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COVER

The Mercedes-Benz FleetBoard system has been enhanced with a new component called UpTime. Find out how it helps fleets and dealers on page 10.

FOCUS ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

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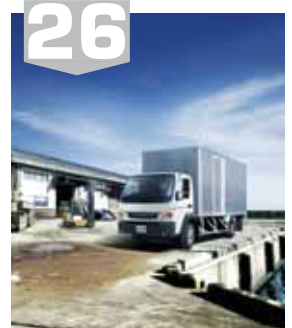
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Regarding buses, we generally think of delays, insufficient routes, cramped seats and smoke pumping clunkers. But the people-moving world has a totally different side to it.



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JC, the licence and yours truly.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN!

Regular **FOCUS** readers will know that I have been working towards achieving my EC (or code 14) driving licence. I am pleased to report that it is a case of Mission Possible!



Charleen Clarke

It's been a long time coming! Not for any reason other than my truly hectic schedule (they don't call me the editor in exile for nothing, you know).

Incredibly, this journey began at the Johannesburg International Motor Show back in 2013. I was chatting to Alexander Taftman, product and marketing director at Scania South Africa, and I suggested that the company sponsor my training. To my delight he agreed!

The next step was obtaining my learner's licence ... a rather painful exercise (you can read all about it on our website). Scania contracted the IDes Driving Academy to teach me everything I needed to know, and, to my surprise, I managed to get that prized piece of paper.

Then it was a case of actually learning to drive. I have driven trucks for many years ... on private roads, obviously ... but the K53 test is something quite different. JC Bothma, my exceptionally patient and really wonderful driver trainer from Scania, drew the short straw when he was tasked with teaching me everything I needed to know. JC was utterly amazing; he was supportive and he never lost

this cool ... even when I failed to alley dock after my 20th attempt one day (it's harder than it looks).

After a while, we decided that we would head to the wild west of Mogale City (previously known as Krugersdorp) ... and finally prepare for the actual test. This decision was taken for two logical reasons. First, the Mogale City Testing Station is reputedly the only place in Gauteng where it is possible to get a licence without paying a bribe. Right at the outset of the programme I had resolved that I would obtain my licence legally ... there was no way in hell that I was bribing anyone.

The second reason for heading west was a man called Oom Jan (no one ever uses his surname; it's Stoltz for the record). Oom Jan owns a driver training school called Alfa Driving School in Krugersdorp ... or Mogale City.

He is one of the best driver trainers in the land. If any **FOCUS** readers need driver training, I urge you to use him! Oom Jan has actually trained a number of the driver trainers at Scania; he's also trained many of the instructors at the Mogale City Testing Station. He really knows his oats. Between the



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patient and wonderful JC and the delightful and utterly hysterical Oom Jan, they vowed that I would get my Code 14.

And, shame ... What a frustrating journey it must have been for them. We met regularly at the old Krugersdorp test facility in that city's CBD. It's a really cool spot because it's been abandoned by the testing authorities (they have fancy new premises on the outskirts of town) but it's still there. All the markings and poles for the yard test have remained in place. As such, it is used each and every day by people who aspire to get some sort of licence.

The old yard can get really hectic; it's used by guys on bikes, motorists in cars

Testing Station is massively efficient and the people working there are really nice.]

Once again, I was utterly terrified. My legs wouldn't work. My hands were shaking. I was a complete mess. Oupa Chembe runs the Mogale City Testing Station, and he was full of encouragement (I was delighted to see that he was testing me; he's one of the nicest people on the planet). "You and I both know that you are a very capable driver. You can do it!" he urged me, with a big smile. I wasn't so certain; I was convinced that the alley docking would foil me.

As I attempted the alley docking, scores of people from the testing centre lined the side of

the testing station, chatting incessantly about rugby (ag shame, he's a Sharks supporter like me). I was so nervous I honestly don't know where we drove to ...

Suddenly the road driving was over. We were back at the Mogale City Testing Station, and the question on my lips was: did I pass? Yes! I don't know who was happier at the good news: JC, Oom Jan, Oupa or me.

So, there you have it: one times Code 14 licence. Tick! Now it's done and dusted, there are a number of people I need to thank (in no particular order).

I need to thank Scania (Steve Wager and Alexander Taftman) for sponsoring me.



From left: Another early morning start. "My" Scania and I in Krugersdorp. Oupa Chembe runs the Mogale City Testing Station. It's probably the best testing station in the country and he happens to be such a nice man, too. Oom Jan and JC; my two very dear driver trainers.

and truckers in dinky-toy Code 10 vehicles. Yours truly was almost always the only person aiming for a Code 14 ("my" sensational Scania truck became quite famous with the locals).

Because it is so busy, we often met there at dawn: JC, Oom Jan, the mighty Scania and me. This necessitated JC leaving his home at 03:00 ... but he never complained once.

There are three elements to the yard test: a left turn, a hill pull-off followed by a reversing manoeuvre, and the alley docking. Eventually I mastered all three – when I was practising. Of course, take the Scania and yours truly off to the Mogale City Testing Station and I completely fell to pieces ... and I messed up the alley docking twice!

Eventually, the Scania and I became quite famous at the Mogale City Testing Station, too; when I arrived back for my third attempt, I was welcomed back like an old family member. (As an aside, I have to tell you that the Mogale City

the yard (thankfully I didn't notice them). Oom Jan joined the throng; JC was on the other end of the phone. I don't know who was more nervous: Oom Jan, JC or me.

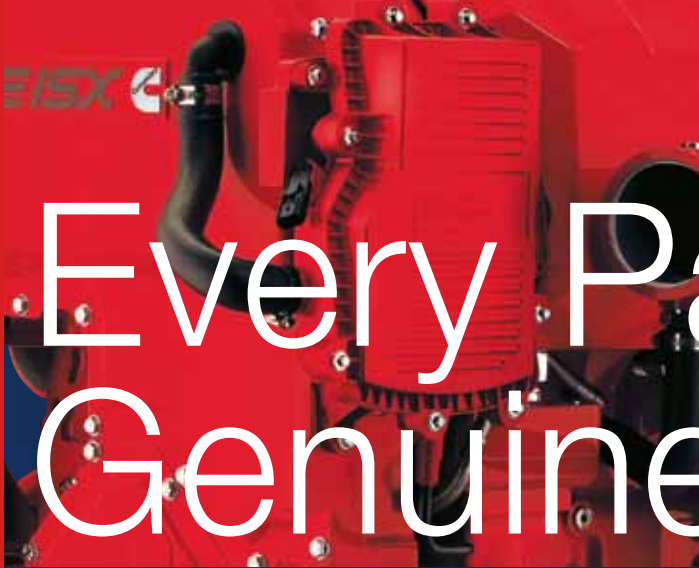
I messed up my first attempt – to my immense frustration. I began to think I would never get my Code 14, but then things looked better on my second and final attempt. "It's going in!" Oupa announced with huge excitement. And it did.

That was probably one of the most exciting moments of my entire life; the alley docking monkey on my shoulder was gone! After that, the test was easy. I did the hill pull off without rolling back, reversed like a pro, and then I did the left turn. I know that this all sounds easy but there are trillions of things you need to remember (largely relating to observation and indicating).

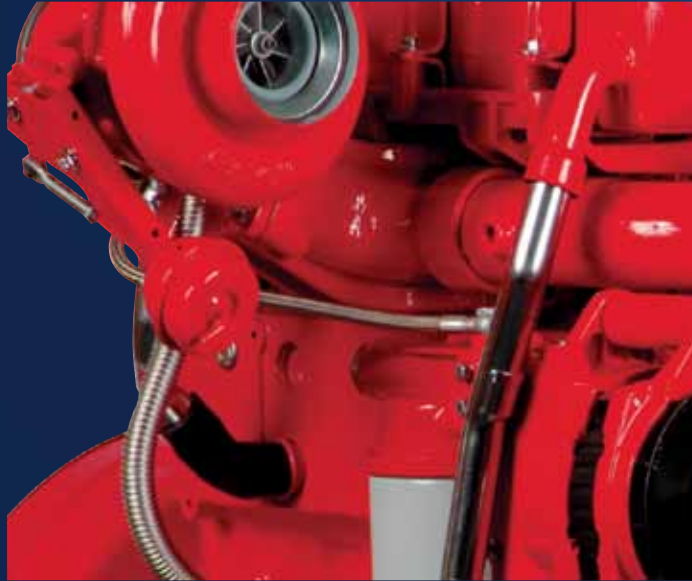
Then it was time for the road test. Oupa jumped into the cab and we headed out of

Thank you, too, to Janke van Jaarsveld, from IDes, for all the tuition. I also need to thank Oupa (he's such a wonderful man I am planning to propose; don't tell a soul), but, most of all, I need to thank Oom Jan and JC. We spent many hours together. All of them were very special. You made me laugh (while I probably made you cry at my dismal alley docking). Oom Jan, I think my Afrikaans is a tiny bit better now, *baie dankie* for that. JC, I will miss our times together (and thanks for teaching me what the truck manufacturers' acronyms stand for).

Getting my Code 14 licence has been on my bucket list for a long time. I never dreamt that it would be possible. I am so chuffed to have it, but, much more importantly, I am happy and blessed because I met so many incredibly special people in this journey. Thank you guys; you have enhanced my life. You're in my heart forever. **IFOCUS**



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TAKE A SEAT

Ensuring children are securely strapped in is no longer optional (though it should never have been to begin with); one of the lesser-discussed recent amendments to the National Road Traffic Act. One organisation is doing sterling work in this regard



Gavin Myers

By the time you read this, October Transport Month will be done and dusted and we'll be just a few short weeks away from calling it quits on 2015.

Did anything truly useful come out of October Transport Month? Year after year (it's now ten years old) it is criticised as being little more than a month of lip service by

government, about implementing better public transport, cutting congestion, clamping down on drunken driving and reducing road fatalities – with little in the way of follow up thereafter.

Transport Month 2015 kicked off with a truck drivers' empowerment event; we had the EcoMobility World Festival 2015 in Sandton (essentially the poster child for this year's event, marred by the fatal collapse of the pedestrian walkway onto the M1 highway); a law-enforcement operation in Swartruggens; the Go!George launch; and a mini career expo.

As I write this, though, it is still October and the full results are yet to be seen. Therefore I'm going to focus on a non-governmental campaign, and, if there's one that's worth supporting on a continual basis, I think Wheel Well's Car Seats for Kids campaign is it!

Wheel Well – a Section 21 non-profit company – creates awareness about the risks of carrying an unsecured child in a car. It also sources and provides baby car seats for parents who cannot afford them, provides car-seat maintenance and offers sound advice for choosing the correct seats for a child.

During October Transport month, which Wheel Well dubbed the "Month of Amazing", the organisation focused on the Western Cape region – collecting car seats in and around Cape Town, with the kind support and sponsorship of Imperial.

The 94.7 Breakfast Express show and John Robbie's show on 702 did call-outs for seats, while Renault, Hyundai and Kia dealerships nationwide also participated as drop-off points during the campaign.

In total, over 550 seats were donated to

Wheel Well during the Month of Amazing. Yet, says Peggie Mars, founder of Wheel Well, that's nowhere near enough.

"Even with 5 231 seats distributed from the Car Seats for Kids campaign, there are still far too many children not secured in a car seat. Eight children die on our roads daily and lower-income families are five-times more likely to be affected," Mars notes.

Why is it so important to keep a child properly restrained? In an accident, the vehicle loses its speed almost immediately, yet everything in that vehicle keeps moving at the speed the vehicle was moving before the collision.

An infant's skull is very soft, so even a small impact can result in significant injury. Furthermore, a vehicle's seat belts (even at the back) are designed for an adult frame and will not hold a child in place sufficiently. Anyone under 1,5 m tall needs to be in a child seat, or on a booster seat, to be properly restrained.

"The grace period for parents to become compliant with Amendment 22 of the Road Traffic Act, which makes car seats compulsory for children under the age of three, expired at the end of October.

"Unfortunately, there are still many parents who cannot afford new car seats. The gift of safety will make the world of difference in keeping our children safe and stopping this horrible carnage," says Mars.

Well done Wheel Well for the amazing work you do – not only during October Transport Month. Government could learn a thing or two ... I'll be interested to see if it got things right this October Transport Month. **IFOCUS**

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**ONE MAN
ONE TRUCK
ONE EPIC JOURNEY**

**MISSION
ACCOMPLISHED**

The TGX Euro 5 truck, Riaan and Nduna have finished their 13,234 kilometre journey through Africa. They've dealt with the military borders of Mozambique, dangerous cliff descents in Malawi and a stack of nightmarish border crossings. What's more, the new truck overcame every single challenge Africa could throw at it. The team also dropped mosquito nets off along the way as part of a joint initiative with Rollback Malaria.

13 234 KM | 9 COUNTRIES | 11 BORDER CROSSINGS

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NO LIMIT TO IGNORING MASS LIMITS

Truck and bus drivers ignoring National Road Traffic Mass Limit signs do so at their peril and endanger the lives of the general public

Having recently witnessed a few serious truck accidents on the steep hill in Doreen Road, Roodepoort, Gauteng, I have been prompted to write this article in the hope that truck and bus drivers will adhere to the National Road Traffic regulations pertaining to mass limit signs.

Due to the steepness of Doreen Road, authorities have imposed a mass limit of five tonnes for any vehicle.

Well-displayed mass limit signs have been erected at the top and bottom of the road and can be clearly seen by drivers long before they ascend or descend the hill. Yet many truck and bus drivers ignore the mass restriction and use the road at their peril.

To establish how many trucks and buses that exceed the maximum tonnage allowance are using the road, I conducted my own traffic survey and found that approximately 16 vehicles an hour (in both directions)

exceed the gross vehicle mass (GVM) rating of five tonnes and are illegally using the road.

The National Road Traffic Regulations sign number R202 clearly spells out the meaning of the sign as follows: Mass Limit Sign indicates to the driver of a vehicle with a GVM or gross combination mass (GCM) in excess of the mass indicated in tonnes, by means of the number on the sign, that he or she shall not proceed beyond that sign.

In my opinion, the possible causes for heavy vehicles with a GVM exceeding five tonnes using the road, are that drivers do not know and understand the meaning of the mass limit sign; they deliberately choose to ignore the sign; or that they do not know the GVM of the vehicle that they are driving.

To minimise the risk of drivers exceeding the mass limit, I would recommend that commercial vehicle operators refresh their drivers' understanding of the GVM and GCM ratings of the vehicles that they drive.

- GVM: The total weight of the vehicle and load – including the weight of the fuel, driver and passenger being carried.
- GCM: The combined weight of the towing vehicle and the trailer (or trailers) that it is pulling.

GVM and GCM ratings can be found on the vehicle data plate that is normally fixed to the left-hand cab door. The fixture of a metal data plate on commercial vehicles exceeding 3 500 kg GVM is a legal requirement.

The dangers involved in ignoring mass limit signs should be explained, as well as the risk of brake failure down long and steep gradients – resulting in a runaway vehicle.

