

FleetWatch

EMag Vol 80 / 2023

South Africa's Leading Online Trucking Magazine



Cover Story
Scania
and Shoprite
**Towards a
better future**

**New home
for DTSA**
UD Trucks
**Going beyond
the truck**

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Volvo Trucks. Driving Progress

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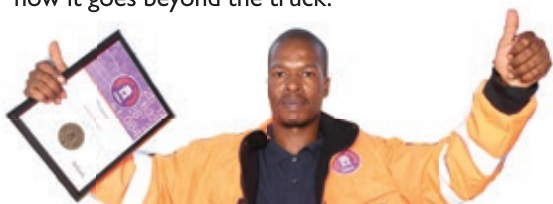
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Entry Deadline May 31 2023

Enter your top drivers as the winning truck driver could take home R150 000 and the winning bus driver R100 000.

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FleetWatch

Publisher and Managing Editor

Patrick M. O'Leary
fleetwatch@pixie.co.za

Technical Correspondent

Dave Scott
ds55@mweb.co.za

Advertising Co-ordinator Manager

Michelle O'Leary
083 303 0705
michelle@fleetwatch.co.za

Sales Manager

Dylan O'Leary
083 613 7613
dylan@fleetwatch.co.za

Editorial Submissions
michelle@fleetwatch.co.za

Administration

Eva Mphapogang
083 513 9708
eva@fleetwatch.co.za

Brake & Tyre Watch Co-ordinator

Kylie Saunders
kylie@fleetwatch.co.za

Events Co-ordinator

Kylie Saunders

Subscriptions/Circulation

Benjamin Sibanda
060 445 3234
benjamin@fleetwatch.co.za

Design

Michelle O'Leary
michelle@fleetwatch.co.za

Reproduction

Mariette Martin

Published By:

Big Fleet Media
P.O. Box 3097
Honeydew 2040

083 303 0705

083 513 9708

060 445 3234

e-Mail:

fleetwatch@pixie.co.za



SA'S LEADING ON-LINE TRUCKING MAGAZINE

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On the road again

“Apologizing doesn’t always mean you’re wrong and the other person is right. It means you value your relationship more than your ego.”

I have always considered the relationship between *FleetWatch*, its readers and its advertisers to be a close one and after reading the above saying a while back, I realised that because I value so much the relationships built up over the past 46 years of reporting on the trucking industry - of which some 29 years have been as head of *FleetWatch* - I owe our readers and advertisers an apology. I apologise for having dropped quite a few balls - and especially over the past year.

Like many companies in many sectors, we were affected by the Covid pandemic. From working dynamically as a strong team from offices in Randburg, the Covid lockdown saw us having to close the office and set up home offices for staff. I am a team player and I must be honest, working from home is not my ideal. Some people love it. I don't. Well the 'hard' lockdown came and went and we started moving out again - albeit with our faces covered by masks. However, many of our activities such as *Brake & Tyre Watch* had to be shelved due to the pandemic restrictions. There is no ways we could all gather in a test station pit under a truck and still practice social distancing - even while all wearing masks. Our golf day went on hold as well as did many other activities. And it wasn't only us. Many companies had the same restrictive policies in place where staff could not even visit customers. It may seem long ago but it wasn't really. And then last year arrived and as the months went by, I found myself becoming extremely NAFI - that's an army term for 'No Ambition and No Interest' (the army guys will know to substitute the 'No' with that other word). Yes, we have all tried to be strong and brave and rise above our weaknesses or afflictions. Some managed to do just that. Others, like me, didn't. In fact, I became a stranger to myself and to my family. From being a high energy, active participant in life and the trucking industry, I found myself being constantly tired, having no energy and with the concentration span of a gnat. My brain seemed to function in a permanent fog which saw me sitting behind my computer for hours producing nothing but gibberish. No, it was not 'writer's block' - a temporary curse that I experienced in the first six months of the Covid pandemic. This was more like trying to gaze through a London fog as seen in those old movies where even the carriage horses bump into lamp-posts. I could see the story in my head and knew where I wanted to go with it but concentrating long enough to link the different inputs and get the words down was something I could only dream of. My productivity was at Arctic level - minus zero. Any excuse to get up and move away from my desk would

do. Chasing and swotting mosquitoes in my office during the summer evenings was a good excuse to get up from my desk - and walking back and forth to the kitchen to make countless cups of coffee also counted as constructive breaks from my comatose state behind my computer. And on top of all that, I got out of bed one morning and almost collapsed from pain which started in my right hip, shot down my leg and ended up in my foot. What the heck? Spider bite? Snake bite? Great White Shark attack? No, it was my hip and to cut a long story short, I have to sometime in the near future have a hip replacement. It seems my younger days of debauchery, jumping out of airplanes and generally enjoying a totally irresponsible way of life has caught up with me. The pain lasted for some months and there were times when I could not walk 50 metres without having to stop. Not sure how or why but that excruciating pain has gone so, with the agreement of my orthopaedic surgeon - I've postponed the hip replacement op until later in the year. However, combine all the above and that was me - a useless, lay-about slob who didn't know what the hell was happening to him. Was this the end of my productive life? It certainly seemed so.

It was while describing all this to the MD of a company involved in the industry that he threw some light onto the subject. He said that apart from the hip problem, he had experienced the same NAFI symptoms which had also debilitated his normal life and modus operandi. "It sounds like you've got what I had - Long Covid," he said. I had heard of this but it hadn't entered my mind. I thought I had metamorphosed into a turgid slug. Yes, like many of us, I had picked up Covid last year but got over it without having to go through the horror of those lonely hospital stays we saw so many people go through. I hadn't ever thought of Long Covid but now, at last, I had something concrete to work on. After reading up quite a bit on it, I realised that there was no 'quick fix pill' I could take. Rather, I starting working on my mind, taking vitamins and generally trying to perk myself up. To be honest, I still have low energy days but I'm 100% more active and alert than I was over the past year.

My apology therefore is sincerely extended to all. Despite my best efforts and will to stay on top of my work, the fatigue, brain fog, hip hassles and other symptoms made it challenging for me to meet my full responsibilities to lead the team in producing quality content and meet all deadlines. For this I apologise. I also thank the *FleetWatch* team members for putting up with my lousy moods and NAFI attitudes - and taking the lead where I failed. One positive that came out of all this is that instead of being involved in matters of the industry, I was able to observe from the sidelines the matters of the industry. From this, my 'issues to tackle' box is full. Let's do it. And if anyone out there is feeling like I was or is going through similar experiences, [drop me a line](#). I've opened up to you so please don't hold it in. Let's chat and get through it together. We're sometimes not as strong as we'd like to think we are. I certainly wasn't. □



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A new home for DTSA

▲ The Board of Directors of DTSA, top level management from Daimler Truck AG in Germany, the German Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa/eSwatini/Lesotho and other dignitaries lined up with Michael Dietz, President and CEO of DTSA and South Africa's Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Economic Development, Ms Nomalungelo Gina, to cut the ribbon marking the official opening of the new facility.

April 25th was a great day of celebration for Daimler Truck Southern Africa Ltd (DTSA) with the official opening of its new headquarters and business campus in Centurion, Gauteng. Situated on 12 hectares, the new facility houses DTSA's head offices, training facilities, new and used retail facilities as well as a dedicated Daimler Truck Financial Services company.

