



# It's not a 'them' and 'us' situation

**In August 2011, FleetWatch launched its Call to Action campaign at the Shongweni Expo to some 350 middle to top managers in the trucking industry. This year, the event was repeated at the Shongweni Expo – but with one difference. The audience was made up of drivers rather than management. It was a day of positive interaction and motivation.**



▲ Driver trainer Brian Kerr established a direct link with the drivers through his empathy and understanding of what they face on the roads. He was stunning.



▲ Not only did managing director of Javelin Trucking Fred Kingsley send his drivers to the event but he too braved the cold to lend his support to the upliftment of truck drivers.

**Thumbs up to the operators who let their drivers attend!**

◀ Happy day! Now you tell me - does this gentleman truck driver look like he will go out and stone or torch trucks to get a point across? No chance!



▲ Even the cops were there to urge the drivers on to best practice standards. Most drivers reckoned they wouldn't mind being stopped by her.

There is a guy down KZN way who one cannot help but admire. His name is Clyde Lawrence, the man who started and built the Shongweni Expo into the success it is. He also has a passion for the trucking industry and having seen the success of the FleetWatch Call to Action campaign in 2011 at his show, he went all out this time to get the drivers together under the Call to Action campaign with the full support of FleetWatch.

It was thus that in August this year, just one month before the start of that damaging strike, around 160 drivers from different companies gathered at the show-grounds to listen to a host of speakers urge them on towards best practice standards. The function was held with four partners, namely, the Shongweni Expo, FleetWatch, Thekiwini Toyota and the KZN Department of Transport.

Space does not permit the listing of all the speakers and the subjects addressed. What space does permit, however, is to state that none of those drivers would have been there on the day if their bosses hadn't let them off their normal duties so they could attend. So where is this huge divide of animosity between bosses and drivers that the strike, through its violence, projected?

Given the nature and pressure of the job, gathering drivers from



**Proud graduates!**



different companies into one place at one time is an almost impossible task. Customers want trained drivers who will ferry their goods safely but if anyone expects customers to cut a bit of slack in allowing their transport service providers to give drivers time off to train, you're living in a dream world. Customers want it all – and they want it now!

However, the bosses - some of whom were present on the day – cared enough about their drivers to give them time off to empower themselves through knowledge. And the response from the drivers after the event was extremely positive.

Let's not be naive and state that all bosses are good guys – or that all drivers are good guys. Certainly on both sides there are those who don't give a toss about each other but that is not true of the entire industry. It is nowhere near the truth!

The point – and I state it once again – is that the industry cannot go forward under the false banner of total animosity that was projected via the strike. There is too much good - built up over years - to allow this to happen. The Shongweni Call to Action Drivers Day is just one more example of the positive spirit of cooperation that exists in the industry.

Dispel the notion that it is a 'them' and 'us' situation out there. It is just not true. □

**The day was an example of positive spirit & drivers wanting to learn more**



▲ It was a cold day but the warmth of the camaraderie among the drivers didn't let the chill dampen the spirits as they listened to a host of speakers impart information on a variety of subjects all geared towards empowering the drivers with knowledge. This was a unique occasion as getting drivers off the road to attend such seminars is difficult given the 'pressure cooker' environment in which they operate. Well done to the bosses for giving them time off to attend.