Hopefully this article will prompt vehicle operators and traffic control authorities to take some action to minimise the carnage we witness daily on our roads; caused by drivers ignoring mass limit signs. **IFOCUS**



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!

FOCUS LETTERS



CAN WE SEE MORE CAB OF TOMORROW?

I have to tell you that I think the regular International Truck of the Year (IToy) stories have been a great addition to your world-class magazine. It's always nice to find out what's new on the international scene, as we hope that one day these vehicles might make their way to our roads. In addition, it ties in really well with Frank Beeton's always-informative Global Focus feature.

In the October edition your ITOY report focused on the Russian Comtrans exhibition and the Kamaz "cab of tomorrow" really caught my attention. I was, however, sad to only see one picture of this with the story. Would you please send me a few more – as I am seriously intrigued by this concept! Keep up the great work!

Ivan Hart

We're glad you like the ITOY feature, Ivan, and that you find value in the stories. Here are those pics you ordered! PS – the renderings are exclusive to ITOY members, and we hope you enjoy them! – Ed.

REMEMBERING TERENCE

Dear **FOCUS**

Thank you very much for the article published about my dad. It is so very special. He was a very special man and we all miss him terribly. His long fight with cancer was fought bravely. His love and commitment for the industry was part of our lives as well.

Thank you for honouring his memory this way.

Colleen Klopper

Barloworld Motor Retail

*Thank you so much for your message, Colleen. It was certainly an honour to publish the article. The **FOCUS** team had a very good relationship with Terence and share fond memories of him. Our thoughts continue to be with you and your family – Ed.*



FOCUS DOES IT AGAIN

I've just spent some time reading the October issue – thank you for your continual publishing excellence! I have subscribed to **FOCUS** since entering the heavy commercial vehicle business over ten years ago.

Please continue to bring us news from around the globe – Charleen Clarke's stories about Namibia made for good reading, as did Gavin Myers's about his eventful trip along the N3 ...

Hat's off to the N3TC, as well, for managing our country's most important artery at such world-class standards!

Finally, the Truck Test 2016 teaser article whet my appetite! I think the concept has real merit and I look forward to more updates leading up to the event.

Keep up the good work!

Theo J Green

Thank you for your feedback, Theo. You'll be happy to know we've done more travelling – turn to page 32. There's also a Truck Test update on page 12 – Ed.



FLEETBOARD KEEPS ALL EYES ON UPTIME



FleetBoard, the renowned proprietary telematics system from Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA), has set new benchmarks in the original equipment manufacturer telematics market. The system now sports a critical new component, aptly called UpTime

MBSA's Polokwane commercial vehicle outlet, Mercurius Motors, was one of the first dealerships to implement FleetBoard UpTime monitoring. The system enables constant communication with MBSA through the on-board control module, which records all fault codes occurring on the vehicle. These codes are transmitted to a server known as the Telediagnosis Viewer.

"When a particular vehicle is due for a service, FleetBoard UpTime informs us to schedule a session with our workshop and then call the customer. We have even made calls to operators to let them know that a specific truck within their fleet was low on oil, or needed to have its brakes replaced – all from the data on the screen. Basically, UpTime allows us to carry out proactive monitoring," notes Japie Brits, dealer principal, Mercurius Motors.

Andre Bradbury from Dynamic

Transport, a Polokwane-based company, says: "FleetBoard encourages our drivers to use a proactive and more economical driving style, which results in reduced wear and tear on our vehicles. This means we can reduce the number of times our trucks go into the workshop, due to breakdowns, as the drivers are handling them better."

He adds: "We have noticed improved wear and tear on various parts and are happy that we can remotely monitor our drivers' patterns. We can then advise those who need guidance and reward those who excel at efficient driving techniques."

"We had one of our trucks hijacked recently. The culprits removed the tracker thinking they had got away with the vehicle. Thanks to FleetBoard, we were still able to trace and recover the vehicle," exclaims Bradbury.

"Maximising vehicle uptime will always remain one of the most important aspects

of running a commercial vehicle fleet. With UpTime, FleetBoard's after-sales support team is given total visibility of customers' vehicles. This enables them to offer comprehensive round-the-clock support to keep these fleets moving," explains Rowlands Peters, manager of FleetBoard South Africa.

"What gives FleetBoard's UpTime an added advantage over other telematics offerings out there is that we have remote access to fault codes. This means we can order the required parts for repair early. In short, FleetBoard UpTime is the perfect answer for those struggling with downtime," concludes Peters. **IFOCUS**



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

There is a better way.





FORMATTING THE FUTURE

FOCUS, our Truck Test partners and industry stakeholders met at Engen HQ towards the end of October, to thrash out the details of Truck Test 2016

This was a very important meeting ... what was to be decided, from the reactions and feedback of those in attendance, would set the template for the way all future Truck Tests would run. Happily, reactions and feedback were both positive and constructive.

Martin Dammann, coordinator of the event, contextualises: "Over the years we've tried to tighten the rules and improve the format, in order to make the tests more meaningful to

the typical operating conditions of each vehicle category as accurately as possible.

The routes will all begin and end at a central location called "the hub". While routes are still being finalised, this is likely to be the Engen 1-Stop, on the R59, just south of Johannesburg. The short- and medium-haul routes will be set within the area, as traffic disruptions should be minimal.

The short route will be suitable for vehicles with a one to eight-tonne payload, solo-type

distance of over 600 km. The average speed on this route is expected to be 75 km/h.

As in the past, the test will be run over two days to include both laden and unladen simulations.

"We encourage participants to run standard, legal, South African-spec vehicles, so that their customers can get an accurate picture of what the vehicles can do. However, we will report on what is brought to the test, including any spec changes made for the test, with full disclosure," Dammann says.

From 2016, an interesting aspect expected to feature in Truck Tests will be the inclusion of low-emission vehicles that require a urea solution (AdBlue). "We would measure AdBlue consumption as it is a cost, but just for interest," says Dammann.

Lindsay Bassett, key account

manager: transport, commercial fuels at Engen, says that more and more vehicles are running with AdBlue. "It is a product that is starting to gain traction, so we will definitely make it available for any vehicles that require it," he notes.

Due to the open nature of future Truck Tests, other special vehicles are expected to feature as well. "There is an option to enter prototype, gas-powered or diesel-electric hybrid vehicles into a special category, which will be reported on separately," explains Dammann.

The future of Truck Test sure looks bright. **IFOCUS**



Standard short-, medium- and long-haul routes will form the basis for all future Truck Tests.

manufacturers and operators and allow the whole industry the chance to participate.

"From next year, we want to create a standard format that we will follow for every test thereafter. The platform (including routes) will be consistent and will allow for benchmarking of vehicles and future comparison to those run previously."

As highlighted in the October issue of **FOCUS**, the test will be open to all types of vehicles with the only defined criteria being set payload categories for the different routes. These routes – a short-, a medium- and a long-haul – have been specifically devised to simulate

vehicles (such as mixers and tippers) and even 8x4s. The route will include many stops and starts and vehicles are expected to run at an average speed of roughly 30 km/h.

The medium route is aimed at vehicles with a payload higher than nine tonnes, and could include 6x4 truck tractors with tridem trailers. A lap of this route will equal roughly 100 km and the average speed should be 45 km/h.

For the long-haul route, vehicles will travel from the R59 to the N3, which they will join near Heidelberg. From here vehicles will travel to the Bergville interchange and back again – a



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MAKING A HEALTHY IMPROVEMENT

While drivers are the “life” of a transport operation, their health is one of the most neglected aspects of their job – with many suffering from disorders including diabetes and HIV/Aids. GAVIN MYERS asks Tertius Wessels, MD of Corridor Empowerment Project (CEP), about the overall health of South African drivers today

It feels good to be able to start this article with some positive news – the general health of South African truck drivers seems to be improving! The struggle is slowly being won.

“Our drivers are starting to take ownership of their health,” says Wessels. “They are much more educated today. They know they have to manage any illness and many of them approach us to find out if we have chronic medication for them (all Trucking Wellness clinics stock medication for primary health care and some diseases). It’s all improving – a little bit at a time.”

Trucking Wellness is an initiative of the

National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI), on whose behalf CEP is the appointed Trucking Wellness services project manager.

Wessels explains that when he started with the Trucking Wellness programme in 2002, the prevalence rate of HIV was between 18 and 20 percent. “Today we are barely reaching nine percent – so there has been a drastic decline in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) amongst the drivers,” he says proudly.

Wessels says that drivers today are really worried about their lifestyles, which is evident in the number of visits the programme’s

22 clinics and 11 mobile units has received this year alone. About 25 000 people visited Trucking Wellness centres between January and August.

Of those, 2 200 cases of STIs were identified and treated (just under ten percent) and, so far, 1,1 million condoms have been distributed by the programme. (Around 15 million condoms have been distributed since inception.)

There is, however, still a lot more to be done. HIV/Aids still ranks as one of the top three health problems among South African truck drivers, along with diabetes and high blood pressure.

There is, however, still a lot more to be done. HIV/Aids still ranks as one of the top three health problems among South African truck drivers, along with diabetes and high blood pressure.

"I am worried about the general health status of truck drivers in South Africa," says Wessels. "There are a lot of diseases that they don't have the opportunity to address through normal centres. It all has to do with their lifestyle: they are on the road all day every day and accessibility is a major problem."

Further compounding the problem is that, while it's very difficult for them to access conventional healthcare services, it is very easy for them to access bad food and cheap sex – two of the more unfortunate aspects of life on the road that the trucking industry is very familiar with.

"Let's face it: out on the road the drivers

can access sex workers in every town. They spend a lot of time on the road. They are lonely, and it is cheap to pick up a sex worker next to the road.

"They also have unhealthy eating habits: they drink Coke and Grandpa to stay awake, dinner is pap and meat wherever they stay – they don't go for veggies and a balanced diet," Wessels notes.

Physical exercise (or the lack thereof), is also a current focus of the programme – even if it's simply encouraging drivers to stretch regularly when they stop.

Overall, though, Wessels reiterates that drivers are responding. "They are »

really worried and the Trucking Wellness programme currently plays a major role in educating them about leading a healthy lifestyle," he says.

"Hours on the road are long, so it's not easy, but they shouldn't have a pie and Coke every day, for example. There are truck stops out there that serve a proper meal, including vegetables and chicken, and not just pap and meat ..."

While drivers are given advice on what to eat and how to follow these diets, Wessels would still like to see drivers visiting clinics on a regular basis – every four to six weeks – to be screened. The companies they work for are also advised to be proactive.

"What we need is to get the employers to contact us and get our mobile centres out to their premises. We can then get to the drivers on the ground and make them aware that they might have a problem and that they can access the services.

"The mobile centres can test glucose, cholesterol, body-mass index, tuberculosis

and STIs including HIV. It's free of charge to book for a vehicle to come through – anywhere in the country!"

What if a driver is found to be infected with HIV or to be suffering from some other illness? As with any such testing, drivers are given a pre- and post-test counselling session as to what they can expect and how they can handle their health going forward.

The organisation will undertake to enrol a driver found to be HIV positive on an anti-retroviral treatment programme, where they can see a private doctor and laboratory and receive monthly medication at any place where they feel comfortable.

"He never has to stand in a queue again to receive treatment," Wessels explains. "There is also now an improved Wellness Fund Health Plan through the NBCRFLL, available to employees within the road freight and logistics industry, who are active NBCRFLL members contributing to the Wellness Fund."

Originally launched in July 2011, this scheme was placed under the service

provision of Affinity Health on January 1. It grants members and up to two eligible spouses access to a range of healthcare solutions they might otherwise not consider or be able to afford.

These include GP consultations, access to acute and chronic medication, dentistry, optometry, emergency services, and hospital and injury benefits. (According to *Payscale.com*, the average salary for a South African truck driver is R1 18 384 per year.)

However, more funds are still required. "A lot of our funding comes from donors, but they haven't been able to give as much over the last few years. We need industry to really get involved and see the bigger picture. We don't need massive contributions per month; if somebody adopts a clinic and sponsors it, that will relieve a burden on the industry," Wessels notes.

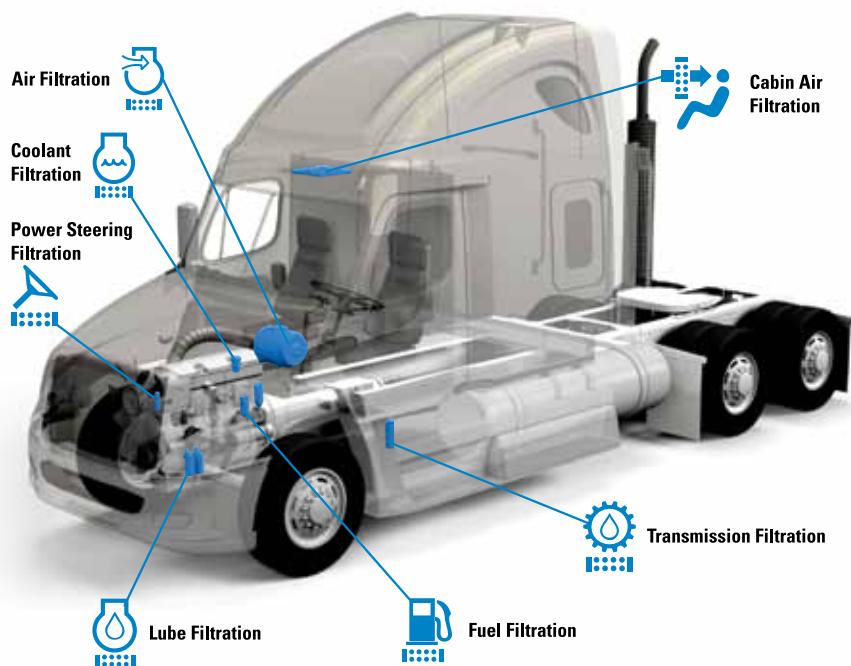
"We need properly educated, healthy drivers. A healthy driver is a safe driver," he adds. Without a doubt, our industry needs more of those, too. **IFOCUS**



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THE BATTLE OF THE **TYRES**

Depending on which side of the fence you sit, you either view importing cheaper tyres as a progressive or destructive move. THATO TINTE looks at whether these cheaper, yet good-quality, alternatives have any merit

Tyres have recently become a contentious topic in the country. The South African Tyre Manufacturers' Conference (SATMC) has tried to curb the illegal importing of cheap substandard tyres and has recently intensified its efforts to launch

anti-dumping probes into these inferior imports.

On September 2, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry was briefed by the SATMC on the growing concerns around the unregulated second-hand tyre industry, including the illegal

importing of tyres into the country.

The SATMC – which represents the leading four South African tyre companies: Bridgestone, Continental, Goodyear and Sumitomo – first applied in 2005 for anti-dumping duties to be introduced, but this application did not succeed.



imported tyres with the same brush and label them substandard? Andre van der Walt, the owner of a reputable and leading Namibian long-haul transport company, has been using inexpensive, but high-quality, imported tyres in his business and gives us his thoughts on this controversial topic.