The importance of the occasion - described by Michael Dietz, President and CEO of DTSA as a sign of the solid commitment of the DTSA Group of companies to its customers, South Africa and the entire southern African region - was highlighted by the presence not only of the Board of Directors of DTSA but also by top level management from Daimler Truck AG in Germany.

Among others, dignitaries included Karin Rådström, member of the Board of Management Daimler



▲ Michael Dietz President and CEO of DTSA: "This day marks a great beginning for us and I look forward to further creating a great place to work for our employees, while fully catering to our customers and continuously serving all who keep Africa moving."

Truck AG and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Trucks as well as Stephan Unger, Member of the Board of Management Daimler Truck AG and Head of Financial Services. Also present was South Africa's Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Economic Development, Ms Nomalungelo Gina, who officially cut the ribbon with the help of Dietz. (It was a massive scissors).

A man who caught the heart of the audience was Andreas Peschke, German Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa/eSwatini/Lesotho who interspersed his English with perfect vernacular phrases. It was the much beloved late Nelson Mandela who said: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." Well the Ambassador got into many hearts on the day. Guests included customers, dealers, suppliers and other stakeholders.

Putting the 'song and dance' celebration aside, what struck me was the fact that at a time when South Africa has extremely serious problems on the political, social and economic fronts, it can count itself extremely fortunate that there are organisations like DTSA which are still prepared to commit massive investments (this one alone is R170-million which forms part of the R190-million investment promise made by DTSA at the 2022 Investment Conference) into what is, in essence, an extremely tumultuous country. Load shedding alone is causing havoc and has forced many companies – particularly smaller companies – into closing their doors. It has also created a climate of investment uncertainty and hesitancy.

In my opinion, the opening of the DTSA facility was an occasion which inspired hope in the future. If only our political leaders would emulate this attitude for it is all the right stuff. To be honest, it is the first time in a long time that I got goose-bumps when the South African national anthem was sung; led not by the Deputy Minister or any other 'dignitary' but rather by an ordinary 'man-in-the-street' - a man by the name of Khaya Nobala, an assembly worker at DTSA's East London plant. His voice was pure, honest and powerful and served to rouse a spirit of patriotism I haven't felt for a long time.

It was a day when I felt proud to be closely associated with the trucking sector where players like DTSA are still prepared to commit to keeping the wheels of Africa moving – despite the many negatives.

There is a saying: "Success isn't just about what you've accomplished in your life. It's all about what you inspire others to do." Certainly this occasion acted as a mark of DTSA's accomplishments and success but it also served to inspire us all to go forward with renewed hope for a brighter and more prosperous future. *FleetWatch* extends its congratulations to all at DTSA and extends our thanks for re-inspiring hope in a climate where 'hope' has been substantially diminished. □

PATRICK O'LEARY



▲ Karin Rådström, member of the Board of Management Daimler Truck AG, and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Trucks: "The investment not only underlines our positioning as a global player in the commercial vehicle world but also shows our keen passion for people and diversity to which South Africa is renowned for."

▼ Stephan Unger, member of the Board of Management Daimler Truck AG and Head of Financial Service: "The concept of bringing sales and marketing and Financial Services together under one roof is taking the right step in our strategy to provide integrated transport solutions for our customers."



▲ South Africa's Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Economic Development, Ms Nomalungelo Gina, thanked Daimler Truck Southern Africa and Daimler AG for all they are doing for South Africa.

The first Volvo electric trucks are set to hit the roads

This is one *FleetWatch* is going to be following closely. News from Volvo Trucks South Africa is that it is currently busy with the homologation of its first extra-heavy electric truck units locally. Plans are to present the first of these vehicles to a local customer, KDG Logistics, within the next two months once all statutory procedures have been adhered to.

Eric Parry, Volvo Trucks SA's sustainable solutions manager, took the Volvo FM 4x2 truck-tractor through its paces on a trip from the company's dealer in Durban to its facilities in Johannesburg - a 600km journey, with only one stop for charging.

"We aimed to prove that an extra heavy electric truck like this can drive long distances. Even though we didn't carry any payload, it still gave us a good indication of just what this truck is capable of," says Parry. "Generally, battery electric trucks are used in regional distribution, operating in and around cities, running from distribution centres to stores, etc. But with proper planning, customers will be able to do so much more."

Volvo Trucks South Africa is bringing in its complete extra-heavy electric truck range, which includes FH, FM and FMX models in truck-tractor and rigid configurations. Axle combinations will include 4x2

through to 8x4 models. The full load on the first FM units will be 44 tonnes GCM (Gross Combination Mass). With a drive line that has 490kW of power and 2400Nm of torque, it will definitely not struggle to get the job done - so long as the batteries are charged of course.

"Locally, there has been a lot of activity and interest around electromobility, a lot quicker than we anticipated, and the enthusiasm and opportunities in South Africa are there," says Sally Rutter, Volvo Trucks South Africa's sales director. "Irrespective of local challenges when it comes to load shedding and infrastructure, a lot of customers are looking at setting up their own charging infrastructures to

▲ This Volvo FM truck tractor is the first extra-heavy electric truck to be brought into South Africa by Volvo Trucks South Africa. It is currently being homologated and tested.

accommodate electromobility and their own sustainability goals."

"These trucks can run meaningful kilometres in a day and if you have your charging set-up optimised, you can extend that range quite comfortably and match your operations to it," says Parry. "Within regional operations, public charging is not really relevant for these types of fleets and having control of their own charging will allow customers to fix their costs of energy."

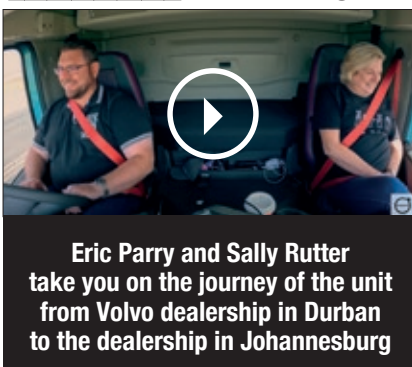
Volvo Trucks electric trucks are designed to operate in a wide range of climates and environments. This includes higher altitudes and warmer conditions typically found in South Africa.

"These electric trucks will be working commercial vehicles and are designed to be treated and driven as such," says Parry. "We're excited about Volvo Trucks' electromobility future in South Africa."

The video below takes you on the first journey of the unit with Eric Parry and Sally Rutter who drive from the Volvo dealership in Durban up to the dealership in Johannesburg covering almost 600km with the need for only one stop for charging, from start to finish. Have a look at the start of Volvo's electromobility journey. □



WATCH THE VIDEO



Eric Parry and Sally Rutter take you on the journey of the unit from Volvo dealership in Durban to the dealership in Johannesburg

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPnRcV9Ka_o



Volvo Europe has broadest electric truck line-up

With South Africa battling to keep the lights on due to Eskom's woes which have their origin in the Zuma/Gupta state capture days, there isn't much local excitement around the subject of electric trucks. This is in contrast to some overseas markets where OEMs are way down the line in getting electric trucks onto the road.

One such OEM is Volvo Trucks which is now starting series production of the electric versions of the company's most important product range, its heavy-duty

trucks – the Volvo FH, Volvo FM and Volvo FMX models. These trucks can operate at a total GVM of 44 tons and the three models represent around two thirds of the company's sales.

