europe in 2019. It is engineered to help reduce operating costs in even the most congested streets, the company says.

Ford begins testing its new generation of EV technology this year. In Europe, the company intends to put the Transit Custom plug-in hybrid on the road, along with a new set of mobility services, telematics and connectivity solutions.

In addition, Ford is testing a fleet of 20 Transit Connect hybrid taxi and van prototypes in some of the world's most demanding traffic conditions in several major American cities. These build on the success of the world's first hybrid taxi – the Ford Escape Hybrid.

"Ford's global EV strategy is to build on our strengths," says Raj Nair, executive vice president, product development, and chief technical officer. "This means more capability for trucks and more productivity for commercial vehicles – plus improved fuel economy."



TOMORROW'S TRUCKS, TODAY

The Mercedes-Benz Urban eTruck made its debut last year, and the first (low-volume) production vehicles are about to be delivered to their new custodians.

The company is bringing the world's first all-electric, heavy-duty truck to market in a small series, with 20 potential German customers involved in the disposal, food and beverage and logistics sectors set to take delivery and pave the way towards series production by 2020.

"It will be used in real transportation applications. The aim is to use actual application scenarios and requirement profiles together with feedback from the customers, to further optimise the vehicle concept and the system configurations of the electric truck. The tests will include use in shift operation, charging times as well as battery and range management," says Stefan Buchner, head of Mercedes-Benz Trucks worldwide.

Both 18- and 25-t models will be equipped with a refrigerated body, as a dry box body and as a platform vehicle. Together with a special charger, which takes into account the increased demands on a truck, the vehicles will be handed over to the customers to use for a period of 12 months.

They will be supported by the Mercedes-Benz Trucks road-testing department. During this time, the use profiles and areas of application will be recorded and compared to the expected performance of the vehicles.

KIND OF A BIG DEAL

Iveco has signed an agreement with the Lannutti Group for 610 New Stralis XP and NP trucks.

International transport and logistics operators work on a different level to those in South Africa. Take this deal, for instance...

Established more than 50 years ago, the Lannutti Group has an ambition to source the most innovative green technologies and, in partnership with Iveco, has opted for "the most fuel-efficient truck available on the European market" – the Stralis XP – as well as "the first natural-gas truck suitable for long-distance missions" – the Stralis NP.

The Stralis XP is fitted with the Iveco Cursor 11 engines, which vary from 343 to 358 kW (460 to 480 hp). These specific model types were chosen by the Lannutti Group for their ability to reduce fuel consumption and maximise payload.

The New Stralis NP model will also be supplied. It is equipped with an Iveco Cursor 9 engine with a dual liquefied natural gas tank, which guarantees a fuel range of up to 1 500 km!

"This is one of the most important European agreements in terms of vehicle numbers – 610 New Stralis in the XP and NP versions, both of which are winning solutions for sustainable transport," comments Pierre Lahutte, Iveco brand president.





AN OUTSTANDING REPUTATION

Daimler commercial vehicle brands once again secured first place in five categories at the Image Awards 2017, hosted by freight forwarding, transport and logistics magazine *VerkehrsRundschau*.

This was the fourth time in a row that the Mercedes-Benz brand has been honoured with the Image Awards for Trucks and Vans, while it also won in the categories of Telematics, Rental/Leasing and Fuel Cards.

The Image Awards honour the activities of the company to offer the best commercial vehicles and services in the areas of efficiency, safety and networking. Mercedes-Benz has excelled in all these categories...

Its Actros, for example, achieves up to six-percent fuel savings with the latest efficiency package. When it comes to safety, Mercedes-Benz is the first provider to offer the Sideguard Assist and the new Active Brake Assist 4 with pedestrian detection.

Furthermore, with telematics-based internet services, Daimler FleetBoard supports fleet operators of commercial vehicles to manage their vehicles more economically. In practice, this translates into fuel savings of up to 15 percent and optimised vehicle and trip utilisation, says the company.

What is the result? Yet another award and Daimler's services also having been deemed "top class" according to the 500 surveyed logistics decision-makers from German industrial and commercial enterprises.





VOLVO GUNNING FOR MARKET NUMBER ONE

For Volvo Group Southern Africa 2016 was a tough year, but, because it was "handled with a smile and sunglasses", it exceeded expectations and is "on its way to being number one", says Torbjörn Christensson, regional president.