A Van Der Walt Transport has been in business since 1986 and provides transport services across Namibia and other sub-Saharan countries. The company has routes extending across the entire Southern African Development Community (SADC).

manufacturers against cheap imports, Van der Walt believes the commercial transport industry must find ways to reduce costs of transport in order to ensure savings for consumers.

"If you buy tyres at a higher price, costs to the consumer increase. We need to work on getting these costs down for the benefit of the industry as a whole – from consumers to sellers," he says, adding that quality should never be compromised.

Van der Walt estimates the difference in price between his imported and locally



Is it fair to label all imported tyres as sub-standard?

A parliamentary media release stated that the SATMC had requested that industry standards be implemented in order to improve the regulated sale of second-hand tyres and reduce the growing import market of illegal tyres.

Experts consider tyres to be the most crucial safety feature of a vehicle. Tyres are the only part of a vehicle in direct contact with the road and, therefore, need to be of a high quality and meet certain standards. Cheap and substandard tyre imports are dangerous and pose a risk to all drivers on our roads.

Having said that, is it fair to paint all

Van der Walt tells us that he uses a few trusted brands, which he imports from China and South Africa. The Chinese brands he uses are; Double Star, Double Coin and Aeolus tyres. Van der Walt also sources tyres through local South African distributors including: Firestone, Bridgestone and Michelin.

When it comes to back-up service and support, Van der Walt says he has never experienced any challenges or problems regarding the tyres from China or South Africa.

"The duties we pay and the cost per kilometre are the same for the brands from China and South Africa. I also find that the lifespan of the tyres from China is the same and, at times, better," he asserts.

With regard to protecting local

manufactured tyres ranges from 35 to 50 percent – depending on the tyre type and brand.

The SATMC is of the view that, because locally manufactured tyres are designed specifically for the road and conditions of the country in which they are manufactured, these tyres are safer and more durable, when compared to many imported tyres that may be of an inferior standard.

Van der Walt is, however, of the opinion that these statements are incorrect. "The main customers of these Chinese tyres are from Asia. The conditions in Asia are harsher and more extreme than those of South Africa.

"China also supplies tyres to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have much more extreme conditions than South Africa. The quality of these credible tyre >>



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Customers are advised to exercise caution when buying and fitting imported tyres.

suppliers is good and their tyres perform well in these countries," he enthuses.

Over and above the required South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) safety approval on all imported tyres, Van der Walt notes that the tyres he imports undergo extensive safety and quality tests before they are used or sold. He says that his suppliers in China test the three brands he imports and, thereafter, issue him with the testing certificates.

His company also conducts its own safety and quality tests before giving the tyres the thumbs up. Van der Walt has also visited and inspected the South African plant from where he sources tyres.

In terms of quality, Van der Walt says that, in his experience, the wear and tear is the same on the Chinese imports and the local quality brands that he uses. He says the maximum difference he has seen in terms of durability is between 15 and 20 percent.

He notes that the process of sourcing and importing is actually straight-forward and shipment is reasonably fast. He does not believe, however, that the local tyre manufacturers will eventually go out of business with the infiltration of the cheaper Chinese imports.

"There will always be a market for local

manufacturers, because China cannot always supply. When we don't receive enough stock from China, we choose to buy from our local distributors.

"Many businesses don't conduct enough research to ensure they're getting the best prices available. They often don't realise that they can get the same quality products at a much cheaper price from China," he points out.

Van der Walt believes that the transport industry needs to save costs to ensure the end-user pays less. "If you can get the same quality at a better price, it's a much smarter way of doing business," he concludes.

We also took the opportunity to speak to South African tyre expert Liana Shaw, who gave us her valuable input on this topic. Shaw established South Africa's only tyre publication, *SA Treads*, which has been touted as the "official voice of the tyre industry".

She explains that, in South Africa, the biggest importers are the [previously mentioned] four leading local manufacturers, as they need to supplement their local range. Together with other reputable brands such as Michelin, Pirelli and Hankook, they form part of the country's import quota.

Shaw notes that only substandard and inferior tyres (which are predominantly made in China) are being imported at low cost into South Africa. She notes that, not all tyres coming from China should be considered cheap or poor quality, adding that imports certainly have their place in the market – given that the local manufacturers are the biggest importers in the country.

"There are some good and proven Chinese tyre brands – especially considering that the world's leading manufacturers, such as Michelin and Bridgestone, have factories in China," she states.

In spite of this, Shaw advises consumers to exercise caution when buying imports, as inferior and substandard makes are available.

"Consumers need to ensure that they buy from reputable dealers, or importers, who are preferably members of the Tyre Importer Association of South Africa (TIASA)," she warns. "This way, you can rest assured that there will be recourse in the event of a claim," she says.

Whether or not there is merit to the cheaper imported quality tyres (as Van der Walt believes there is) is to be seen, but cheap tyres of inferior quality are definitely a burden to our society. **IFOCUS**

FOLLOW YOUR FLEET

Advances in fleet management are usually led by technology and heavily influenced by innovations such as telematics. CLAIRE RENCKEN finds out how a couple of suppliers in this field are keeping up in this ever-evolving industry

Today's sophisticated vehicle tracking and integrated fleet management systems allow fleet operators to reduce fleet costs by streamlining maintenance processes and procedures, reducing vehicle downtime, making informed maintenance decisions and managing driver behaviour.

Murray Price, MD of Eqstra Fleet Management, says: "Keeping a fleet of vehicles efficiently maintained requires attention to detail and a systematic approach, both of which are provided by integrated fleet management reporting and tracking systems. This technology helps fleet operators address operational challenges through a comprehensive array

of vehicle performance and engine diagnostic capabilities."

Together with maintenance history trends, down to component level, these combined systems enable fleet operators to eliminate paperwork via online service monitoring and intuitive data maintenance management features.

They set proactive reminders for oil changes, tune-ups and other preventative maintenance activities. They also control repair costs and extend vehicle life via automatic access to service records.

These systems monitor automatic engine diagnostic alerts to identify minor problems, thereby helping to reduce expensive roadside repairs. They also analyse comprehensive

service record reports to improve fleet health and lifecycle maintenance management.

Some key elements of using technology for efficient fleet maintenance management include:

- **Engine alerts** – the system continually tracks the health of engines, and automatically notifies fleet managers of potential engine problems. These alerts enable them to take necessary steps to ensure that the vehicle functions properly and, as a result, reduce downtime.
- **Maintenance scheduling** – preventative maintenance procedures are based on manufacturer's specifications, which are directly linked to mileage travelled. Regular odometer updates enable fleet

owners to proactively manage scheduled maintenance, ensuring adherence to all warranty specifications. This reduces unscheduled maintenance and unnecessary downtime.

- **Unnecessary driving** – low mileage reduces the wear and tear on a vehicle, extends its operational life and reduces labour and repair costs. A fleet tracking management system helps monitor both unnecessary and unauthorised driving by routing vehicles more efficiently, tracking their locations, and monitoring off-hours usage. Many tracking systems come with GPS connection capabilities, which can further reduce vehicle mileage by providing drivers with accurate directions.
- **Reducing idling time** – one of the key fuel burners in fleet operations. By monitoring vehicle idle times, operators can set thresholds, which identify vehicles with excessive idle times and automatically shut down the vehicle. Customisable alert notices and reporting features provide data to set goals for reducing idling times and coaching drivers to achieve the desired results.
- **Integrated fleet management systems** – these provide a complete online service history of every vehicle in the fleet. Records are easily captured and updated and the system provides comprehensive reports, which provide the data required to analyse fleet maintenance problems and identify areas for improvement.

“As these effects kick in, less time will be spent on emergency or unexpected repairs and more work will involve scheduled maintenance,” explains Price. “As a result, labour overtime will decrease as vehicle breakdowns and unexpected repairs decline. Fleet technology systems provide the tools required to improve the entire maintenance process and to operate a fleet safely, efficiently and cost effectively.”

At the Bauma exhibition in September, MiX Telematics announced its global partnership with Iridium Communications Inc. – a market leader in mobile satellite communications, and provider of the world’s farthest reaching network comprised of 66 low-earth satellites.

The relationship extends the mobility »

offering of MiX Telematics to include a reliable, cost-effective and complementary global satellite communication alternative to terrestrial solutions.

Catherine Lewis, executive vice president of technology at MiX Telematics, says: "As a provider of information and related services for mobile assets, it's critically important that we provide clients with important exception notifications and vehicle status updates regardless of where their vehicles are located.

"Adding Iridium as a complementary service offering helps us to broaden our value offering in the market, reinforcing our ability to deliver solutions that promote safe, secure and efficient fleet operations."

She adds: "We're pleased to be partnering with Iridium, a business that's synonymous with market leadership when it comes to technology innovation. Our global leadership position in the premium fleet space and Iridium's global business strategy represent a strong alignment."

While mobile coverage across the globe is growing strongly, it is still largely immature in many rural/under-developed areas. Given

that road transport is still a prominent – if not leading – mode of goods transportation, the need for full visibility of vehicle fleets at all times is higher than ever. Thus, a network that covers the entire earth's surface is needed.

Bryan Hartin, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Iridium, says: "Through leveraging the Iridium network and solutions, fleet managers will be able to track and manage their valuable assets and personnel regardless of their location, including remote and rural areas."

He adds: "Partnering with MiX Telematics increases our footprint in the industry globally. It will help deliver our products and functionalities using the Iridium network to areas that need it the most, such as in rural Africa. We look forward to making a positive impact on businesses worldwide."

Another specialist in the field, Globaltrack, delivers sophisticated location-based asset monitoring information for a wide range of industries and applications globally. Through the use of the latest hardware and its uniquely developed Webtrack software, its customers are able to reduce costs and increase safety, wherever they are.

Globaltrack offers its clients the use of different types of hardware, dependent on the requirements and environment; including satellite-based hardware, or a combination of satellite and cellular.

One of the innovative solutions from Globaltrack is its fuel probe, which integrates fully with the Webtrack software. Fuel Probe gives accurate readings regarding fuel increases and decreases in litres. This information is used in the fuel module on Webtrack, to calculate your vehicles' usage in kilometres as well as the cost per vehicle. A quick overview of your fleet's usage against your own benchmark also helps in detecting discrepancies.

Says Globaltrack CEO, Pieter Smit: "Our fuel solution was first introduced 18 months ago, but when testing it on the market, although successful, we wanted to roll out a solution that works in a variety of situations with different variables.

"It took us 18 months and 26 versions of the fuel probe and the entire system before we could roll out to the market," Smit concludes. **IFOCUS**

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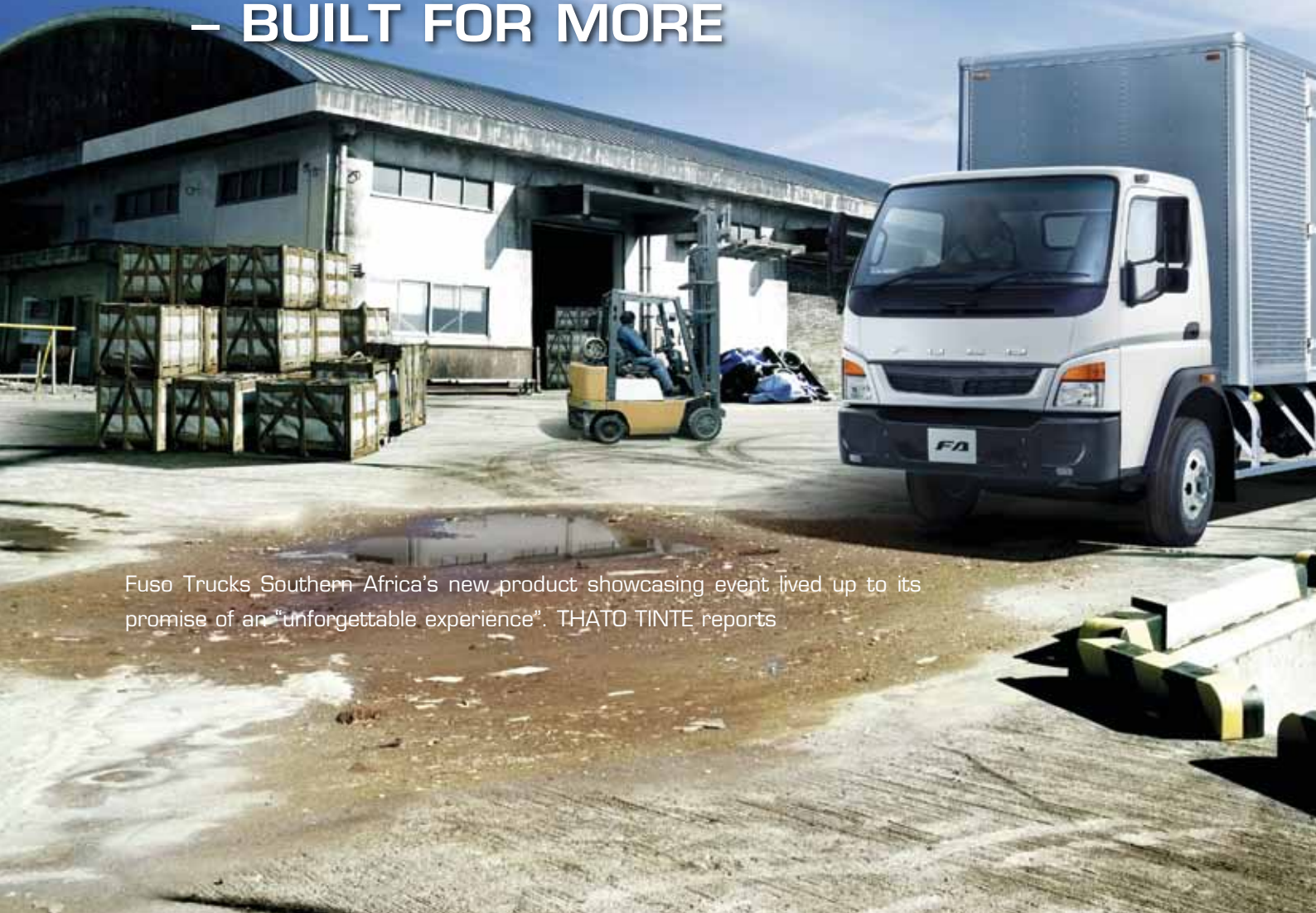
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FUSO'S NEW FREIGHTER

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Fuso Trucks Southern Africa's new product showcasing event lived up to its promise of an "unforgettable experience". THATO TINTE reports

The launch, which took place on October 15 and 16, drew the attention of the many guests in attendance – as Fuso unveiled its light- to medium-duty FA9-137 truck.

Fuso Trucks Southern Africa – a division of Daimler Trucks and Buses – hosted guests (including dealer networks) at the impressive "reveal venue", Steyn City – the mega lifestyle estate developed by insurance mogul, Douw Steyn.

Following addresses from head of Fuso Trucks Southern Africa, Naeem Hassim, and executive director for Daimler Trucks and Buses, Kobus van Zyl, an overview

of the FA9-137 was presented by Harry Makitla, product manager at Fuso Trucks SA.