With these new additions, Volvo Trucks now has six electric truck models in series production globally – the broadest electric truck line up in the industry.

"This is a milestone and proves that we are leading the transformation of the industry. It's less than two years ago since we showcased our heavy electric trucks for the very first time. Now we're ramping up volumes and will deliver these trucks to customers all over Europe - and later on also to customers in Asia, Australia and Latin America," says Roger Alm, President of Volvo Trucks.

Series production of Volvo's heaviest electric trucks has started in 2022 in the Tuve factory in Gothenburg, Sweden and the year the factory in Ghent, Belgium will follow. Volvo produces the electric trucks on the same line as its conventional trucks, which gives high production flexibility and efficiency gains. The batteries are supplied by Volvo Trucks' new battery assembly plant in Ghent.

◀ Volvo Trucks in Europe has started series production of the electric versions of the company's most important product range, its heavy-duty trucks – the Volvo FH, Volvo FM and Volvo FMX models.

The demand for electric trucks is rapidly increasing in many markets. Volvo Trucks' electric portfolio could cover around 45% of all goods transported in Europe today. This is based on Eurostat statistics "Road Freight Transport by distance" (2018), which states that 45% of all goods transported on road in Europe travel a distance of less than 300 km.

"We've sold around 1 000 units of our heavy electric trucks and more than 2 600 of our electric trucks in total. We expect volumes to increase significantly in the next few years. By 2030, at least 50 percent of the trucks we sell globally should be electric," says Roger Alm.

Volvo Trucks' electric line-up of six truck models covers a wide range of applications such as city distribution and refuse handling, regional transport and construction work.

For South Africa, such progress may seem dream-on stuff but what is interesting is that one of Volvo's local customers, KDG Logistics, has signed a Letter of Intent with Volvo Truck South Africa to buy two Volvo FM 4x2 Electric Truck Tractors to be used by KDG Logistics, an auto carrier, in a port-to-factory operation in Durban.

"This marks the first steps locally in embracing electric vehicles as part of sustainable transport solutions here in South Africa," says Waldemar Christensen, MD of Volvo Trucks South Africa.

The first Volvo FH 4 x 2 electric truck-tractor has in fact arrived on our shores. See page 6 for the story on this. □



▲ "We've sold around 1 000 units of our heavy electric trucks and more than 2 600 of our electric trucks in total," says Roger Alm, President of Volvo Trucks.



THIS IS FOR OUR GRANDKIDS

The shared commitment of two major companies in different – although co-dependent - industries to drive sustainability by embracing a partnership relationship via the sharing of objectives and the linking of hands in striving towards reducing their negative impacts on the planet exemplifies a spirit between truck manufacturers and customers that needs to become the norm as we move forward writes Patrick O’Leary.

Five year walk

▲ The handover towards the end of last year by Scania of two of the 240 Scania Euro 5 trucks ordered by the Shoprite Group was a celebration of a five-year walk down a path of shared values.



Fuel tanks

▲ Note the extra tank with the Blue Cap next to the fuel tank. That's for the AdBlue necessary for the Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) after-treatment to comply with Euro 5.

This truism stuck me at the handover ceremony last year of 100 Scania New Generation Euro 5 G450 A6x4 truck tractors to the Shoprite Group. In days gone by, the story would have caught the headlines solely in terms of the scale of the order. It was huge - 100 trucks with another 140 to be delivered by the end of 2023. That's a massive news story for a truck supplier and for the customer. But that would have been it.

Well not quite. In 'dem ol deys' it would have been accompanied by a huge braai where copious amounts of Brandy and Coke would have flowed as guests delighted to the entertainment of Glenda Kemp and her python. At this function, however, it was a lovely violinist playing melodious tunes on a wine farm where the air was squeaky clean and fresh thus matching the underlying intentions of the occasion.

The difference between back then and now is that in those brandy and python days, the words 'global warming' and 'climate change' were unheard of. Global warming would have been noted then as: "Jis maar dis warm vandag. Kom ons drink 'n paar koue biere". ("Wow. It's hot today. Let's go drink a few cold beers.") And climate change would have been ear-marked as the transition of winter into summer and commented on joyfully as: "Die son kom vroer op. Ons kan nou meer braai." (The sun is rising earlier. We can now braai more).

Today, the terms 'global warming' and 'climate change' have entered everyone's vocabulary posing, as they do, extremely serious threats to the sustainability of our planet. And what about that word 'sustainability'? In 'dem ol deys' it was far too big a word to be incorporated into a trucker's vocabulary. The closest reference would have been: "Yislike. That oke can hold his booze hey. He's had ten pints and he's stul sustaining."

On a more business orientated note, going back to those 'days gone by', the size of the discount would more often than not have won the ► 10



AdBlue

▲ The AdBlue tank. AdBlue is a diesel exhaust fluid used in vehicles with Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) technology to reduce harmful gases being released into the atmosphere.



Double achievement

▲ Andrew Havinga, Chief Supply Chain Officer for the Shoprite group, thrilled at the double achievements of fuel savings as well as emissions reduction.



Better future

▲ Erik Bergvall, Managing Director of Scania Southern Africa: "We believe in the same principles and share the same objective: to create a better future for those who come after us."

Progress

◀ The cabs boldly proclaim a double whammy of progress for the environment: Less CO₂ and Less Fuel – both better for the planet.

► 9 deal. Things later changed to 'Total Cost of Ownership' (TCO) in the purchasing decision and I recall doing many articles in *FleetWatch* quoting various experts on trying to transition the mind-set of operators away from purchasing decisions based on 'discounts' to structuring their decisions on TCO.

Total Cost of Ownership remains a prime consideration today but there are now many added considerations to be embraced – and these revolve around going beyond 'self' and working towards transforming the transport landscape together with sustainable transport solutions.

New era under ESG

In today's world, profit and shareholder returns are still obviously vitally important but companies need to embrace far more responsible paths of action in all the decisions they make – including the trucks they buy – to ensure maximum benefits to all.

This new era of thinking is officially embraced under the banner of ESG - environmental, social and governance - principles which are sustainability-oriented guidelines providing a framework for understanding the sustainability performance and development opportunities of a business. ► 12

ESG

Environmental Social Governance

You don't hear much of CSR anymore (Corporate Social Responsibility) which, in essence, refers to a company's voluntary

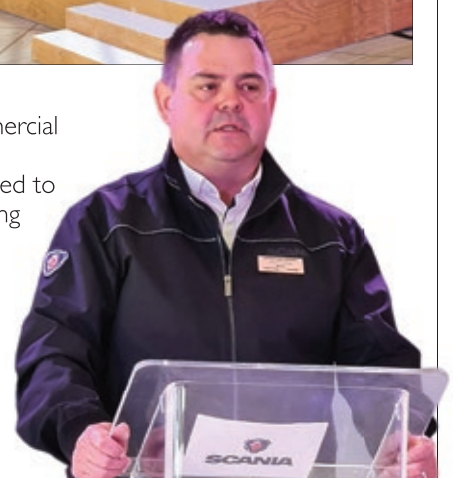


Better lives

▲ Mark Erasmus, General Manager Commercial Sales of Scania Southern Africa: "We share sustainability goals and are deeply committed to southern Africa's development and bettering the lives of all who live here."