The company's focus over the last couple of years was to create synergy by combining the administrative, marketing and legal representatives from Volvo Trucks, Volvo Bus, Volvo Penta, as well as the UD Trucks brand into one supporting entity. "In 2016 we achieved synergy, now the focus shifts back to the customer," says Christensson.

The company's 360° customer service strategy saw its customer satisfaction index (CSI) ratings improve significantly between 2015 and 2016. The customer satisfaction rating of Volvo Trucks in the sales customer satisfaction rating in the sales category allowed it to move from third to first position with 98,5 percent.

Its service score also improved from 91,2 to 94,86 percent, moving the brand from 12th to fourth position in the category, while its parts CSI improved from 91,57 to 94,46 percent taking it from eighth to fourth position.

The combined scores of the three categories made Volvo Trucks the leading brand in the European commercial vehicle segment in 2016. With a total of 1 957 units sold, Volvo Trucks also held the third position in the local commercial vehicle market for 2016, with a 15,6-percent market share.

Volvo Group's performance in Africa over the past year allowed the company to grow

its net sales by 1,2 percent despite continued challenging market conditions.

Volvo Penta also continued its strong run in the local market, especially in marine diesel and off-road engine sales. During 2016, Volvo Penta recorded a 20-percent increase in orders and a significant 55-percent market share of the power-generation segment.

Volvo Bus South Africa increased its market share on rear-engine buses to 27 percent and is forecasting a total market share of between eight and ten percent for 2017.

As part of its commitment to road and driver safety, new safety features will be introduced locally on the Volvo Trucks extra-heavy commercial vehicle range in 2017.

"The innovations include electronic stability control, adaptive cruise control with forward collision warning and emergency braking, lane keeping and lane support, as well as driver alert support – all aimed at assisting the driver to operate the vehicle safely and responsibly. These innovations also enhance the overall driving experience by minimising fatigue and increasing productivity," says Christensson.

Volvo Trucks will soon start assembling trucks with these safety features at its Durban factory, which was recently renovated at a cost of over R6,5 million to enable the assembly of these specialised units.

The company already has 30 dealerships across southern and eastern Africa, and is developing new facilities in Pinetown, Port Elizabeth, Kenya and Zambia to bring its international standard of service to its customers' doorstep.

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR JANUARY 2017

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. No GWM figures were disclosed for January.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 11 977
AMH	478
Fiat Group	63
Ford Motor Company	2 747
GMSA	1 406
Jaguar Land Rover	2
JMC	16
Mahindra	200
Mazda South Africa	45
Mitsubishi	64
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	13
Nissan	2 462
Peugeot Citroën SA	1
Renault	2
Suzuki Auto	10
TATA	94
Toyota	3 892
Volkswagen SA	482
Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 493
AMH	16
Fiat Group	2
Ford Motor Company	9
GMSA	108
Iveco	30
JMC	10
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	143
Peugeot Citroën SA	5
TATA	33
Toyota	101
Volkswagen SA	36
Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 276
FAW	65
GMSA	63
Iveco	12
MAN	15
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	34
TATA	32
Toyota	48
Volvo Group Southern Africa	41
Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 450
Babcock DAF	20
FAW	22
GMSA	14
Iveco	6
MAN	67
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	239
Powerstar	11
Scania	117
TATA	11
Toyota	31
Volvo Group Southern Africa	151
Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 56
Iveco	10
MAN	26
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	14
Scania	14
TATA	4
Volvo Group Southern Africa	2

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

SMALL BUSINESS SOLUTION IN A BOX

TomTom South Africa (SA), in partnership with Infotech Business Solutions, has launched its Business in a Box, which comprises a TomTom Bridge device pre-loaded with Infotech's Inteligen and AllOnMobile applications. The device allows for real-time job dispatching and employee tracking.

While the device has been available for large companies since last year, Business in a Box is aimed at small businesses. "It is a complete solution in a box," says Charles Harvey, senior account manager at Infotech Business Solutions.

The TomTom Bridge is a rugged seven-inch tablet with 3G connection and an Android-based operating system. Employers can track and assign jobs to their workers by locating the nearest employee to a job site. The most efficient route is calculated and displayed through the web interface, while the employee's activity is recorded.



When a new job is assigned, the employee receives a job description on their tablet. When they accept the assignment, they receive a traffic-optimised route to the client. An automatic SMS or e-mail notification with a link to view the employee's location is sent to the client.