This newest member to the South African Fuso product family is hailed as "the truck poised to dominate the region".

The FA9-137 is the first vehicle to be imported by Fuso Trucks Southern Africa from its Daimler India Commercial Vehicle (DICV) production plant, in Oragadam near Chennai, India.

DICV, a Daimler AG subsidiary, is one of the leading manufacturers in the Indian commercial-vehicle market. Characterised by its "Indian engineering with German

DNA", DICV aims to focus on safety, reliability and comfort.

Fuso says this new truck signals the expansion of its range in the country, and will "set the pace for more built-in-India products in the future".

Remarking on Fuso's direction towards the expansion of its Indian-manufactured imports, Hassim states that, with the huge potential of the Indian market, its intention is to participate in this growing arena.

He adds that other benefits include leveraging the skills within India, as well as Fuso's need to go where its customers



are. Van Zyl proudly states that in future the FA9-137 will be assembled in South Africa.

Makitla says the 4x2 FA9-137 is equipped with a Daimler engine and fits between Fuso's Canter and Fighter models. It has a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 9,6 t that allows for a payload of up to five tonnes.

This six-speed manual-transmission truck comes with a newly developed 4D37 diesel engine and boasts an impressive output of 100 kW at 420 Nm.

Adding to the truck's value proposition is its ability to be a "versatile workhorse".

The FA9-137 model can be fitted with various bodies such as drop side, van/box, curtain side, aerial platforms, cherry pickers, cranes, water drilling equipment, tankers and light-duty tippers.

The ergonomic cab's functional design has many comfort features including: twin co-driver seats with headrests, cup holders, a sliding rear window, tiltable and telescopic adjustable steering wheel, smooth gear shift and a standard demister with air-conditioning.

Over and above this, accessing the FA9-137's cab is easy as its doors open to 70°. The cabin tilts 45° to allow for convenient maintenance. Drivers will also welcome the high level of safety bolstered by the cab's side intrusion bars in the doors.

Known as the "Bharat Benz" in India, Fuso says the truck demonstrates

Daimler's uncompromised standards, efficiency and superior quality. It currently serves all major customer segments with DICV exporting the vehicles to Asia, Africa and the Middle East, with South America to follow soon.

On the Steyn City grounds, Fuso provided guests the opportunity to experience the FA9-137. The order of the day entailed product orientation and test drives in the various truck models.

"Already successfully launched and leading in various markets, the FA9-137 is a vehicle that represents a key step in Fuso Trucks Southern Africa's strategy of enhancing customer satisfaction, perfecting operational excellence and demonstrating our commitment to Africa's growing markets," Hassim enthuses. **IFOCUS**

ISUZU TRUCKS

EMBARKS ON THE BUSINESS OF TRUCKING



With a tough operating environment comes the need to offer customers innovative, value-added products and services, which is exactly what Isuzu Trucks is doing. GAVIN MYERS finds out more

This has been a busy year for Isuzu Truck South Africa. Its business has evolved to become an enterprise-type setup, it has placed increasing emphasis on its Trk'Eneur customers and it has taken operations at the Kanu/ACT bodybuilding venture under its wing.

You would have read about both of these initiatives during the year, so, with this in mind, the company has embarked on what it calls the Business of Trucking – bringing everything together to offer real added value to its customers.

“We want our brand to be seen to be doing things very differently, which has made us change our mindset, take risks and change the way we do things,”

begins Craig Uren, Isuzu Truck South Africa COO. “Business of Trucking is about how we participate in the whole supply chain of the business of trucks. It’s not just about the piece of hardware that leaves the factory.”

Specifically, the Business of Trucking brings Isuzu Truck South Africa, its dealers and supply chain together to be more collaborative and offer real value-added products to the customer.

“In this way, we keep close to our customers and interact with them for a much longer period. We also ensure that their investment can give its best throughout its lifetime,” Uren adds.

Isuzu Truck South Africa plans to do this in four ways, which it practically demonstrated with 65 individual vehicles at its Business of

Trucking event during October. Here, vehicles were presented in a range of configurations that have been created by the Kanu/ACT operation (see **FOCUS** October) to simplify the process of buying a bodied vehicle.

“Buying the right truck can sometimes get ‘lost in translation’. These packages make it a lot easier to spec vehicles ... When customers walk into our dealerships and say: ‘I want one of those’, they should get exactly what they want,” Uren explains.

The display modules of the event also included several of the refreshed Isuzu KB bakkies – which Uren considers to be a fundamental extension of a commercial operation and part of the solution Isuzu offers its Trk'Eneur customers. “They have been specifically upgraded to fill a tool-of-trade



function for our customers," he notes.

The company has also formed a range of service and maintenance plans for each of its vehicles. "These are specific to our product and give the customer and dealer the full value of the product based on factual operating conditions," says Uren.

The real news, however, is that Isuzu Trucks is tacking on the aftermarket replacement parts industry with a range of competitively priced, alternative, original-equipment [OE] parts.

Sourced from selected suppliers, these present a better purchasing option to the customer, who might otherwise opt for inferior-quality "no-name" replacement parts. Examples of these are general service parts, clutches and brakes.

Allied to this, the company has also created Isuzu Drivetrain – a business enterprise that specialises in the repair and remanufacture of transmissions, differentials, prop-shafts, steering systems and clutches for all Isuzu models. Customers know they are getting an OE, warranty-backed product, because it is owned and supported by Isuzu Truck South Africa.

"Here, no matter how old a truck is, there is a product that is fit for purpose for the life of that truck. Our dealers have the perspective of keeping the customer on the road, and the intention is for the customer to come back to our dealers and make use of this offering," says Uren.

Isuzu Drivetrain follows a four-tier approach; offering customers new

replacement components, exchange components, repaired components and minor repairs to components. Each carries a warranty of 24, 12, six or three months respectively.

"The current economic environment can be seen as full of potential, or just chaotic. The challenges on the horizon have encouraged us to come up with new ideas that will add immense value to the end user," Uren reiterates.

"Every single customer must see a tangible benefit in the purchase of his vehicle and know what it can do for his bottom line. The onus is on us and our dealers to take as much of the risk out of the equation as possible and find ways of satisfying those needs," he concludes. **| FOCUS**



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**SHELL CARD.
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Shell's annual "Fuel Matters" study finds that most fleet managers believe they can reduce fuel spend by at least five percent

by Sagar Sen, Marketing Manager, Fuel Card, Shell South Africa

Every year, Shell conducts a "Fuel Matters" research study, which is designed to provide insight into the state of fuel issues to inform fleet managers of ways to optimise operations.

This is the second time that Shell has conducted the Fuel Matters research, following the inaugural report in the United Kingdom in 2014. The research was conducted in May 2015 by Edelman Berland, an independent research firm, in partnership with Shell. Via an online survey, it obtained the views of 100 South African fleet managers, who were responsible for heavy and light goods vehicles.

In the study, Shell found that 80 percent of fleet managers think that more effective fuel management could reduce their fuel spend by five percent or more.

The fleet managers surveyed are aware that the fuel costs can account for more than 20 percent of operating costs for fleets. However, most agree that if fuel consumption is managed more effectively, fuel spend can be reduced significantly.

Fleet managers believe the best ways to better manage fuel usage include: better driver education, efficient route planning, load optimisation and regular maintenance of the vehicle and tyres.

Shell and its partners have found that a few small changes can have a large impact on efficient fuel management.

DRIVER EDUCATION

As the driver is the first line of defence in fuel efficiency, it is important to invest in driver education, so that each driver has the tools and knowledge necessary to make the best decisions on the road.

Mandating and informing drivers about standards in fuel and lubricant selection can have a big impact on fuel consumption. Drivers should be informed about the benefits of economy products, and directed to use a recommended grade of fuel and lubricants for the best results on the road.

Additionally, educating drivers about on-the-road behaviour is an

integral part of reducing fuel costs. Drivers should be encouraged to avoid harsh accelerating or braking where possible, to keep steering smooth and to avoid over-revving.

Finally, drivers should be helped to plan more efficient routes. Only half of the fleet managers surveyed used a route planning service or device. Communicate with your drivers and ask them to combine short trips and travel outside of peak hours to avoid traffic.

EXPLORE ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Fuel management devices and operational fleet management devices are not widely used, but can have an immense impact on measuring fuel consumption and changing behaviour.

When fleet managers are armed with the hard evidence that fuel management devices and operational fleet management devices provide, they are better able to hold drivers accountable for their actions and prevent fraudulent activities.

ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY

One of the biggest issues surrounding fuel management is that there is often no designated member of the supply chain who is held accountable for monitoring it and enforcing standards. Drivers look to fleet managers for guidance, while fleet managers often feel it is the driver's responsibility to manage their own behaviour. Three out of four fleet managers agree that there should be a designated role to manage fuel consumption.

Shell's "Fuel Matters" study found that fleet managers see the opportunity for improvement within their businesses and it takes only a few small changes to have a large impact on fuel savings.

Increased accountability, driver training and taking advantage of services and devices that monitor fuel usage are just a few simple tricks of the trade that can save a lot of money over time.

TALE OF FOUR CITIES!

CNH Industrial is truly a global giant, with 12 brands, 64 manufacturing plants, 49 research and development centres and a workforce of more than 69 000 people. It produces anything and everything from trucks to buses, tractors and construction equipment. CHARLEEN CLARKE went on a whistle-stop tour of four European cities to gain an insight into this mammoth – and rapidly expanding – industrial goliath

DAY ONE: CHABLIS, FRANCE

Things have got off to a decidedly good start. That's because I am surrounded by one of my favourite things: wine. To be precise, I'm at Domaine Vocoret, a Chablis vineyard some 180 km from Paris. Chablis is a small town (it has a population of just 2 600). Where it lacks in numbers of people, it more than compensates in terms of wine production; it comprises some 4 200 ha of vineyards.

Alas, we are not in Chablis only to drink wine (although, truth be told, we do quaff a couple of bottles). We're actually here to learn about one of the CNH companies, namely New Holland.

The company produces massively advanced grape harvesters. It's been the market leader since pa fell off the bus, selling 14 000 of these machines

since 1975. In fact, half of the 350 to 400 machines sold annually, worldwide, (including in South Africa) hail from the New Holland stable.

New Holland also produces olive harvesters, which enable farmers to reduce costs by a whopping 25 percent (versus manual picking).

Later, out in the vineyards, we see the VN2080 in the flesh (or should that be metal?) And what an impressive beast it turns out to be. The VN2080 can straddle two rows (the wheels are always in the middle of the row). It adjusts to widths of between 0,95 and 1,50 m. The track width adjustment is controlled from the driver's seat using electro-hydraulic controls.

The big blue machine is powered by a New Holland NEF six-cylinder turbocharged 6,75-litre engine, rated at 130 kW (175 hp), which is matched to a hydrostatic transmission with integral antiskid control (this provides optimal traction and grip on all terrains).

The system eliminates the risk of wheel slip and is used to climb steep gradients. In fact, we're told that it can climb a 45° slope! It's incredibly manoeuvrable too; turning in the tightest of spaces.

It's very easy to see why this machine sells faster than bottles of Chablis on a hot day ...



Above: The VN2080, the grapes it straddles and a scene from the winery.

DAY TWO: ULM, GERMANY

Such was my excitement following my day in Ulm that I covered it in my editor's column in the September issue of **FOCUS**. However, because I would like to fully portray the extent of CNH's operations, I will cover the day yet again (albeit briefly).

Ulm is home to Magirus, which is one of the top three companies in the world that specialises in producing fire engines. Magirus is, of course, yet another star in the CNH crown.

Arriving at the fire-engine producer, we are introduced to Antonio Benedetti, the company's CEO, who gives us some insight into this truly fascinating company, which was founded in 1864 by a chap called Conrad Dietrich Magirus.

"Magirus was the local fire brigade chief of Ulm, and he invented the first ever turntable ladder," he tells us.

Fast forward 151 years and Magirus is a huge business today. It's a massively progressive company, too; it recently launched the ML68L, which just happens to be the highest ladder in the world (68 m).

Later, I ascend the ladder (a truly terrifying experience) and go for a spin in the Superdragon X8, which is the mother of all fire engines. It is powered by two 412 kW Iveco engines that deliver a combined output of 824 kW of power, and it blasts off like a rocket.

We also go on a tour of the Magirus plant, where regular trucks are transformed into fire trucks. Because the company is part of the CNH group (which also owns Iveco) some people think that it only converts Iveco trucks, but that's

not true; the customers select their own chassis.

We also learn about the company's extremely close relationships with its end users; the firefighters. "Magirus actively collaborates with firefighters from Siberia to Africa, and from China to Japan. It is through close relationships, with those who are at the front line in emergency response, that the best and most reliable technological solutions are developed.

"When firefighters save lives, they cannot afford to make any compromises. This is why we also cannot make any compromises when it comes to providing firefighters with the best technology and tools. Every advancement we make, regardless of how hard it is to achieve, will pay off in the end. One life makes the difference," stresses Benedetti.

It's clear that this CNH-owned company is also making a real difference ...



KURTE
ASPLSUNG
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Above: The full Magirus range, Charleen Clarke and the sensational fire truck, the highest ladder in the world and the production facility in Ulm.

DAY THREE: TURIN, ITALY

Day three of our whirlwind tour is utterly fascinating. We kick off with my personal highlight of the entire trip: a meeting with David Wilkie, director of industrial design. He is both a fascinating and colourful character, who made his mark in the automotive world before moving into the world of commercial vehicles.

He reveals that he has enjoyed the transition to industrial products. "The fact that it's an industrial vehicle doesn't mean to say that it has to be boring or boxy. Yes, our vehicles must be functional, but there is a lot of style in our products, too. A commercial vehicle has to deliver goods, but it is also a communication device; which means it must stand out from the crowd," he explains.

Automotive design, on the other hand, can be a bit repetitive. "A car does a job and the job is never that different. Within the field of commercial vehicles, however, every product we work on has a different reason for its existence."

Our next stop is the CNH Industrial Village; the company's first multifunctional centre made to sell, support and present the products of New Holland Agriculture, New Holland Construction, Iveco, Iveco Bus, Astra and FPT Industrial.

The facility, situated in the northeast part of the city, comprises an area of over 74 000 m², of which 23 000 m² is covered with a large display of vehicles and powertrains. There are points of assistance for after-sales and financial services and a large workshop capable of carrying out all levels of maintenance and repairs, using highly skilled technicians.

Inside the complex, in the large showroom dedicated to the exhibition of vehicles, there is



Above: A futuristic design from the CNH team, David Wilkie (designer extraordinaire) and the methane tractor.

also an area showing technological excellence and innovative solutions that are the basis of the products of today and tomorrow.

In addition, an area has been dedicated to a gallery that traces the historic evolution of the products of CNH Industrial companies from the early years of the 20th century.

Then we dash off to a farm to see a New Holland tractor powered by methane. I get to spend some time behind the wheel of this unique tractor; it is surprisingly easy to drive. Best of all, the air-conditioning works like a dream (it's 40°C outside; everyone is wilting). The tractor is great news for the planet and for operating costs, too; it offers a 20 to 40 percent fuel saving over diesel-powered truck.