Not 'pick-a-product'

► Johnny-Ray Basset, Key Accounts manager at Scania Southern Africa: "When we first started talking to Shoprite, it soon became evident that this couldn't be a 'pick-a-product' scenario."



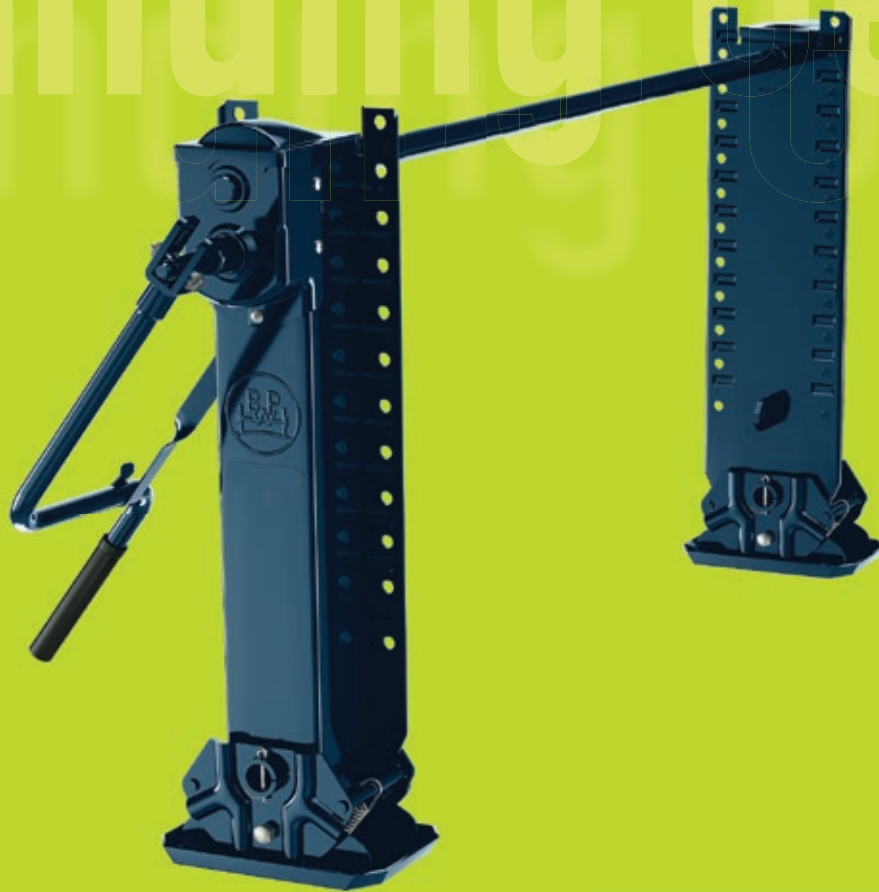
Demo tests

▲ Johan Foley, Demo Manager at Scania Southern Africa, took oversight of the tests conducted to monitor the fuel savings and overall performance of the models prior to the Shoprite Group placing the order.

Leaving their Mark

◀ The two Marks working for a brighter future for all: Mark Erasmus (left) Scania's GM of Commercial Sales and Mark Templeton, Manager, Sustainability at Scania South Africa. "Sustainability is no longer a choice," says Templeton.

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Badging

◀ Proudly displaying the G450 model badging on the New Generation Euro 5 G450 A6x4 truck tractors.

On the road

▲ And there she is – one of the new G450 Euro 5 units out on the road. Shoprite's fleet travels more than 90-million kilometres per year delivering over 350-million cases of products to its nationwide stores.

► 10 actions to address social and environmental concerns beyond its legal obligations. CSR is about a company's philanthropy and community involvement actions.

ESG has not replaced CSR but has extended it and integrated it into a broader framework. It goes beyond CSR and encompasses other factors such as how a company manages its environmental impacts, how it treats its employees and how it is governed. Important to the bean counters is that ESG factors are increasingly being used by investors as a way to evaluate a company's risks and opportunities. There's a lot to it but that's for another day.

Linking hands

Suffice to say that aiming for ESG best practices is not a sole endeavour. It brings in all stakeholders meaning one has to work as a global community linking hands in partnerships to ward off

the devastating impacts of climate change and global warming.

FleetWatch has always said that the trucking industry is based on relationships rather than on mere transactions and although many manufacturers and operators have followed this route, now - more than ever before - must those relationships be paramount. They must be solid and built on a foundation of shared values.

The strived for solutions must, of course, still drive customer profitability but equally important, they must embrace components that serve to better the lives of all. It's a big ask and it's not every deal that will see the parties on the same page. In this case, Scania and Shoprite were on exactly the same page and it is thus I saw the Scania/Shoprite handover as much more than the celebration of a great new truck deal for both companies.

What I came away with – and want to carry through 2023 - was

insight into the fact that the 'quick deal' era has passed. There are just too many extra issues to take into consideration that reach beyond the inward interests of the parties involved. We have a planet to save and taking action on this – without compromising on your specific needs – is now paramount. The signs are there. The debate is over. The planet needs our care.

So what are the added considerations when it comes to minimising global warming? There are many but in this context, there is a global urgency to do away with diesel fuel. The world is looking for ways to transition from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources and the world's truck makers have been doing a tremendous amount of Research and Development work into finding alternative propulsion methods.

This is now clearly evident in Europe where there is a massive shift by the OEMs towards electric

trucks and other alternative propulsion methods such as hydrogen powered trucks.

Scania in Europe is certainly up there in that race but although local interest in electric vehicles is high – especially down in the dinky-toy passenger car arena – it will be some time before we see the wide-scale use of long-haul electric trucks operating on our roads. The light-switch of interest has certainly been flipped on but it is going to be some time before the bulb shines bright enough for all to see where we're going.

Diesel is here for some time

Without going into the dreadful Eskom woes which are familiar to all, even if we had a 24/7 reliable electricity supply throughout the country, the charging infrastructure has to be put in place to cater for such vehicles – and that is going to take time and money. So we are stuck with diesel for some time to come. The problem is, of course, that fossil fuel is seen as dirty fuel.

So what do we do? For one, it is no use waiting for Government policy to lead the charge. Policy is not going to drive the change. After all, we're still legislated at the antiquated Euro 2 emissions level whereas Europe is now heading towards Euro 7. We're miles behind. Maybe a tender should be issued to speed it up, says he with half a tongue in his cheek.

FleetWatch has always contended that in South Africa, apart from what the major truck manufacturers are able to do in the way of, for example, engine technology and aerodynamics to mention just two positive impacts, one of the main ways for truck operators to achieve realistic fuel savings and reduce their carbon footprint in a practical and achievable manner is via driver training. A driver can have a huge impact on fuel consumption and training in economical driving is a definite to achieve fuel savings.

This still applies to this day but thanks goodness we have some visionary truck customers like

the Shoprite Group and truck manufacturers like Scania who have taken it upon themselves to drive the change beyond economical driving. They are not waiting for policy changes and the function held last year in Stellenbosch was a celebration of this vision.