The AllOnMobile app includes digital forms for common tasks like creating quotes, invoices and delivery receipts. The documents are converted to PDF format and can be e-mailed to the office and/or client.

"The information is transparent and shared with everybody as appropriate, so we can deliver an optimal customer experience," explains Byron Moorgas, strategic manager sales at TomTom SA.

The software is charged at a flat rate of R387 per month, while the hardware is R8 699 (ex VAT) per device. Businesses have the option of paying in cash, or financing the device over 36 months at a 15-percent interest rate. The device uses a SIM card, which businesses can either supply or source from Infotech.

A minimum of one gigabyte of data is recommended per device each month. Data usage on the device can be restricted to avoid accidental over-expenditure. While Business in a Box is launched as an off-the-shelf solution, TomTom SA and Infotech also offer businesses the opportunity to modify the components to suit their specific needs.

DIESEL THEFT AND SPEEDING: STOPPED!

Ctrack's new Fleet Monitoring Services has already paid dividends for Massyn Vervoer, having allowed the company to identify diesel theft and fraud from within.

While Ctrack's relationship with Massyn Vervoer goes back 15 years, the company now employs Ctrack's advanced Fleet Monitoring Services – a full outsource of fleet control-room activities.

Dedicated fleet controllers support Massyn Vervoer's entire fleet from Ctrack's national support centre, with 24-hour "eyes-on-screen" fleet and route monitoring and response services to incident alerts and alarms. The services also include highly efficient hindsight, insight and foresight data analytics and reporting for streamlining fleet operations.

Using Ctrack's Fleet Analytics, Massyn Vervoer was able to validate toll-road transactions, which identified a driver who was regularly abusing a fuel card for

non-work purposes. On another occasion, the reports – backed by real-time fleet and route monitoring – were able to pinpoint a driver who was illegally offloading fuel.

"Fuel can account for as much as 25 percent of a long-haul trucking company's costs, and the rise in fuel theft and fraud poses a serious threat to transporters' operating profits. In this regard it undeniably benefited Massyn Vervoer to invest in our Fleet Monitoring Services to help eliminate these types of risks," says Hein Jordt, MD of Ctrack Fleet Management Solutions.

The Ctrack solution has also enabled the company to monitor its fleet's speeding events. As a result, it has virtually eliminated speed-limit violations, bringing incidents down from 200 per month to just two.

"Our new division helps customers to use the vast amounts of data generated from their fleet-management systems. It provides information for critical decision-making, from cost savings to future investments. Our developers are constantly growing and improving the model to best suit our clients' needs," Jordt concludes.



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Saving Cape Town from CONGESTION



Public transport could be the solution to traffic congestion. In this first article in a series of four, MARISKA MORRIS speaks with experts about solving the issue

Cape Town once again surpassed Johannesburg as the most congested city in South Africa for the fifth year running. The TomTom Traffic Index 2017 estimates that Capetonians spend an extra 163 hours (or six days) on travel every year. Aside from the frustration and stress that traffic congestion causes the driver, the economy loses money, too.

Civil engineer at the University of Cape Town, Associate Professor Marianne Vanderschuren, a specialist on public transport, uses the April 2016 arson attacks on Metrorail as an example of economic losses.

"If we assume that everybody in Cape Town works one hour less because of the arson, that would cost the Cape Town economy more than R450 million," she explains.

The congestion in Cape Town is caused by population growth and mobility – more people moving around more frequently. There was a 2.5-percent increase in the population (approximately 1.3-million people) in the last decade. Economic advancements resulted in a five-percent increase in mobility with five-million people travelling more often.

This increase in population and mobility requires increased road space. However, the city has not kept

up with the growth, and building more roads will not necessarily resolve the issue. "What we need to remember is that building more roads is not going to remove the congestion. You can't build your way out of congestion," Vanderschuren argues.

More roads simply lead to more cars and drivers. She suggests improved public transport as a solution to Cape Town's congestion crisis.

WHY PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

The Metrorail trains and MyCiTi bus rapid transit (BRT) system (with its dedicated lanes) result in a shorter commute. They transport large numbers of people leading to fewer cars and less congestion. Public transport also addresses the current travel inequalities in Cape Town.