Equally fascinating is the fact that the La Bellotta farm that we're visiting has its own biogas plant. Through the anaerobic digestion of biomass and livestock manure produced on site, this plant generates biogas, which is used to power an endothermic engine for the production of electricity – all of which is fed into the national grid, and corresponds to the power needs of 10 000 households. The farm produces all the methane required to power the tractor.

La Bellotta also produces 15 000 t per year of digestate, which almost entirely covers the farm's needs, meaning it no longer requires chemical fertiliser. Some 4 700 t of CO₂ emissions are also saved via this initiative. Green and very clever – just like the methane-powered tractor.

DAY FOUR: MILAN, ITALY

Day four of our CNH tour sees us arrive at Expo Milano 2015; a massive exhibition which focuses on “providing healthy, safe and sufficient food for everyone, while respecting the planet and its equilibrium”.

Practically, this means an enormous exhibition area where 140 countries proudly show their pertinent technologies and product offerings. I am one of over 20-million visitors expected to view the 1,1-million square-metre exhibition.

CNH is an official global partner of the Expo, so the company is loudly and proudly involved in the event, thanks to the construction of a fascinating pavilion that flies the Holland Agriculture flag.

Incredibly, I discover that, at the end of the Expo, the entire structure will be dismantled and reassembled for new purposes. Equally interesting is the “green” manner in which the entire pavilion was constructed.

So how did they achieve this? Well, the pavilion was assembled according to the techniques of dry construction. (Where concrete requires water, this site was able to operate entirely without it.)

It also boasts a grass roof, which reduces heat during daytime hours. Rainwater is harvested from the pavilion roof, conveyed to a collection tank and placed underneath the lower section of the roof and is used to irrigate the grass roof area.

During the night, a free-cooling system with ambient air is activated through a fan and a servo controlled damper located on the north side of the pavilion. The free circulation of air reduces the temperature inside the building. When the air-conditioning system is switched on in the morning, less energy is needed to cool the ambient air.



Furthermore, photovoltaic panels are integrated into the upper windows of the south façade. They produce part of the energy required for the operations of the pavilion.

Amazingly, even the tiles in and around the pavilion are green. I'm not going to explain them fully (that would require an article in itself, but I discover that they degrade the same amount of Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) as 30 trees would in one day (approximately 22 m² of foliage).

Later, when I page through CNH's 2014 Sustainability Report, and I see the message it contains from Sergio Marchionne, the group's chairman, I think that the construction of the pavilion is especially apt.

“Building the future is an individual and collective responsibility. It is the duty of every person at every level. We have a duty to commit to what we are able to do, to dedicate our individual skills and talents in uniting the best of society, and to work together to achieve higher objectives,” he writes.

The Expo pavilion is tangible proof that the group is doing exactly that. **IFOCUS**



Above: Scenes from Expo Milano 2015: Fiat food trucks (Fiat is yet another CNH-owned company), the media group in front of the highly innovative New Holland pavilion, machinery from the New Holland stable and the USA pavilion, which featured an innovative vertical garden made up of herbs.

THE NEW COOL



For years now, two specific vehicles have had the run of the compact panel-van/multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) playground. GAVIN MYERS drives a new challenger that he thinks will be the new cool kid on the block

This segment has strange dynamics ... Traditionally comprised of Volkswagen's (VW's) Caddy, Renault's Kangoo, the Citroën Berlingo and Peugeot Partner twins, Fiat's Doblo, Toyota's Avanza and Nissan's NV200; there has been more than enough choice for the buying public. The Toyota and VW are the perennial favourites with buyers, though.

Ford has now entered the fray, too, with its Transit/Tourneo Connect models – the smallest of the Transit/Tourneo family that are available in South Africa.

Admittedly, the differences between the panel van and MPV sectors of the market are quite marked. Taking the most recent figures available (September), the Avanza has the run of the MPV sector, with the Caddy in second place, and vice versa when looking at the panel vans. So, the Transit Connect needs to aim for the Caddy, while the Tourneo Connect will have the Avanza in its crosshairs ...

While we would have preferred to review the Transit Connect, we were only able to get our hands on the Tourneo Connect 1.0 EcoBoost Trend. No bother, though, as, in five-seat spec, this MPV truly is multi-purpose. (Seven seats are available on the Grand Tourneo Connect 1,6-litre petrol and diesel models.)

The interior is commodious. Ford claims a 1 029-litre load volume and 913 mm load length with the second row of seats in place. With these easily folded flat, the

figures increase to 2 410 litres and 1 828 mm. For those wanting to load heavier items, this model offers a 2 000 kg gross vehicle mass and 550 kg payload to play with.

If you want to load people, though, the second row of seats (split 60/40) is a treat. Passengers will enjoy their comfort and space, ease of entry and egress through the side sliding doors, individual three-point seatbelts and aircraft-style overhead lockers. There is also a secret hidden storage compartment in the driver's side rear footwell ...

The driver also enjoys a handy storage compartment atop the instrument binnacle and a large overhead storage tray. In fact, the front is as comfortable and spacious as the rear. Interior styling and switchgear will be immediately recognisable to those who have spent time with the brand's current range of vehicles. Everything falls nicely to hand and has a quality, upmarket feel.

Among the standard features of the Tourneo Connect Trend are Ford's easy-to-use Sync system, cruise control with a speed limiter, EcoScout included in the trip computer and a host of safety features.

These include: driver, passenger and front and rear curtain airbags; anti-lock brakes with six different electronic braking aids; and three different "Controls" – Traction, Torque Vectoring and Trailer Sway.



Ford's range of EcoBoost engines is well-known by now. The 1,0-litre unit powering the Tourneo Connect develops 74 kW at 6 000 r/min and 170 Nm thanks to turbocharging and direct injection.

While it copes fine with day-to-day commuting, this little three-cylinder is a bit low on oomph when the going gets hot. It does emit a characterful little growl, though. Even more importantly, Ford claims it'll sip just 5,6 l/100 km on the combined driving cycle.

Ride comfort and road holding are top-drawer, as are visibility and manoeuvrability thanks to the large glasshouse and wide-angle wing mirrors. (Front and rear park-distance control are optional.)

Included in the list price of R283 900 is a three-year/60 000 km service plan, a four-year/120 000 km comprehensive warranty, five-year/unlimited km corrosion warranty and three-year/unlimited km roadside assistance.

While some other vehicles in this category might be cheaper, I stand by my conviction that Ford really does have the competition licked with the Tourneo Connect. It is easily the most handsome vehicle in its class. It is exceptionally spacious and versatile and – if you don't ask too much of the small engine – very nice to drive. This 1.0 Trend offers good value and quality in particular. **IFOCUS**

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YEAR(S) OF THE VEHICLE



With one of the biggest populations on planet earth, China experienced huge economic growth over the last few years, and is considered one of the world's up-and-coming superpowers. **FOCUS** investigates the proliferation of vehicle sales in that country

No matter your perception of the country, there's no denying the importance of vehicles with four or more wheels in modern-day China ... Huge growth in that country's economy over the last decade has seen the development of a burgeoning passenger- and commercial-vehicle industry, with the congruent rise in sales.

In fact, between 2000 and 2013, China's share of global light-vehicle sales experienced an eightfold increase, from three to 25 percent. It is predicted to reach 29 percent by 2020. Let that sink in ... essentially one third of global sales, of all

such vehicles, will be made in one country.

What sort of numbers does all this translate to? Well, big ones! According to statistics portal *Statista*, in 2013, almost 18-million passenger cars were sold in China! The number of privately owned vehicles was just above 88-million cars, while 200-million licensed drivers were registered in China as of 2012 (approximately 15 percent more than the previous year).

It's not only passenger cars that have enjoyed this boom, as commercial vehicles have also proved to be big business in China.

PR Newswire reports that there were a total of 73 companies selling commercial

vehicles in China in 2013. "The top ten, in terms of sales volume, were Beiqi Foton, Dongfeng Motor, JAC Motors, Jinbei Automobile, FAW Group, Jiangling Holding, SAIC-GM-Wuling, Sinotruk, Nanjing Auto and Chang'an Automobile, with a combined market share of 71,6 percent," the media content provider claims.

Heavy trucks account for the most market share, with Sinotruk, Beiqi Foton, Dongfeng Motor, JAC Motors and Shaanxi Automobile the major players with a combined segment share in 2013 of 83,8 percent.

"In the bus field, large buses have a higher market concentration than medium-sized and



Chinese commercial vehicle sales are expected to reach 5,12 million in 2017.

lightweight buses. China's large bus market is dominated by Jinlong Bus and Yutong Bus, with combined market share of 65,2 percent in 2013," it continues.

In terms of commercial vehicles, in 2013, approximately 477 000 busses and 2,7 million trucks were sold in China. South Africa's own sales during that year pale in comparison. We sold a mere 650 620 vehicles – in total! Chinese commercial vehicle sales are expected to reach 5,12 million in 2017.

However, as lush as the market has been – and still is – there are some concerns. China's economy slowed in the third quarter of 2014, which had similar effects on the

associated commercial-vehicle industry. In July this year, vehicle sales dropped seven percent. *PR Newswire* again reports that the truck market remains depressed as a result of the slower pace in infrastructure and project construction.

"It is expected that the truck market will maintain a moderate growth trend over the next few years, due to continuous structural adjustments of China's macro economy," it states.

Digital financial education platform *Investopedia* states that, although long-term trends are positive, the near-term issues are discouraging.

Writing for the website, financial columnist Dan Moskowitz states that there are several reasons for this: "The most obvious is the poor performance in stocks following a market plunge, which has affected consumer behaviour for the worse."

He adds: "Another hurdle for auto sales is that the government is looking to curb automobile growth to improve traffic flow and to reduce pollution. Then you have to factor in pricing; due to price wars, retail prices are down 2,4 percent in 2015 when compared to the previous year."

While the market is expected to return to the glory of its recent past once the economy recovers, Moskowitz claims this "will take years". There are, however, sectors of the Chinese commercial-vehicle market that show more immediate promise.

Reported on *PR Newswire*, Frost & Sullivan

claims that the Chinese compressed and liquefied natural gas (LNG) commercial-vehicle market is on an upward trend. "With the Government implementing and supporting the new energy resource policy [...], the prospects for compressed and liquefied natural gas commercial vehicle manufacturers look bright," it states.

Analysis from Frost & Sullivan earlier this year found that total Chinese LNG commercial vehicle (medium and heavy-duty natural-gas trucks and buses) sales volumes stood at 78 200 units in 2013.

It estimates this will reach 246 000 units by 2020. Accordingly, the number of natural-gas filling stations is expected to increase from the 4 000 in 2013, to 18 000 by 2020.

Frost & Sullivan Automotive and Transportation Research Associate, Ming Lih Chan, says: "The central government is promoting green transportation in more than 100 cities within China, and every regional government is adapting and coordinating accordingly. In fact, Shanghai, Chengdu, Xinjiang and Hebei have already replaced more than 85 percent of their existing fleets with natural gas buses."

While the boom may be abating, the vastness of the Chinese vehicle industry is undeniably impressive. It'll be interesting to revisit the topic in 2020, to see if the predictions made for that year will materialise. If perceptions of modern-day China aren't changing by now, they are sure to by then. **IFOCUS**



MERCEDES MAGIC IN RUSSIA

Following our coverage of Russia's Comtrans 2015 exhibition last month, GIANENRICO GRIFFINI's exclusive ITOY interview with two of Daimler's top managers in Russia provides further insight into this dynamic market

In 2008, Daimler started a strategic partnership with Russian truck manufacturer Kamaz, and inaugurated local production of Mercedes-Benz and Fuso trucks in Naberzhnye Chelny in 2011. In June 2015, the business units of Mercedes-Benz and Fuso were integrated under one roof.

With these models Daimler offers solutions in all areas of the Russian transport industry. The best sellers vary depending on the field of application, but, for example, the Actros 1841 and Actros 1844 LS resonate extremely well with customers engaged in international transport. In addition to Mercedes-Benz and Fuso trucks, Mercedes-Benz and Setra buses are also included.

Heiko Schulze, CEO Mercedes-Benz Trucks Vostok (MBTV), explains that MBTV is a 50:50 joint venture between Daimler AG and Kamaz. It combines the strengths of Daimler's

technological know-how and world-class quality standards, with Kamaz's profound knowledge of the Russian market and its local supplier base.

Some years ago, you started a localisation process of some truck components. Is this process ongoing and is it taking advantage of the five supplier clusters in Russia?

Today, MBTV is treated as a local producer, because we fulfil localisation obligations within the "industrial assembly" regime, together with other automobile producers like Kamaz and Renault (the so-called "Alliance").

In 2014, the Alliance achieved a localisation level of more than 68 percent - the highest among the other companies and alliances. The company cooperates with more than 30 local suppliers. We have plans to increase localisation further, for instance by localising the cabins in Naberzhnye Chelny.

In June, it was decided to merge MBTV and Fuso Kamaz Truck Russia. Why, and what results did you expect?

We decided to integrate Fuso under the roof of MBTV and work within the framework of one single joint venture. This decision will lead to synergies in administration, production and procurement. At the same time, the overall shareholder structure remains the same: Daimler and Kamaz each still hold 50 percent of the company.

Can you describe the Russian Federation truck market?

The Russian truck market has shrunk dramatically over the past two years, and our outlook for 2015 and 2016 foresees a continued downward trend. When it comes to segments, we see a clear focus on truck tractors, which account for roughly two-thirds of the demand.



Above: The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Classic is a "made in Russia" success story.

Left: Sören Häse (left, with Rene Mack, director sales and marketing, Mercedes-Benz Vans) and Heiko Schulze are the men tasked with driving the Mercedes-Benz van and truck businesses in Russia.



High interest rates make it quite challenging to finance new trucks in Russia. Moreover, access to capital markets is restricted, which is why many customers postpone their purchasing decisions.

Western European models are at the top end of the price range, due to their advanced features, followed by Japanese and Korean manufacturers, and local and Chinese original equipment manufacturers. MBTV does not differentiate between locally produced and imported trucks, as they have the same quality and product characteristics.

The current emission level is Euro 4, so the current requirement for diesel is 50 ppm. This is rather good fuel quality, which allows a huge fleet of cars and trucks to successfully operate in Russia. Fuel quality and control for fuel circulation in Russia is constantly being improved.

Do you foresee any upturn, once the political tensions are over?

The economic situation in Russia is currently rather challenging. The main reasons for the

difficulties are a weak investment climate, low oil prices, high interest rates and a considerable slump in the Russian ruble.

The economy could pick up in the medium term, but economists expect a recovery at a moderate pace. We welcome all diplomatic efforts to overcome political tensions that will help to unleash some growth.

Is the transport sector in the Russian Federation dominated by big fleets, small transport companies, driver owners, or sub-contractors?