Buzz was Euro 5

The buzz of the day was Scania's Euro5 advanced engine platform in the Scania Euro 5 G450 A6x4 truck tractors that Shoprite took delivery of. The hint of what both Scania and Shoprite were excited about was given via the branding on the vehicles. On the left hand side door of the cab was written: 'Less Fuel – Better for the Planet'. On the other side of the cab was written: 'Less CO² – better for the planet'.

To be honest, I didn't see the Euro 5 accent as being the most important highlight of this function. After all, Euro 5 technology in South Africa is not exclusive to Scania as it is offered by a number of other truck makers in South Africa in certain of their models. What I saw as significant was all that I have spelt out above – the thrill of a milestone reached in a long journey. It was the absolute thrill of achievement



We are relentless in our efforts to improve operational and supply chain efficiencies which play a crucial role in our ability to consistently deliver low prices and reduce overall environmental impact.

Anrew Havinga
Chief Supply Officer
Shoprite Group

both companies felt in reaching what Mark Erasmus, General Manager, Commercial Sales of Scania Southern Africa, has termed as a milestone along a journey of shared visions started some time ago – with the cherry on top being the fuel and emissions benefits.

Johnny-Ray Basset, Key Accounts manager at Scania Southern Africa, spelt it out: "The Euro 5 journey is still very new but there's quite a story to tell – one that stretches back over five years when we first started talking to Shoprite. It soon became evident that this couldn't be a 'pick-a-product' scenario."

Among other things such as driver safety and comfort features, Shoprite was looking for improved fuel efficiency and lowered emissions and it was agreed to conduct a number of demos and road tests to see if the aspirations could match the realities.

Shoprite's vision went way beyond just the price and it remains that way to this day. Andrew Havinga, Chief Supply Chain Officer for the Shoprite Group, sums it up in the following statement: "We are relentless in our efforts to improve operational and supply chain efficiencies as it plays a critical role in our ability to consistently deliver on Shoprite's promise of everyday low prices while reducing our overall environmental impact."

The first vehicles tested back then were the Scania Euro 3 P410 and G460 truck tractors which were sent on the road serving the northern regions of South Africa where road conditions are pretty harsh. The tests included driver training and monitoring of vehicle performance using the Scania fleet management system.

The end result was that the fuel saving on the Scania Euro 3 vehicles was great, the reliability of the trucks was superb and the drivers loved the power and comfort. As a result of these positive outcomes, Shoprite decided to take delivery of 16 Scania PGR 410 truck tractors. But that was not the end of the shared journey.

As mentioned above, South African legislation is still stuck at ► 15

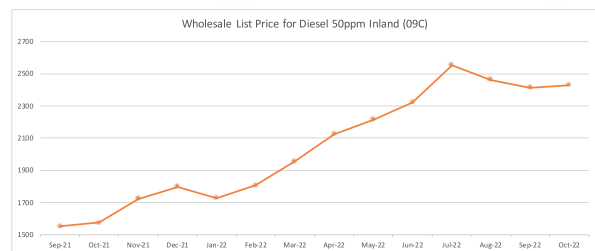
HOW FLEET MANAGERS CAN STAY ON TOP OF RISING FUEL EXPENSES



Despite the cost of fuel increasing by a staggering 67.5% over the past year alone, the scary reality for business owners and fleet managers alike is this: **business must go on.**

As long as your business has vehicles on the road - whether occasionally or on a daily basis - you're ultimately burdened with **heavy fuel expenses** that can seriously cut into your profit margins, leaving an unpleasant dent in your bottom line.

At Masana, we are keenly aware of the daily challenges being faced in the fleet management environment: rising fuel costs, industry regulations, and of course the white elephant in the room - fuel theft. **Fuel fraud and theft accounts for a significant portion of fuel wastage in SA.** It isn't hard to see how this fact, alongside steady fuel price increases, could potentially have a disastrous effect on any profitable operation; but **by partnering with Masana, you're able to successfully regain effective fleet management control - while eliminating fuel theft.**



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Masana's range of on-road solutions gives our customers access to **discounted, Wholesale List-priced diesel** across an extensive national network; which immediately affords significant savings over paying full Retail cost with every refuelling stop. Furthermore, our solutions are **cardless, cashless** and **paperless**; by implementing the latest technology to manage your fleet's fuel usage, you're able to effectively control fuel expenditure without attracting any bank or transactional fees.



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For more information on our solutions visit our site, or contact us directly:

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► 13 Euro II level but Scania is way beyond that. Check this out. According to Erasmus, Scania was the first heavy vehicle manufacturer to produce a Euro 4 engine to meet the European Union's emission standards. And that was back in 2004.

Then, in 2005, the company acquired SCR after-treatment to comply with Euro 5 with even greater fuel savings and lower CO² and NOx emissions being achieved. Consider that its now 2023 and we're still at Euro II. Eieeesh!

Euro 5 tests

The technological expertise existed in the Scania stable and

Solar power

▼ It's not only the truck tractors that the Shoprite Group is looking to for environmental sustainability. The Group has a huge trailer fleet of more than 1 200 trailers of which 749 are solar-powered trailers. Of these 473 are refrigerated trailers and 276 units are not refrigerated but the tail lift is powered by solar energy.

Shoprite wanted it. It was thus that the Euro 5 discussions were started and once again, extensive demos and road testing of the Euro 5 vehicles were done. What emerged from these tests is that a proven fuel saving of around 10% along with the desired lower emissions was achieved.

The aspirations had met the realities and it was all this – along with the built-in safety features and other offerings such as the flexible maintenance solutions tailor-made specifically for the Shoprite fleet - that led to Shoprite's final decision to place the massive order of 100 Scania Euro5 G450 A6x4 truck tractors with a further 140 to be delivered by the end of this year.

You might ask why *FleetWatch* has given so much time and space to this story? Why didn't we just go the big headline news story of the massive order? The answer is simple. This one is for our grandkids.

As Erasmus said at the function: "Transportation is historically a huge contributor to carbon emissions and decreasing the levels

has become imperative for all of us involved in it." And he is right.

Way off the tables of our leaders

With all the problems South Africa is facing in terms of the electricity crisis, rampant corruption, increasing crime, daily service delivery protests, lousy politics, low economic growth, unemployment – and much more - I contend that environmental considerations are way off the tables of our leaders and legislators apart from, of course, when it comes to scoring handsomely from the carbon tax imposed on the industry.

If environmental sustainability was high on the agenda, I reckon President Cyril Ramaphosa would be out there on the roads pleading with protestors to stop polluting the air with a toxic cocktail of gunk by burning tyres in their service delivery protests. Maybe he could hand out a few gas cigarette lighters so at least they could have a glow on the roads.

With Euro 5, we're talking about reducing CO² and NOx emissions. ► 16





Symbolic tribute

▲ Excuse my romantic side but I see this pic as being symbolic of man bowing down with his feet in a pool of clean, clear water to pay tribute to the efforts of Scania and the Shoprite Group to secure a better future for the planet and for all who live on it.

► 15 Now check this out. *FleetWatch* contacted IQAir in North America to get a handle on the emissions and health hazards to humans and the environment resulting from the open burning of tyres. Are you ready? This is the reply we got from Cathy Hood, Public Relations Manager of IQAir North America, Inc. (thanks Cathy).