Remnants of the apartheid regime are still visible in the city structure. Poor communities often live on the outskirts of town. They have to travel between 45 and 70 km to work. Many of these commuters spend up to 45 percent of their salary on transport. With some earning a meagre R3 200 a month, there is very little money left for other expenses.

The car-dependent culture in Cape Town also means the poor are less likely to travel. Research shows that there is "inherent unfairness built into a



car-dominated transport system" where "those who are better off travel the most", explains Bruce McVean, integrated design manager at Beyond Green, in his article for the website *ThisBigCity*.

Those who don't own or have access to a car travel less often. Public transport makes travel accessible to everyone. Vanderschuren mentions that all types of transport services need to be accommodated where they make sense.

"Where there are huge numbers of people requiring transport it doesn't make sense to have a hundred mini-bus taxis. Buses or trains should rather be used. It really depends on the demand," she says. Building 'corridors' with large numbers of people travelling in the same direction will help sustain public transport in the long run. Providing a successful system will, however, be a challenge.

IT'S NOT ALL GOOD NEWS

In an interview with the *Cape Times*, Cape Town mayoral committee member for transport Brett Herron explains how public transport is essential and receives

providers. "The Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) is not the responsibility of the city. The city can only provide bus infrastructure. In terms of minibus taxis, it is the province that gives permits to the taxis for their routes," Vanderschuren explains. This creates a division of resources.

This division also creates a problem for commuters. Gavin Oliver commutes from Retreat in the southern suburbs to Blaauwberg for work every day. Until last year, Oliver took a train, two taxis and a bus on his daily commute. He would catch the 05:20 train and arrive at work just after 07:00. He bought a separate ticket for each form of transport.

To improve the commuter experience, Vanderschuren suggests a unified fare collection



ABOVE: A commuter waits in a graffiti-smeared Metrorail train carriage heading to Bellville, Cape Town.



LEFT: Taxis exit the Killarney Garden taxi rank.

subsidies in every country. He adds that public transport "should be sustainable, as opposed to being profitable". This isn't the case in Cape Town.

"The network and the services are fragmented, misaligned and compete with each other. The service is largely operator-focused instead of commuter-focused," Herron says. He wants the MyCiTi BRT system to replace all other modes of transport to form a unified, non-competitive public transport system.

However, as the population grows and mobility increases, there is an accompanying growth in the demand for transport. Vanderschuren believes that rather than replacing transport services, they should be moved to where there is demand.

Cost also needs to be considered. "Do we actually want MyCiTi buses where we already have another form of public transport? Would it not perhaps be cheaper to improve the rail system in those areas than to build new BRT systems?" she asks.

The competitive market in the public-transport sector possibly stems from the divide in service

system as used by German transport services. Germany invested in its public transport services in preparation for the 1972 Summer Olympics hosted in Munich and developed S-Bahn, a rapid transit railway system.

To collect fares, various ticketing systems of different public transport providers were combined into one organisation. One ticket is used for all modes of transport and fares go to the fare collection body, which, in turn, pays each service provider. "Commuters buy a monthly ticket and use whichever mode of transport that makes the most sense to them," Vanderschuren says.

This solution makes travel easy for commuters, while eliminating competition in the system. Although Vanderschuren's solutions might sound simple, implementing them in Cape Town could be difficult.

The South African public transport system is complicated and flawed, but, in order to eliminate congestion in Cape Town, we need to start addressing the issues. **F**



The year of the “TRANSPOOKS”?

VAUGHAN MOSTERT conjures up a clumsy word to describe the forces behind local public transport: “transpook”

“**T**ranspooks” are organisations and individuals with two things in common – they are involved with public passenger transport in some way or other, and not one of them is doing anything of real consequence to solve the many problems we face.

They include: the Department of Transport (DoT) (ten of them at central and provincial level), public enterprises, the Treasury, city councils, the subsidised bus and rail operators, several research bodies at government and university level, various non-government organisations (NGOs), some accounting firms, consultants and all the political parties.

While they “spook” around, the construction people pour scarce money and concrete into phoney transport infrastructure projects. Two articles, both taken from *Business Day* of November 17, 2016, illustrate this point.

The first one was headed: Report reveals Gauteng taxi permit woes. A provincial committee found “wide-ranging administrative, regulatory and managerial failures around the issuing of taxi permits”.

It noted “worrying relationships between some associations and officials that resulted in cosy arrangements around private security and hitmen, together with poor record-keeping on agreements over routes”.