Roughly, we can differentiate between pure transport companies and retailers with their own fleets. The majority of pure transport companies have fleets ranging between 20 and 70 trucks. Very few operate fleets of more than 500 vehicles. The number of owner-drivers is relatively small and does not play a major role in Russia.

Is total cost of ownership (TCO) an important issue?

TCO is a significant aspect for our customers,

and has become even more important in economically difficult times when they are increasingly cost sensitive. This is one of the reasons Mercedes-Benz has been gaining market share, as we offer reliable and efficient vehicles at an attractive TCO.

Can you give me some information on the used truck market?

In times of crises, the business for used trucks has become more important. Interest from our customers is quite high. As a result, MBTV started a used truck and trade-in business at the beginning of this year – of course also to support our sales efforts for new trucks, as many customers are willing to buy new trucks if they can get an attractive price for their existing fleet.

SÖREN HÄSE, VICE-PRESIDENT MERCEDES-BENZ VANS IN RUSSIA, DESCRIBES THE VAN BUSINESS

Can you outline a short history of Mercedes-Benz Rus van business and its major developments?



In 1974, Mercedes-Benz was the first foreign automotive company to open a representative office in the Soviet Union and the first to do so in Russia in 1994. In 2002, Mercedes-Benz opened its first completely van-dedicated dealer, of which there are now 18 in Russia. We have seven certified bodybuilding partners.

In December 2010, Daimler AG and GAZ Group signed an agreement on contract manufacturing of the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Classic in Nizhny Novgorod. After two-and-a-half years and over €100 million, we launched full-scale production in July 2013. We have produced over 10 000 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Classics and it has become our best-selling model in Russia.

On top of that, we also started production of Mercedes-Benz diesel engines at the GAZ-plant in Yaroslavl, which are installed on the Sprinter Classic. Altogether, we now reach a localisation rate of 40 percent, which is more than some international passenger-car manufacturers operating in Russia.

We have 74 dealer centres (18 are van-only) which sell and service vans in 55 Russian cities.

Please describe today's Mercedes-Benz Rus product portfolio.

Mercedes-Benz Vans offers a full and young van model portfolio for each business need in Russia. The Mercedes-Benz Citan improved its sales performance in Russia by 146,2 percent during the first seven months of this year

compared to 2014.

The Mercedes-Benz Vito was introduced at the end of last year, but proved itself a leader in its segment: with sales up 27,9 percent from January to July, compared to last year.

In 2014 alone, we sold a record number of over 6 600 Sprinter Classics – it is our most popular model. The Sprinter Classic is originally the T1N, but has completely new safety systems, transmission, engine, modernised front optics, steering wheel and seats.

Local production allows us to offer it at an attractive price, in the current economic climate, and to participate in state-supported programmes.

Please tell us about your partnership with PKF Luidor for Sprinter minibuses.

The Sprinter Classic is a “made in Russia” success story. In 2009, Mercedes-Benz Vans was looking for a Russian bodybuilder to cooperate with, because dealers and customers were increasingly looking for individual bodybuilder solutions and appropriate after-sales service.

PKF Luidor was a new player. We introduced Daimler standards and technologies. It was our first local experience with the turnkey concept based on a beneficial partnership.

Today, there are six certified companies with official Van Partner status: PKF Luidor, ST Nizhegorodets, Automechanical Plant LLC, Tsentranstehk mash, Evrakom, and VO Avtotekhnimport. This guarantees high quality

of production and servicing. Customers can choose where to buy and to service these vehicles – at official Mercedes-Benz dealer centres or the van partner.

Russian bodybuilders produce minibuses, emergency vehicles, Mixto, Kombi, mobile shops, different refrigerators, mobile services, motorbike transporters, and others, based on the Sprinter Classic.

Some key figures on Russian Federation light commercial vehicle (LCV) market and your forecast for this year?

The market environment is extremely difficult. The LCV market was down by 13 percent from 2013 to 2014 (171 660 versus 149 199). By July 2015, the LCV market decreased by another 30,4 percent. In July, the decline slowed and decreased by only 12 percent. We do not see any indication for a quick market recovery.

How do Russian customers use their vans?

In general, fleet customers are interested in using their vehicles for a longer period of time as the total costs of ownership of Mercedes-Benz vans remain low.

It is true that some Russian customers had complaints about small service intervals?

Unfortunately, the quality of fuel differs from region to region, thus the aggregates should be checked more often. There are 119 458 Mercedes-Benz LCVs in Russia. **| FOCUS**

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.



Mercedes-Benz locally produces trucks in Russia and collaborates with more than 30 suppliers.

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CURBING CLIMATE CHANGE AS ONE

A new report released at the Global Sustainable Aviation Summit in Geneva, Switzerland, shows the aviation industry has embarked on a systematic programme of energy efficiency to reduce its climate impact. This includes solar power installations at 100 airports around the world, tablet computers for pilots, brand new aircraft designs and flights using fuel made with waste gas from steel plants

The report, *Aviation Climate Solutions*, was released at the end of September by the Air Transport Action Group, a global coalition of aviation partners promoting the sector's sustainable development.

Executive director, Michael Gill, said at the launch: "The case studies show the wide variety of climate action across the sector. Carbon-emissions-reduction projects by over 400 organisations, in 65 countries, are represented."

He adds: "This is, however, only a snapshot of the projects underway. The most impressive realisation is the amount of collaboration between industry partners, helping to drive efficiency. Action is taking

place in all parts of the world: not only at large organisations, but also through partners in emerging economies."

He continues: "Importantly, the report also shows how the industry is working to meet the goals it has set itself through the climate action framework announced at the same summit in 2008.

"Through investing in new technology, making the operation of aircraft more efficient and developing better infrastructure, the sector is more than meeting its goal of a 1.5 percent improvement in fuel efficiency per year. The case studies in the *Aviation Climate Solutions* report point to just some of the projects making that a reality."

In 2008, the aviation sector became the first to set global goals to proactively manage its climate change impact. The industry will stabilise its net CO₂ emissions from 2020 through a concept called carbon-neutral growth, whereby traffic would continue to rise to meet the demands of society and the economy, but growth in emissions would be offset through a global market-based measure (MBM). The longer-term goal is to reduce net CO₂ emissions from aviation to half of what they were in 2005, by 2050.

Key areas of climate action in the sector include: the development of alternative fuels; operational efficiencies, (such as using lighter equipment on board and taking-off, flying and



landing in smarter ways); the development of new technology (both entirely new aircrafts and components); and systematic changes in airspace and navigation.

Gill says the report shows that not all projects are headline grabbers: "Some actions are big, such as bringing a new aircraft to service, and some are smaller, but significant in their own way.

"This is a reflection of the aviation industry as a whole. We serve thousands of communities and over three billion passengers a year, but each journey tells its own unique story. It is also a reflection of what will be needed to tackle the climate challenge on a broader level. All parts of the economy and all parts of society have a role to play, with both small actions and large shifts in thinking."

Tony Tyler, director general and CEO of the International Air Transport Association, agrees: "Flying is a team effort. We also need a team effort to reach our sustainability goals. Innovation has been at the root of our technological and operational improvements,

but, above all, it is the unity of the aviation industry, jointly setting our three climate-change targets, which has enabled us to make significant progress."

Tyler concludes with a personal vision on the importance of aviation to deliver a more sustainable world, urging that "to save the earth, we need to take to the air".

"Aviation creates the connectivity that helps make our world a more prosperous place: a source of 58 million jobs and US\$ 2,4 trillion (nearly R32 trillion), in economic activity. That prosperity drives the innovation required for societies to move forward sustainably. Rising living standards lead to greater technological advances, far more efficient use of resources, and political pressure for environmental safeguards.

"So, aviation's greatest environmental service is to do what it keeps on doing – being a force for good, spreading peace and prosperity around the globe."

You can access the Aviation Climate Solutions report at www.enviro.aero/climatesolutions. Some of the highlights include:

- More than 100 airports worldwide have invested in solar power to supply a portion of their energy needs (and up to 100 percent in one case).
- The addition of wingtip devices to 8 300 in-service aircraft has saved around 56 million tonnes of CO₂ in the last 15 years.
- Over 2 000 commercial flights have already taken place using sustainable, alternative aviation fuels, which are now being brought into everyday use. Airlines have also invested billions of dollars in alternative fuels by pre-purchasing stock to help kick-start the industry.
- Lightweighting (including the use of new slimline seats, carbon-fibre food service trolleys and stronger, but lighter, cargo and baggage containers) is saving millions of tonnes of CO₂ each year across the fleet.
- A number of organisations are empowering their teams to generate climate action ideas – employees can provide expert insight into the initiatives that will help cut emissions. **IFOCUS**

CATERPILLAR

TO BUILD ITS OWN TRUCKS

In his monthly review of global news for local truckers, FRANK BEETON notes what appears to be the final act in the Navistar/Caterpillar cooperation, reports on PACCAR's growing Stateside success with its own engine family, reflects on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter's 20th anniversary, and examines some interesting new trailer-reversing technology



Back in 2009, the world trucking community was abuzz with news that iconic civil engineering equipment manufacturer Caterpillar Inc. was to cooperate with Navistar International on engine platforms, and the introduction of a Cat-branded vocational heavy-duty truck range in the North American market.

This subsequently resulted in the formation of a 50/50 joint venture, named NC², which was also intended to pursue targeted global commercial truck opportunities overseas.

However, in September 2011 there was a surprise announcement that NC² had become a wholly owned Navistar subsidiary.

Subsequent direct involvement from Caterpillar, was, therefore, ruled out, other than its continued sourcing of Cat-branded vocational trucks for the North American market, and the offshore use of "Cat" branding on certain products – namely a series of International-built truck tractors for the Australian market.

The NC² cooperation, together with several international joint ventures entered into during that period by the Navistar family, seemed to herald the creation of a major new force in the global truck market.

This perception was reinforced by the rebranding of several former Navistar global operations with the NC² logo, suggesting intensified marketing focus and material support from the iconic yellow-metal manufacturer.

However, through a process of subsequent contraction (that has been detailed too many times in this column to bear repeating), it all just seemed to fizzle out, to the point where we have been left asking more questions about Navistar's strategic intent, than reporting positive news of the company's progress.

EACH GOING ITS OWN WAY

The announcement, made during July in the United States (US), that Navistar and Caterpillar are to go their separate ways in the heavy-duty vocational truck business, seems to have written the final chapter to this rather unfortunate story.

At the end of 2016, Navistar's Escobedo, Mexico, plant is to cease the production of Cat-branded trucks that it has been building since 2011 for the North American market. Truck production at Caterpillar's Victoria, Texas, plant is, however, to ramp up from the first half of 2016.

The Victoria plant was opened in 2012 and currently manufactures hydraulic excavators. It will also become the future design and engineering centre for Cat's own vocational truck range of dumpers, mixers and haulers, which will carry on from the CT660, CT680 and CT681 models that emanated from the NC² collaboration.

Navistar has also announced that it intends to launch its own new "premium vocational" truck range in early 2016.

SPRINTER TURNS TWENTY

During September, Mercedes-Benz Vans celebrated the 20th anniversary of its highly successful Sprinter "large

van" family. Up to that time, more than 2,9 million Sprinter vans, together with spun-off passenger, chassis/cab and light truck models, had been delivered to customers in more than 130 countries around the world.

Sprinter production is currently undertaken in Germany (Düsseldorf and Ludwigsfelde plants), Argentina (Buenos Aires), China (Fuzhou) and Russia (Nizhny Novgorod), with CKD assembly in North America (Charleston, South Carolina).

The Sprinter has passed through three product generations; the first running from 1995 to 2006, the second from 2006 to 2013, and the third from 2013 to the present.

The first-generation Sprinter re-entered production as the "Sprinter Classic" at the GAZ joint-venture plant in Russia during 2013. The Chinese Sprinter models have been built by the Fujian Benz Automotive joint venture since 2011.

The celebrations surrounding the 20th Anniversary were used to confirm some new strategic direction changes for the Sprinter going forward. As we reported earlier this year, Daimler Trucks has announced that a new van manufacturing plant, incorporating an assembly line, body shop and paint shop, is to be opened in Charleston during 2016 to build the next generation Sprinter. This will allow the manufacturer to improve the economics of its North American van business, and shorten delivery times.

During 2014, the US was Mercedes-Benz's second-largest individual market for this product after Germany, with around 26 000 units sold. It has also been announced that €450 million (R6,699 billion) is to be invested in modernising the two German plants, and that Düsseldorf would become the global competence centre for the Sprinter product family.

DAIMLER AND VOLKSWAGEN PART COMPANY

It is not surprising that so much attention was focused on the next-generation Sprinter, as it promises to be a somewhat different animal to those that have gone before.

Since 1995, Daimler has been involved in a van-building partnership with Volkswagen AG. In terms of this, the Volkswagen Crafter and Mercedes-Benz Sprinter integral van ranges were both built alongside each other at Daimler's Düsseldorf plant, using the same basic structure, but with unique drivetrains supplied by each of the respective partners.

This arrangement will be terminated during 2016, however, after which the two partners will go their separate ways. The successor to the current Crafter model will be built in a new Volkswagen (VW) plant located at Września, in Poland.

POSSIBLE COUSINS FOR THE NEW SPRINTER

With the Daimler/VW partnership consigned to history, it must be presumed that the erstwhile partners will each develop a new, unique "large van" product. However, there is the possibility that Daimler may have already turned to its intensifying relationship with Renault-Nissan for some input on future van direction.





Twenty years and three generations on, the next Sprinter promises to be very different.

The Renault Master and Nissan NV400 van families share market space with both the Sprinter and Crafter families, but one significant historical difference has been that the Renault/Nissan models were basically front-wheel-drive (FWD), while the VW and Mercedes products were rear-wheel drive (RWD).

The growing incidence of all-wheel drive (AWD) configurations recently evident in this market may, however, make that difference academic in future models. It is notable that the most recent Nissan and Renault van families are available with FWD, RWD and AWD layouts.

Daimler, one would assume, would want to retain its own powertrain in any future cooperative venture, so it may come down to the ability or willingness of Renault-Nissan to accommodate this requirement that will influence future direction. With the new Sprinter due in 2016, these decisions will have already been taken, so we should not have to wait too much longer to find out!

100 000 PACCAR ENGINES NOW POWERING AMERICAN TRUCKS!

Even before Global Focus first made its appearance early in 2006, we had been tracking a very significant fundamental change in the American truck-building industry.

After decades where a highly standardised selection of outsourced driveline aggregates – supplied by the likes of Cummins, Detroit Diesel, Caterpillar, Eaton/Fuller, Spicer, ArvinMeritor and Dana – was to be found in the vast majority of American “Class 8” vehicles, a new era had dawned.

During this, the European-led groups Daimler Trucks and Volvo – long-established champions of “vertically integrated” in-house driveline component sourcing – took control of American brands Freightliner, Western Star and Mack.

The European manufacturers were clearly intent on extending this philosophy to their American brands, with the motivation being to spread the amortisation of development

and production costs across the largest possible global volume footprint, and to take increased control of their aftermarket and parts business.