“Emissions from open tyre burning include “criteria” pollutants such as particulates, carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur oxides (SOx), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). They also include “non-criteria” hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), such as polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, dioxins, furans, hydrogen chloride, benzene, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and metals such as cadmium, nickel, zinc, mercury, chromium, and vanadium.” And we not finished yet....

“Both ‘criteria’ and ‘non-criteria’ pollutants can cause significant short and long term health effects. Depending on the length and degree

of exposure, these health effects could include irritation of the skin, eyes, and mucous membranes, respiratory effects, central nervous system depression, anxiety and cancer. Dioxin is a highly toxic compound which may cause cancer and neurological damage, and disrupt reproductive systems, thyroid systems, respiratory systems etc.” Wait! Hang on. There’s more....

“Uncontrolled tyre burning has been proven to be 16 times more mutagenic, i.e. capable of inducing genetic mutation, than traditional residential wood combustion in a fireplace, and 13 000 times more mutagenic than coal-fired utility emissions with good combustion efficiency and add-on controls.”

Phew! All that is enough to destroy any Euro 5 engine.

I highlight the burning tyres scenario to show that there are many negative impacts on air quality from many different sources. Thankfully the trucking sector is doing its bit to impact positively where it can and perhaps our

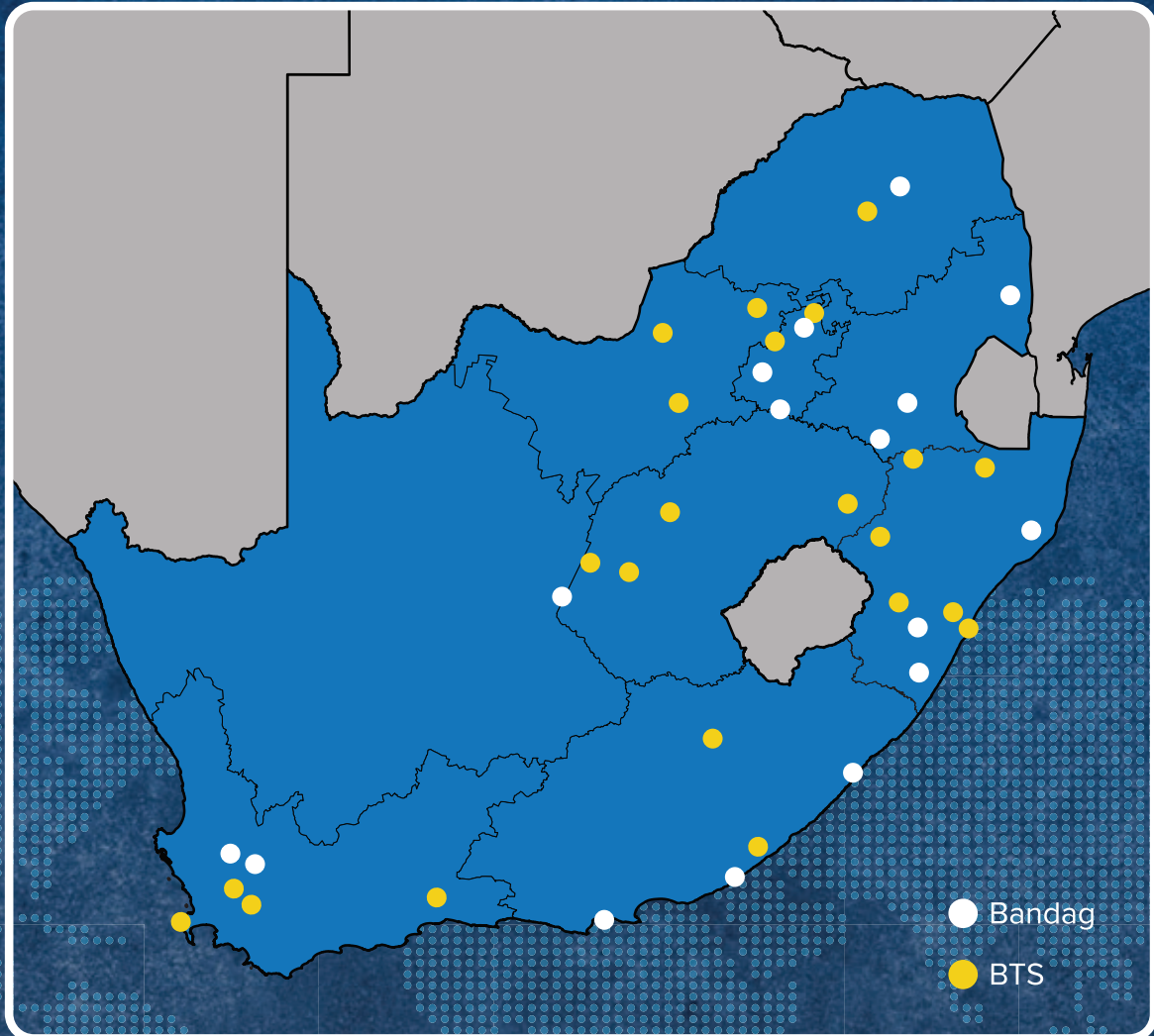
government should follow the shared vision of Shoprite and Scania and reach out to join in that vision. From the private sector side, the willingness is there as spelt out by Erik Bergvall, Managing Director of Scania Southern Africa, at the function.

“Like Shoprite, we are here to collaborate with other partners, to assist, guide and influence customers, local, regional and national government, industry bodies and NGOs around the importance of environmental stewardship for the mutual benefit of society. We are doing this together because we believe in the same principles and share the same objective: to create a better future for those who come after us.”

Yep, it was a great order but this story is one is for our grandkids. □

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**Entry
Deadline
May 31
2023**



The search is on for the 2023 Highway Hero!

▲ Sabelo Dlamini from Agritrans was the overall winner of last year's Holland Highway Heroes competition and walked away with the grand prize of R75 000. He competed in the flatdeck category. The other categories are tippers, tautliners, tankers, reefers and added for the first time this year, buses.

It's a sad reality that the good work truck drivers do in serving the needs of society and the economy has of late been overshadowed by a number of high profile crashes and incidents that have occurred around the country – the latest being the horrific crash on the M41 in Durban where a 'runaway' truck took out around 50 cars. This is a great pity for it serves to impart to the public a negative image of all truck drivers – and indeed the trucking industry as a whole – and in doing so, overshadows the excellent work thousands of truck drivers do on a daily basis in delivering the goods of South Africa writes Patrick O'Leary.

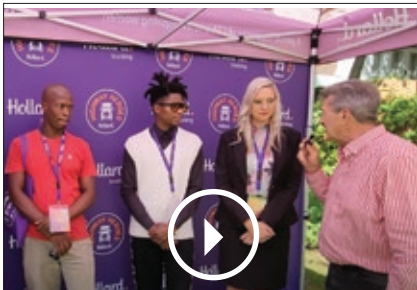
Yes, it is true that there are many miscreant truck drivers who are untrained and act as a menace on the road. While such drivers get no sanction from *FleetWatch* we do, however, also point to the rot which permeates beyond those drivers including the truck operators who employ such drivers.

I have spoken to drivers operating horribly unroadworthy rigs and when

asked why they don't report the faults to their bosses, they say they do but are met with the attitude that they either drive or be fired. Shame on their employers for they care neither for the professional standards of their drivers nor the safety of others on the roads. They are there for the buck and just as their drivers shouldn't be in the driver's seat of a rig, they shouldn't be in the driver's seat of any transport company.