Responding to this, the Gauteng government (which pumps nearly R2 billion a year into the Gautrain) said it “would consider ... the establishment of a dispute-resolution mechanism”.

Commenting on the report, transport analyst Paul Browning said: “There are elements of corruption, maladministration and uncertainty about how the criteria should be applied.”

The second one was a lengthy contribution from the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), which, from time to time, gets a lot of space in *Business Day*. Dealing with the need for “integrated urban economies”, the article touches on some transport-related issues, making good points, but also wobbling in some areas.

Here’s an example: “Current policy also benefits and protects incumbent service providers rather than creating competitive pressures that would make transport more efficient, cheaper and safer.” The first part is correct, but the second part is nonsense.

It is precisely these competitive pressures that have led to the taxi problems mentioned in the first article. To make it worse, we have known about this for a long time.

Let’s go back 24 years to *The Star* of February 10, 1993, when the same Paul Browning accurately summed up the situation at that time: “The (taxi) industry is overtraded – there are too many taxis chasing a commuter population, which is shrinking. Free marketeers might argue that this will lead to a market correction. This may well be so, but the process will create a fertile field for instability and violence.”

I am sure that Browning is as annoyed as I am at the lack of progress at government level, as well as the unhelpful advice still being given by transport economists, consultants and think tanks.

The CDE then comes up with more nonsense: “A reorientation of policy to subsidise commuters rather than service providers should be explored urgently”. Try telling that to the people who run the Gautrain, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) and bus rapid transit (BRT).

The CDE should rather have said: “All commuters should be subsidised on an equitable basis.” Of >

course, that won't happen overnight – at our glacial rate of progress it will take another 24 years to achieve.

Recent research at both the University of Johannesburg and the University of Cape Town has found that the average cost of transport and other costs related to seeking work for unemployed youth is R560 per month, while the average income for the same group of youth is R527 a month. There is not much point in having a job then. Let's hear some ideas from the "transpooks" on this one. Here's a flippant idea – let's extend the Gautrain by five kilometres...

The CDE is also too polite when it says: "No one involved in the transport sector believes enough has been done to develop workable solutions." That's true, but it lets public transport operators off the hook.

I'd rather read: "No one in transport has done enough to develop workable solutions."

The CDE continues: "Long-term transport solutions require the spatial reordering of South African cities." That may be desirable, but in the short term it will be easier and cheaper to fix public transport than to reorganise cities.

The CDE correctly acknowledges that the Gautrain, BRT and renewing Prasa rolling stock have failed to meet their cost and revenue projections. However, it should have added: "No more money should be spent on new construction until existing services have been optimised."

During the past 17 years we have frequently been told that Gautrain is the "example" that other forms of public transport should follow, and that it would be the "catalyst" for various improvements.

Well, we wonder where these improvements are, but hey, "transpooks" don't let questions like that bother them. **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.

BUS STOPS

"BY 2030, EVERY NEW BUS WILL BE ELECTRIC"

Busworld reports that Ryan Popple, CEO of electric bus manufacturer Proterra, believes these vehicles will soon challenge their internal-combustion counterparts for dominance of city streets.

Popple recently revealed, on Greentech Media's *Energy Gang* podcast, that the market share of electric buses will expand much more rapidly than has been the case with electric cars.

According to Popple's predictions, one-third of new fleet bus purchases will be electric by 2020, electric buses will account for half of fleet purchases by 2025, and by 2030 every new bus purchased will be electric.

"That would represent strong growth in a relatively short period of time, but Popple believes it is achievable, due to the nature of the commercial-vehicle business," *Busworld* reports.

According to Popple, Proterra is "already beating" diesel and compressed natural gas (CNG) on pricing. A lower price may be enough for fleet operators to



convert to electric vehicles en masse, he reckons... However, says *Busworld*, the near-silent operation and lack of exhaust fumes created by electric buses may be a bigger selling point in the crowded urban areas in which they operate.

Busworld quotes a recent report by think tank Carbon Tracker, which predicts that average battery prices will drop to US\$ 100 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) by 2020, down from US\$ 268 per kWh today.

Besides a potential price advantage, electric buses are also less affected by charging and range issues than electric cars. Because buses operate on predictable routes, at scheduled times, and within predefined areas, coordinating the installation of charging infrastructure is somewhat easier compared to passenger cars.



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