THE GROWING EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN TRUCKING

In 2000, Daimler bought Detroit Diesel from joint General Motors and Penske Corporation. In 2006, it took it out of the “loose engine” business.

Then, over the 2008 to 2011 period, Navistar International established its own MaxxForce “big-bore” engine range, based on MAN and Caterpillar designs. Caterpillar, confronted by increasingly stringent emission standards, also decided to withdraw its highly successful proprietary engine range from the on-road truck market.

While all this was going on, the only remaining US-owned and controlled truck manufacturing conglomerate, PACCAR, was making its own plans to adopt an “in-house” engine supply strategy.

Following its takeover of DAF Trucks in 1996, PACCAR inherited a substantial engine design and manufacturing capability, which dated back to the licence manufacture of Leyland diesel engines in the 1950s. DAF had incrementally developed its own designs, incorporating turbocharging and intercooling, as the demand for higher outputs grew.

This development process led to the introduction of DAF’s 12,9-litre MX engine at the 2004 Hannover show, followed by the 9,2-litre PR power unit just one year later in Amsterdam.

With a power spectrum of 183 kW (250 hp) to 420 kW (560 hp) now available from DAF manufactured engines, an ideal opportunity was created to take PACCAR’s own power range across the Atlantic to its American customers.

At the beginning of 2007, PACCAR announced its intention to build a new \$US 400-million powertrain manufacturing

and assembly facility, plus technology centre, in Columbus, Mississippi.

The site was confirmed as a production location for both 9,2 and 12,9 litre engines, to be used in Kenworth, and Peterbilt vehicles. Stateside production of these power units commenced in 2010, and, understandably, PACCAR started off by offering them as an optional fitment, while retaining the availability of Cummins power units for those operators who still wished to remain standardised on the American brand.

A POSITIVE TREND FOR PACCAR POWER

We have been keen to establish PACCAR’s level of success in convincing “hard-nosed” American truckers to move away from their traditional preferences.

Early in 2014, we were able to report that PACCAR had already installed more than 51 000 of the group’s MX-13 engines in Peterbilt and Kenworth trucks for the North American market, and that around one-third of current deliveries of Paccar Group Class-8 trucks into its home market were being equipped with these engines.

It was also notable that Kenworth – the dominant force in the heavy commercial (over 16 t gross vehicle mass (GVM)) segment of the Australian truck market – had decided to introduce an MX-powered version of its bonneted T409 regional application model at the 2014 Melbourne Truck Show.

Kenworth’s success in Australia had been built firmly on the “kit truck” philosophy previously dominant in the US market, so this departure from a highly effective strategy was most significant.

During August, PACCAR made two significant announcements that enabled us to make a more up-to-date assessment of the efficacy of their engine strategy. The first revealed that the 100 000th MX-13 engine had been produced in North America, while the second commemorated the delivery of the 50 000th MX-powered Kenworth truck,

which was handed over to operator UPS at a ceremony in Kirkland, Washington.

These announcements indicated that the North American population of PACCAR-built engines had grown by some 50 000 units over the previous eighteen months.

In a 2014 Class-8 truck market of 220 000 units, PACCAR gained a market share of 28 percent, which translated to sales of some 61 000 units. The engine production volume required to support the 12-month portion of the aforementioned 50 000 unit population growth would have been some 33 000 units.

We can, therefore, conclude that roughly half of all Kenworth and Peterbilt Class-8 trucks currently being sold in the US are specified with in-house engines. This is somewhat better than the rate of one-third reported early in 2014, and is an impressive improvement by any standard.

TRAILER REVERSING MADE EASY

Trailer reversing is a skill that is usually acquired after much (and sometimes expensive), trial and error, and only those who practice it frequently can become really expert at the process.

Problems arise because the towing vehicle is required to steer the trailer into position through its own manoeuvres, and this sometimes requires an opposite movement of the steering wheel to what seems logical. There can also be a considerable variation in reversing dynamics, dependent on the comparative lengths of the towing vehicle and trailer.

FORD INTRODUCES PTBA

Ford has recognised the importance of providing a solution to this challenge, and has introduced Pro Trailer Backup Assist (PTBA) on its domestic American 2016 model F-150 pickup.

All the driver has to do is "steer" the trailer in the desired direction, as viewed on the screen of the dashboard reversing display, by twirling a miniature knob mounted on the dash adjacent to the steering wheel.

The PTBA system uses many of the same sensors and systems as the pickup's automatic parking and lane keep assist features, to manoeuvre it and the trailer into the desired

position, while the driver controls only the accelerator and brake functions. The steering inputs and reversing speed are automatically controlled, with the steering wheel turning independently of any input from the driver.

This system does need some advance preparation to function correctly, however; this being the input of four trailer-dimension measurements and the placing of a sticker, which needs to be affixed to a designated position on the trailer.

PTBA can accommodate up to ten different trailers (with overall lengths of up to a maximum of some ten metres, and with single or tandem axles) in its memory bank, once the trailers' names and dimensions have been programmed in. The system does need to be activated, so drivers confident in their own reversing skills can still do it the hard way – if they so wish!

CONTINENTAL'S TRAILER REVERSE ASSIST

The American division of German firm Continental AG is also developing a somewhat more sophisticated system, called Trailer Reverse Assist (TRA), for heavier articulated vehicles.

Using an intelligent rear-camera module, a centrally mounted control knob (similar to Ford's PTBA), and a 360° surround view of the tractor-trailer combination on the truck-tractor's console screen, Continental's TRA system enables low-speed reverse and parking manoeuvres to be steered either from inside the cab, where the vehicle's projected path is displayed on the console screen, or from a position outside the vehicle using a tablet or other smart device.

The remote control function controls low-speed steering, gear shifting, braking and acceleration, but requires that the driver remain engaged with the smart device throughout the operation, or the vehicle will stop automatically, thus preventing potential accidents.

The smart device display shows an overlay of the vehicle's projected path, and images from the 360° Surround View video system, which utilises four 185° fisheye cameras. The TRA-equipped vehicle must also be fitted with

an electronic brake control module, and an electrically-powered steering system.

ASSISTANCE FOR ALL

Continental claims that the TRA system will greatly assist inexperienced drivers, and even be useful for experienced drivers when they are challenged by unfamiliar surroundings, blind spots, inadequate sight angles, or an unfamiliar trailer configuration.

It will remove the necessity for having a second person, standing outside the vehicle, giving advice or directions to the driver seated in the cab. It also incorporates an anti-jackknife algorithm.

Continental says that this system would be ready for production by 2018. However, we are not aware, at this stage, of any similar system that will work with a double-articulated vehicle, such as an interlink or Australian B-Double combination. We feel sure, however, that such a device is not beyond the realms of possibility, given the capabilities of modern technology.



PACCAR has produced more than 100 000 MX-13 engines in North America.

Continental North America's home market is dominated by vast numbers of simple tractor-trailer combinations, so it has understandably concentrated initially on a solution for that scenario, but we await inevitable further developments with intense interest. **IFOCUS**



Global FOCUS is a monthly update of international news relating to the commercial vehicle industry. It is compiled exclusively for FOCUS by Frank Beeton of Econometrix. 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.

SHORT HAULS



DREAM, CREATE, INSPIRE

Cummins South Africa has taken upcycling to the next level with the Cummins Dream Machine initiative, which sees employees create arts and crafts from scrap parts found at the company's Master Rebuild Centre in Johannesburg.

The project was initiated in March by MD Schuylla Goodson Bell. "The premise is that engine parts can be used to educate others about upcycling and to create jobs with local artists, crafters and artisans," she explains.

To kick-off the project, Cummins employees from varying backgrounds were placed into teams, given a budget of R500, and told to let their creativity loose.

A broad spectrum of creations were displayed and presented at the judging and awards ceremony during September. These varied from *objets d'art* to functional items including: lampshades, candle holders, ice bucket holders, photo frames, jewellery, tables with glass tops and wine coolers.

Awards for innovation, originality, creativity and employee choice were handed out, but the overall winner was Team 3, The Design Masters, whose main piece was a side table created from cam shafts, con-rods and pistons.

"It's great to be able to do something creative using scrap materials. We want young people to be able to sell these sorts of crafts," says the team's Stephen Radzilani.

The judges were specifically selected with the aim of taking the Dream Machine Initiative further. "The goal is to create public-private partnerships. Some of the judges are helping us identify local crafters to take this initiative forward, and we're looking for non-government organisations that can help us execute this initiative in the way we envision," explains Goodson Bell.

AHEAD OF THE INSURANCE CURVE

While some vehicles may seem the same on paper, in a real-world operation they can be very different indeed. "Therefore, you cannot apply a one-size-fits-all solution to commercial vehicle insurance," says Belinda Felix, insurance manager at Scania South Africa, as she explains the brand's newest addition to its "one-stop-shop" solution.

"We've realised that every one of our customers has a niche need when it comes to insurance – we need to tailor-make every product for the different applications for which our vehicles are being used, and the operational needs and risks surrounding them," says the heavy-commercial insurance specialist.

It's thus that Scania South Africa has partnered with a national brokerage firm, and the country's five biggest insurers, to launch Scania Insurance Solutions. This unique offering focuses on one thing: adding value to a Scania customer's operation by driving down total operating costs and vehicle downtime.

"Our customers' biggest losses are due to downtime. We've negotiated with our broker to minimise this by taking trucks back into our own workshops. We have the vehicle's history, genuine parts, correct equipment and Scania expertise that guarantees the workmanship –

ensuring it gets back on the road without delay," Felix explains.

Each Scania dealership will house an accredited representative from the insurance brokerage, who will visit the clients and do an in-depth individual needs analysis to identify their operational risks, gaps in coverage, and so on.

"We'll then focus on minimising the risk by providing the appropriate cover for the application. There are certain endorsements that can be added to the policy, for example, clean-up of hazchem spills, to mitigate loss in such an incident."

The insurance solution doesn't end there, though, as the product is being developed to tie in with all aspects of the Scania Total Solution. Soon it will tie in with Scania's fleet management and telematics service. This will minimise the customer's risk by measuring driver and vehicle performance. It will also tie in with Scania's repair and maintenance offering and the company's truck rental offering.

"In the event of a vehicle requiring repairs resulting in downtime, we can send out a loan vehicle, nationwide," Felix smiles. "We have a truly unique insurance offering."

Customisable, specific insurance that is as diverse as the applications of the vehicles it covers – who could ask for more?



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MOZAMBIQUE'S FIRST MAN TRUCK & BUS DEALER

MAN Truck & Bus's dealer footprint in sub-equatorial Africa has been expanded with the addition of the Matola sales and service dealership in Mozambique. Located just outside the capital city, Maputo, the 15 000 m² the new facility includes three service bays, eight repair bays and a wash bay.

Owned by Ernest Da Cruz, who also owns MAN's Swaziland dealership, the new Matola facility will plug a gap in the MAN dealer network – Da Cruz has been servicing MAN customers from Mozambique at his Swaziland MAN dealership for over 20 years.

The parts warehouses of the two dealerships will be linked by a hi-tech workshop and parts inventory management system.

"This new dealership is not just

another outlet for selling trucks and buses, it represents a step towards establishing an infrastructure capable of supporting the immensely competitive transport industry in the region and contributing to the development of the beautiful country of Mozambique," says Da Cruz.

The order book of Matola Truck & Bus is already showing promise, with a R2 million parts order and a deal to supply 55 VW buses to the Maputo municipal commuter bus operator, TPM.

"Our vision is to manage cost-effective business processes with minimum risks. We want to ensure market competitiveness by supplying products and services of the highest standards, on time and within budget," adds Da Cruz.

FLEET AFRICA AND TRANSNET CELEBRATE

On the evening of October 14, the celebration taking place at The Pivot – Montecasino's conferencing venue in Fourways, Sandton – could easily have been mistaken for a glitzy night at the Oscars.

To celebrate the first anniversary of its five-year fleet management contract with Transnet SOC, Fleet Africa hosted a stylish gala dinner in honour of this partnership.

Guests included various Fleet Africa teams, Transnet representatives and Super Group Limited partners.

The milestones achieved to date were reflected on, with highlights presented by key stakeholders such as Fleet Africa CEO, Kamogelo Mmutlana and Transnet acting chief financial officer, Garry Pita.

Many of the speakers reiterated the need for strong private-public partnerships that will help drive socio-economic change and transformation.

Mmutlana proudly noted the work that had gone into ensuring Fleet Africa met Transnet's requirements and contract terms – which included the formation of dedicated contract management and technical teams.

"Our primary focus has been on ensuring exceptional service quality to Transnet in the provision and maintenance of a high-quality fleet of vehicles. Success was non-negotiable," he enthused.

Subcontracted businesses that form part of the partnership were recognised in the Service Excellence awards and Enterprise and Supplier Development recognition awards segment.

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COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2015

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

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 15 121
AMH	620
Fiat Group	19
Ford Motor Company	2 933
GMSA	2 678
GWM	117
Jaguar Land Rover	32
JMC	48
Mahindra	195
Mazda South Africa	153
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	14
Mitsubishi Motors SA	17
Nissan	2 712
Peugeot Citroën SA	11
Renault	4
Suzuki Auto	3
TATA	132
Toyota	4 932
Volkswagen SA	501

Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 890
AMH	22
Fiat Group	3
Ford Motor Company	23
GMSA	190
Iveco	40
JMC	21
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	184
Peugeot Citroën SA	16
TATA	44
Toyota	223
Volkswagen SA	124

Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 479
FAW	62
GMSA	128
Iveco	6
MAN	8
Powerstar	1
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	48
TATA	36
Toyota	125
Volvo Group Southern Africa	113

Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 1 034
Babcock DAF	21
FAW	24
GMSA	53
Iveco	45
MAN	132
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	347
Powerstar	51
Scania	235
TATA	31
Toyota	43
Volvo Group Southern Africa	399

Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 76
GMSA	1
MAN	46
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	18
Scania	18
TATA	7
Volvo Group Southern Africa	4

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

SA'S FIRST ONLINE LOGISTICS PORTAL LAUNCHED

Launching as a first of its kind in South Africa, Logistic Directory (www.logisticdirectory.co.za) brings to market a live portal for freight companies to advertise available space and a central repository in order to match logistics needs with reputable transport suppliers.

As a free online service, the aim of Logistic Directory is to save time for both consumers and corporates when planning logistics, while allowing logistics companies to advertise daily specials for moving freight at discounted prices.

The site presents users with the most reputable logistics companies to meet specific needs, as well as a centralised A to Z listing of all the suppliers in the logistics industry.

According to Lelanie Prinsloo, Logistic Directory CEO, a primary driver of launching the website was to educate consumers by simplifying logistics across the board, while at the same time presenting the logistics industry with a businesses opportunity to fill trucks and cargo aircraft on underutilised routes.

"The fact that we already have blue-chip logistics companies as part of this pioneering site has been hugely encouraging. We have no doubt that the site will become a highly sought-after space in which to be listed, and will add extensive value to our end users," she says.