WATCH THE VIDEO



Enthusiasm runs high for Hollar Highway Heroes competition

▲ *FleetWatch* editor Patrick O'Leary gets enthusiastic response for the Hollar Highway Heroes competition from campaign manager Elka Du Piesanie, last year's winner Sabelo Dlamini, his employer Stan Trollip, MD of Agritrans and the ever enthusiastic Smash Africa. The competition is a winner from many angles.

Then there are the licensing departments where officials abuse their positions to indulge in the well-known 'eat a little' practice so commonly employed in government departments – oh yes, and in Eskom as well it seems. At many licensing departments around the country, licenses are issued fraudulently in return for a brushing of the palm with crispy notes. And then you get the 'Dial a COF' test centres where COF (Certificates of Fitness) are issued without an examiner ever seeing, never mind testing, a vehicle.

Am I exaggerating? If I was, then why on earth did the former Minister of Transport Fikile Mbalula announce at a media conference in October last year that over 190 000 illegally obtained driver's licenses had been sent to provincial MECs for cancellation. This followed a probe by the Special Investigating Unit into various activities of the Department of Transport in an effort to combat on-going fraud and corruption at driving licence testing centres (DLTC).

There are a lot of ills in the industry and it is no wonder then that road fatalities are a crisis in South Africa. Thankfully there were no deaths in the horror Durban crash but six

people were taken to hospital with critical injuries and over 20 were treated for less serious injuries. It could have been so much worse. Every year there are well over 12 000 deaths on our roads.

However, while these realities cannot be ignored, what must also not be ignored is the fact that there are many transport companies who do care about the safety of their drivers and other road users and go out of their way to operate to best practise standards. There are also many truck drivers who are highly qualified and operate to the highest levels of responsible driving. It is these companies and drivers who are the unsung heroes of the economy and as stated, it is unfortunate that they are overshadowed by the miscreants who are allowed to operate in this industry.

One organisation which not only wants to highlight these 'unsung heroes' while at the same time improve road safety for all is Hollar Trucking which, for some years now, has been working to enhance road safety in South Africa through its Highway Heroes competition. This is a competition which identifies and rewards South Africa's best and safest truck drivers – and for the first time this year, bus drivers as well.



"We're deeply invested in entrenching safe driving practices and creating shared value by making South Africa's roads safer for all road users."

Paul Dangerfield

PRIZES • 2023

Winning
Truck Driver

R150 000

Five category
winners

R50 000 each

Top Bus Driver

R100 000

At the launch of the 2023 competition, Paul Dangerfield, Hollar Trucking National Operations Manager, said Highway Heroes is all about improving road safety in that it promotes safer driving practices.

"The Hollar Highway Heroes competition has led to a big improvement in participating drivers' road behaviour. Better driving, in turn, reduces risk and leads to safer roads. It also means lower fuel and maintenance costs, and fewer claims."

This year, for the first time, the competition is open to drivers of all truck and bus fleets – not only those affiliated to Hollar. "By including bus drivers in the competition, we want to have a greater positive influence on enhancing road safety in South Africa. But the broader mission is to go beyond trucking and buses to cut risk and reduce road-accident claims and the tragic loss of life," said Dangerfield.

Last year, Hollar Highway Heroes received 2 400 entries. This year the aim is to attract at least 5 000 truck drivers and a decent first cohort of bus drivers. Entries were opened on 1 March and will remain open until 31 May. After the first monitoring phase ends on 31 July, 50 truck drivers and 20 bus drivers will progress to the second assessment phase from 1 September to 15 October.

And check this out. There are big cash prizes to be won: R50 000 for five category winners, R100 000 for the top bus driver and a whopping R150 000 for the overall winning truck driver. The winners will be crowned at a high-profile gala event at Emperors Palace, Ekurhuleni, on 17 November.

"We're deeply invested in entrenching safe driving practices, and creating shared value by making South Africa's roads safer for all road users – whether you're a fleet owner, broker, driver, community member, or one ► 20



► 19 of our sponsor partners in this initiative. Our message is: we are where you are!” said Dangerfield.

“This ties in with our overarching business purpose at Hollard: to create better futures for all. We believe good drivers help us create better futures for all road users by delivering their cargo and passengers safely and responsibly, and by being an example to others.”

Strong support

The two main partners of the campaign this year are cTrack and CTU Bus Insurance supported by various other organisations such as JC Auditors, well known for its work in the Road Transport Management System (RTMS) arena.

Commenting on the campaign, managing director of JC Auditors, Oliver Naidoo, says they believe that recognizing drivers for their hard work and dedication is essential in promoting driver safety and maintaining a positive work environment.

“In the last 15 years of conducting more than 6000 RTMS audits, we’ve become acutely aware of the severe lack of adequate systems and resources when it comes to managing drivers, which often translates to poor driving behaviour and ever-increasing crash rates. So we see the Hollard Highway Heroes campaign as having a number of positive impacts,” says Naidoo, listing these impacts as the following:

- It boosts morale: Recognizing

drivers for their accomplishments and contributions can boost morale and motivate them to continue working hard to maintain high safety standards.

- It reinforces positive behaviours: Recognizing drivers for exhibiting positive safety behaviours, such as following safety protocols, wearing personal protective equipment and reporting safety hazards, can



“Last year 2 400 truck drivers competed for the crown and this year we are hoping to attract 5 000 truck and bus drivers from around the country. We’re also hoping for more entries from women truck and bus drivers this year.”

Elka Du Piesanie

Industry support



“Recognizing drivers for their hard work and dedication is essential in promoting driver safety and maintaining a positive work environment.”

Oliver Naidoo
JC Auditors

reinforce these behaviours and encourage them to become habits.

- It encourages peer recognition: Peer recognition can be a powerful motivator and encouraging drivers to recognize and appreciate their colleagues' contributions to safety can foster a positive team culture and promote a sense of camaraderie.
- It improves driver retention: Driver recognition can also help to improve driver retention by demonstrating to drivers that their contributions are valued and appreciated, which can increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover.

“All these factors serve to enhance the status of drivers by recognition and in so doing, can contribute to the required change in driver culture that we need on our roads,” says Oliver.

What *FleetWatch* loves about this competition is that not only does it promote safer driving but it also elevates truck drivers from their general ‘unsung’ status onto a platform of ‘Hero’ status. And believe me, there are many drivers who deserve this elevated status. So, to all operators, get your driver entries in before the deadline of May 31st 2023. □



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◀ It's hands-up to a Better Life for all from UD Trucks Southern Africa's Managing Director, Filip Van den Heede (left) and sales director Rory Schultz.

▼ Staying ahead of local regulations and in its quest to reduce harmful emissions, UD Trucks launched its Euro 5 Quester and Croner models last year. Note the AdBlue tank alongside this Quester GWE 460's diesel tank.

UD TRUCKS GOING BEYOND THE TRUCK



A better life is what millions of South Africans are hoping for. However, given the on-going load shedding from Eskom, the horrendously high unemployment rate, the high crime rate, rampant corruption at all levels, dilapidated infrastructure, no service delivery to many communities, low growth and an ailing economy – to mention just a few of the stumbling blocks (yes, there are more) - a better life is a long way off for the majority of South Africans. Truck manufacturers such as UD Trucks are, however, striving in their own way to influence positively the road ahead writes *Patrick O'Leary*.