Once on the site, users select speciality slots for their logistics needs, including courier services (0 to 10 kg), express freight (10 to 10 000 kg), automotive freight, transport (10 to 36 t), abnormal freight, refrigerated trucks, e-commerce, hazardous freight, furniture removal, warehousing and distribution, international freight forwarding and airfreight.

Users then enter the type of goods they need to transport, where the freight is currently situated and its arrival destination. They then hit the "search" button for the Logistic Directory to suggest suitable logistics suppliers to meet these specific needs.



INSUFFICIENT FUNDING AND MILLION-DOLLAR VEHICLES



Generally, in South Africa, we think of massive delays, insufficient routes, cramped, uncomfortable seats and smoke pumping clunkers when the bus and coach industry comes to mind, right? But the people-moving world has a totally different side filled with million-dollar vehicles

Okay, so the picture isn't really that gloomy. There are only a few bad apples spoiling the picture for our country's bus industry. The rest are fighting tooth and nail to stay afloat and deliver this much-needed service.

"The bus industry in South Africa has, for many years, made a vital contribution to the economic and social development of the country," explains the road safety information portal *Arrive Alive*.

"It provides mobility to millions of people who are dependent on public transport; for example, learners who require transport to and from school, workers who require transport to and from their jobs, and individuals who are seeking employment, or access to hospitals and other services."

At the 2015 Southern African Bus Operators' Association (Saboa) conference, which we reported on in April, the bus industry's real dangers were highlighted ... "The local bus industry is in crisis – we need to find solutions for the future," said Jack van der Merwe, of the Gautrain Management Agency, and master of ceremonies at the conference.

We reported that the topic of financial constraints and the subsequent battle for survival – due to nearly two decades of interim contracts and industry stagnation – was raised by both conference delegates and speakers.

Thys Heyns, executive director of the Putco Group, said: "The bus commuter sector is in a straitjacket that locks us into an unsustainable business model. Operators

cannot react to market conditions, reduce operating costs, increase revenue or introduce additional routes. We also cannot pass the shortfall on to passengers."

Heyns noted that since the introduction of the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) in 2009, the expenditure of a typical bus company has increased by 50 percent, while subsidies only increased by 13 percent. "This has resulted in problems with service quality and ability to deliver," he said.

So, smoke-pumping clunkers aren't the main concern ... hopefully next year's Saboa conference will deliver some different news in the way of funding.

However, the people moving industry isn't struggling everywhere ... enter the world of the ultra-luxury coach. Here the Americans are spending big bucks to ride in comfort.



One such vehicle is the 2016 Emerald Luxury Coach from Liberty Coach – a family owned business that converts coaches into luxury motor homes. The company started in 1968, in Frank and Jeanne Konigseder's backyard on the outskirts of Libertyville, in the United States.

The coach is listed for sale at nearly US\$ 1,5 million (roughly R20 million). This "budget buy" is almost US\$ 1 million (more than R13 million) less than many premium conversions of the Prevost brand, a leading North American manufacturer of touring coaches and conversions.

"In terms of value, the Emerald is like no other vehicle in its price range," says Liberty vice president and managing partner Frank Konigseder Junior. "The quality of the workmanship is obvious, and it boasts some

features – like the Crestron remote-control system with iPad interface – that many higher-priced coaches don't offer."

Built on a 45-foot (13,7 m) Prevost X3 chassis, the coach boasts a spacious double-slide floor plan packed with a full array of premium features, including a Sub-Zero refrigerator, Bosch washer/dryer, four roof-mounted air-conditioning systems and a state-of-the-art LED lighting system.

"It opens the door to a new 2016 Prevost for the price of a pre-owned coach," Konigseder points out.

If you're interested in this budget buy, you can schedule a private showing at Liberty Coach of Florida in Stuart, which is located just south of Port St. Lucie on the Atlantic Coast ... Or you can go for a pre-owned option as the company has announced the return of its "Coach of the Week" marketing programme.

The programme, which was introduced last year, showcases a single Liberty Coach listed for sale and available for viewing at the company's full-service Florida dealership. This year, it will focus on its current inventory of 13 pre-owned Liberty models ranging from 2007 to 2013.

"We're excited to be able to offer such a wide range of coaches and price points,

with selected models priced well under the US\$ 1 million (R13,4 million) mark," says Konigseder. "It opens the possibility of owning a Liberty Coach to a whole new segment of buyers."

A case in point is Liberty's first "Coach of the Week": a 2007 Elegant Lady Balmoral Edition, which is listed for sale at US\$ 799 000 (nearly R10,7 million).

Built on Prevost's top-of-the-line H3-45 bus platform, the Balmoral is powered by a Detroit Diesel engine with Allison automatic transmission and boasts a spacious double-slide floor plan. A fully integrated audio-visual system features a ceiling-mounted 42-inch plasma TV in the living room, 32-inch LCD TV in the bedroom, and Bose Lifestyle DVD/stereo system with Dolby Pro-Logic surround sound.

Other features include a multi-function lower-bay entertainment centre with full TV and audio capabilities as well as a Jenn-Air grill and auxiliary refrigerator, and a Crestron touch-screen remote control system for every phase of interior operations.

It is hard to believe that some can spend R20 million for a coach on one side of the planet, but operators on the other side are struggling to survive due to a lack of much-needed subsidies and interim contracts ... **IFOCUS**

Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach touches lives in more than one way.



Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) is widely regarded as a company that empowers members of the communities in which it operates, but never did its Bus & Coach division think they would touch the lives of so many through their exceptional products. “The bus business is a very intimate one and we get to know our customers on a personal level. This is why we ensure that we provide our customers with superior customer services and products. Some see a transport industry, but we see an opportunity to offer memorable journeys for each and every passenger who boards our buses,” says Shane Henry, Head of Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach Southern Africa.

This is also the kind of impact that Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach has had on Atamelang Bus Transport, based in the North-West city of Mahikeng. Atamelang was established in 1995 by former bus drivers who delved into the business arena after noticing a gap in the commuter transport industry and their fleet has always included Mercedes-Benz buses.

“We operate a large fleet, of which 86 are Mercedes-Benz buses, and they allow us to provide over 5.1 million passenger journeys and to cover in excess of 7.5 million kilometres each year in regular government-subsidised contract transportation services in the North-West and Gauteng. We also employ more than 300 people,” says Teboho Sebotha, Transport Manager for Atamelang. “With us covering so many kilometres in a year, it is astounding that we still have Mercedes-Benz buses that are running from when we started. This is because this brand has always offered us reliability and they are thorough workhorses that refuse to give up, no matter the road conditions.”

“As legendary as these buses are, however, we have continued to add more modern Mercedes-Benz buses to our fleet. Recently we were delighted to add 26 OF1726 buses and we just know these will prove to be as versatile as our previous models. An additional reason we are a repeat customer with MBSA is because they are a one-stop shop for us.

Mercedes-Benz

The standard for buses.



We not only buy their buses, but we also make use of their financial services. This makes concluding deals so much easier and we can focus on our values: Continuous innovation and improvement, customer service, development of our people and customer driven excellence,” says Sebotha. Atamelang also provides school transport and the students and scholars do not always reside in areas with infrastructure. This is where the Mercedes-Benz buses show their mettle.

Atamelang is a leading provider of public passenger transport services, transporting learners, government employees, industrial and commercial workers in regular contracted services in Mahikeng, Lichtenburg (including Delareyville), Zeerust in the North-West and Pretoria in Gauteng. “Our buses are expected to do quite a bit of driving on uneven and sometimes off-road surfaces and we have come to appreciate these buses in such conditions. The workmanship that goes into the design of these buses is especially evident when the going gets tough. These buses are incredibly durable and whenever we know there will be gravel involved, we only use the buses with the three-pointed star. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about some of the other manufacturers as they seem to be too soft,” he adds. With so many stakeholders relying on them for safe and reliable transportation, they cannot afford to get their pricing wrong, something that the Mercedes-Benz buses also assist with.

“Another aspect we cannot fault Mercedes-Benz buses on is how frugal they are when it comes to fuel consumption. We run a lot of stop-start operations and this tends to take a toll on the figures, but when we compare the Mercedes-Benz buses to the rest of our fleet, the Mercs fare very well,” says Sebotha. With Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach on their side, Atamelang is poised to expand their service portfolio to include transportation in the private, individual and corporate sectors and will soon increase their footprint to cover the rest of South Africa.





MORE ON LONDON'S ELECTRIC BUSES

FRANK BEETON updates us on the rapidly developing electric-bus situation in London, England

Two months back, we wrote about the return of electric buses to the streets of London. That story was prompted by the announcement that Chinese manufacturer BYD Inc. had been contracted to supply "up to five" battery-electric double-deck buses for trial by Transport for London.

We also noted in the article that BYD had already supplied two all-electric single-deck buses to London in 2013, as part of the city's strategy to improve its air quality situation. Notably, these vehicles have proved capable of completing a day's route service on a single battery charge.

The story has moved on rapidly. It was subsequently announced at the end of July that a £19 million (R403 million) order for 51 all-electric single-deck buses had been placed on a partnership between BYD and British bus builder Alexander Dennis Limited (ADL).

The chassis will be supplied by BYD, and ADL will fit them with 90-passenger bodywork based on its Enviro2000 design.

The vehicles will be operated by Go-Ahead London, on routes 507 and 521 between Waterloo and Victoria, and are scheduled for delivery by the end of August 2016. The deal includes a full on-site repair and maintenance programme.

The proven performance of BYD's pure electric buses under London's severe operating conditions was cited as a major reason for the awarding of this contract to the Chinese manufacturer.

BYD's electric vehicles notably make use of long-life-cycle iron-phosphate batteries, with a low rate of degradation. BYD's parent company manufactures LED lighting; photovoltaic cells and advanced, environmentally friendly battery technologies.

Once delivered, this order is expected to be the single largest fleet of full-size electric buses in Europe. **IFOCUS**

BUS STOPS

MIX RIDES WITH INTERCAPE

In a bid to improve operational efficiency and enhance positive driver behaviour, Intercape has enlisted the expertise of MiX Telematics to integrate a fleet management solution into its fleet of 318 vehicles.

Key deliverables were to reduce the fleet's operating expenses, fuel consumption and carbon footprint, as well as implement a driver management system that would improve the comfort and safety of passengers.

"The solution offered by MiX Telematics provides real insight that enables us to equip our drivers to be the best in the industry," says Frans Esterhuysen,

national operations coordinator at Intercape.

The MiX Fleet Manager Premium solution will include additional accessories, which will be fitted to Intercape's coaches and ensure end-to-end vehicle and driver line-of-sight.

The accessories include: MiX Rovi II, which provides job navigation and driving alerts; MiX Vision, which includes two cameras that upload videos when an incident occurs; and Mobileye, which helps prevent collisions using advanced vehicle, lane and pedestrian detection.

MiX Telematics will provide an ongoing consultancy service to Intercape, which will



include training, assistance with data analysis and creating awareness among drivers.

"Being chosen as Intercape's fleet management partner is testament to our solid understanding of the broader fleet market and our service provision," says Richard Coates, sales director at MiX Telematics (South Africa).

"We are confident that our solution will deliver exceptional fuel savings, improvement in driver behaviour and reduced operational expenses for the Intercape fleet," he concludes.



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

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

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

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

There is a better way.



LESSONS FROM (AND FOR) LONDON!

A recent visit to Great Britain's capital city revealed that even a country with such an illustrious public transport past can sometimes miss the mark

The now defunct London Transport (LT), as Frank Beeton reminded us in **FOCUS** September, once ran the biggest fleet of trolleybuses in the world.

London is widely regarded as a world leader in public transport. It has much to be proud of: the iconic red double-deck buses; its comprehensive route coverage; excellent frequencies; probably the most integrated fare system in the English-speaking world; and an information system second to none.

Yet, there are problems with the modern-day Transport for London (TfL). One is obvious, the other less so. First, despite bus priority lanes in many places and congestion charging in the central area, slow traffic has brought the bus service to its knees.

In late September, it took 45 minutes to get from Waterloo station to Liverpool Street station and 60 minutes on the return – a distance of 3,9 km. The sidewalks were carrying more people than the buses and cars combined.

I stayed on the bus [route 26 in both directions] for no other reason than to be able to write about it in this column. All the other passengers got off and walked – many of them having to negotiate with the driver to open the doors for them between stops – a practice heavily frowned on by TfL!

The financial consequences for TfL's buses must be horrendous – more buses are presumably needed to carry fewer passengers, while many instances were noted of buses being turned short.

One of the main reasons for the problem

is the huge amount of construction activity going on (not only in central London, but within a 25 km radius), resulting in road closures, one-way schemes and general disruption. A contributing factor is that almost every set of traffic lights has a separate pedestrian phase.

Solving this problem will require TfL to do more than merely extending the congestion charging zone – it will be necessary to completely ban cars (including metered taxis) from many streets.

The less obvious problem is the direct cause of the first. London's bus route pattern, although comprehensive, is a bowl of spaghetti that has built up over a period of more than 100 years and which needs serious revision.

Instead of scrapping its trolleybus system, LT should rather have reorganised them on a smaller number of key routes to complement the Underground, and rearranged the diesel routes to complement the trolleys.

This poorly motivated decision – which London is now trying to correct by spending huge sums on hybrids and "Borisasters" – resulted in the decimation of trolleybuses throughout the English-speaking world.

If the 25 LT trolleybuses once destined for Durban [my home town] had got there, they would not only have made an equal contribution to the war effort, but would have lasted until 1967, and would have made profits until 1965!

TfL tries to simplify the confusion by providing thousands of different "spider maps" on its website and at bus stops, but it is significant that TfL, itself, does not produce an overall map of its entire bus operation. It

leaves that to a private citizen, Mike Harris, who "fills the gap" with his Greater London Bus Map that TfL allows him to sell at its Museum Shop near Covent Garden.

Obviously the map is too complicated for the casual user, but serious students of public transport ought to be quite disturbed at the considerable amount of duplication and overlap between routes that is shown there. The map should be an embarrassment to TfL, and should be the subject of academic inquiry by local universities.

Until TfL's bus pattern is fixed, London's "flexible" diesel buses will continue to get in each other's way and the city will have to continue spending billions of pounds on expensive extensions to its rail system, including Docklands Light Rail, the Croydon Tram, the London Overground, the Jubilee line and Crossrail.

Overhead wires supply electricity more cheaply than hybrids and batteries, so trolleybuses operating on a simplified bus route pattern could be carrying many of these passengers at a lower cost.

Why bother with London? South Africa is actually in a stronger position to set an example, for now. First, our cities have more available road space to accommodate both buses and cars.

Second, the absence of a culture of public transport in South Africa may actually be an advantage, since local bus route patterns have not become "fossilised" as they have in London. By using electric trolleybuses on the Moloto Road, we could show the rest of the world how it should be done. **FOCUS**



Vaughan Mostert developed a love for public transport early in life, which led to a lifelong academic interest in the subject. He recently retired as a senior lecturer from the Department of Transport and Supply Chain Management at the University of Johannesburg. 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.

BUILT TO BE CHALLENGED



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