Having attended numerous media events over the years put on by

truck manufacturers, it is interesting to note a content swing away from the 'old style' press conferences where market performance and product specifications dominated the discussions. Certainly market performance is still on the agenda but truck specification details such as horsepower, GVM, torque curves etc for specific models no longer appear on the overhead screens. They are still available of course but in separate spec sheets.

What does appear on the big screen is a more holistic perspective placing the particular manufacturer in the context of its overall contribution to the betterment of society as a whole. In the case of UD Trucks, it has positioned its role as one striving towards a



▲ The Euro 5 UD Quon was launched in South Africa by UD Trucks in 2019. These vehicles are fitted with SCR (Selective Catalytic Reduction) technology which reduces CO².

Better Life. It is, in fact, a credo adopted by the global UD Truck Japan organisation as one to follow. So no longer is the company looking at just providing the right trucks for the right jobs thereby serving its customers with world class trucks but is also widening its purpose.

Obviously UD Trucks can go only so far towards solving all the problems preventing people from enjoying a better life as it too lives under the complexities of both local and global inhibiting factors. However, where they can make a positive contribution, they are doing so and in the face of numerous challenges facing the transport sector, UD Trucks is going all out to transfer its global credo to our local shores.

As UD Trucks Southern Africa's Managing Director, Filip Van den Heede explains, it's not just about pure growth numbers anymore "but aligning the business growth aspirations with our purpose - a Better Life – and meeting customer expectations."

For over 80 years, UD Trucks has been providing trucks and services for the world. Now, however, the logistics industry is facing an array of challenges, brought on not only by the Covid pandemic but also by impacts such as soaring operational costs – high fuel prices being one – as well as environmental impacts such as climate change and resource depletion which are serving to change the face of the industry.

"To overcome these many challenges, innovation and collaboration are essential for making the world a better place. We are committed to making life better - for people and the planet. This is our purpose, and we call it Better Life. Guided by this purpose, we aspire to be the leader in sustainability among Japanese commercial truck manufacturers by 2025," says Van den Heede, adding that under this credo, there are four pillars of focus: Better for Logistics; Better for the Planet; Better for People; and Better for

Business. These are the four pillars that UD Trucks is now addressing with some of the actions taken overlapping the four pillars in terms of overall benefits.

Take for example the attention being paid to reducing harmful emissions released into the environment. This is both a global and a local objective and playing its part on this front, UD Trucks launched its Quester and Croner Euro 5 models last year preceded by the Euro 5 Quon in 2019.

"These vehicles, which are also much more fuel efficient, are fitted with SCR (Selective Catalytic Reduction) technology which has enabled us not only to reduce CO² emissions but also the total cost of ownership. To date we have produced and sold close to 1 000 Euro 5 units in South Africa," says Rory Schultz, UD Trucks Southern Africa sales director

He points out that by introducing Euro 5 technology, UD Trucks has stayed ahead of local regulations and market demands given that South African legislation is still sitting at the archaic Euro 2 standard. The benefits that arise from Euro 5 impact on all four of the Better Life pillars as reducing emissions is better for the planet and for people while reducing fuel consumption is better for logistics and for business.

Improving vehicle safety is also a high priority – especially in South Africa where crashes are rampant. In this arena, UD Trucks Japan has embraced what it terms Vision Zero which is working towards a future with no injuries, deaths or minor injuries from road collisions and safety for drivers, communities, and other road users.

Vision 2030 was announced through the launch of Fujin and Raijin - an innovation roadmap addressing the need for connectivity, automation, and electromobility in logistics by 2030. "As part of our current fleet range, we already offer some of these features such as the Connected Services, ESCOT technology and the Traffic Eye system, which address both automation and connectivity of our

vehicles, making them an appropriate choice for meeting logistics challenges of today," says Schultz.

Good news in this arena is that the Quon range will receive further upgrades this year to improve vehicle safety. "With innovation that puts people first, these safety enhancements are set to support a sustainable future and will help us achieve Vision Zero," adds Schultz.

According to Van den Heede, one of the most significant challenges to the industry is the rising cost of doing business. "Consequently, we focus on providing solutions that will improve efficiency and profitability through our smart logistics approach. UD Connected Services helps us achieve this end goal and our approach has resulted in enhancements set to limit fuel theft, provide a recovery solution as well as ensure safety through alcohol detection. In a world of digitalization, the logistics industry will benefit significantly from these additional features."

UD Trucks sees a reliable and knowledgeable workforce not as being Better for People but also the key to innovation. In this arena, UD Trucks trained more than 2 000 delegates across its dealer network to improve their skills. "Through this process, we guarantee our customers' uptime and ensure they receive reliable, trustworthy service. Additionally, we went an extra mile and provided training to diesel apprentices," says Schultz.

UD Trucks SA will also open over three new dealerships this year in strategic areas to better service its customers. "This will increase the visibility of our holistic solutions and increase our dealer footprint to over 40 locations across the country," says Schultz.

Given all the above, *FleetWatch* lifts its hat to UD Trucks for looking beyond its obvious product offerings towards embracing a wider, more holistic view leading towards a Better Life for all. It is a path which – perhaps naively – I wish all politicians would follow. □



Isuzu builds on 2022 success with 'EasyGo' offering

What has always been admirable about Isuzu Trucks is the innovative thinking that emerges from this stable in catering to changing market demands and needs. Some years ago they came up with the Trk'Eneur concept seeing every truck as a mini-economy that helps in job creation and income generation. It was a new way of thinking and a whole support structure was put in place to support the people – the Trk'Eneurs - who make these 'mini economies' possible. And now there's another one. It's called EasyGo.



WATCH THE VIDEOS



Interview - Craig Uren, Isuzu Motors South Africa

▲ Ready to Work - the Isuzu FXZ 26-360 6X4 Liebherr 6m3 Mixer (left) and the Isuzu FRR 600 AMT Mesh Cage Tipper.

Building on its' 2022 market success (see below), this new EasyGo offering is structured around unlocking growth for SMMEs which, according to Craig Uren, Senior Vice President Revenue Generation Southern African Customs Union, Isuzu Motors South Africa, is a novel funding approach to commercial vehicle acquisitions. It is aimed particularly at first time entrants into the trucking space and is all

▼ Editor Patrick O'Leary talks to Craig Uren

about renting rather than owning a vehicle.

The rental truck programme, formed in partnership with Isuzu Finance, provides peace of mind as ownership rests with the bank and qualifying small businesses pay a monthly rental based on the selected truck, application and period of the rental. Businesses can choose between a minimum of 36 months and a maximum of 60 months.

"Isuzu is the first OEM in South Africa to offer an off-balance sheet solution for customers to rent a truck rather than owning it. We identified this need as many Small to Medium businesses would not qualify for traditional finance based on an evaluation of their assets and liabilities. EasyGO focuses on the business's revenue streams and contracts, rather than on its assets and liabilities," says Uren.

"Falling outside of the National Credit Act, this is an option that really has the customer in mind. Small businesses seldom have the capital outlay to buy and own assets like trucks, so this allows them to focus on their business instead of worrying about how to purchase a truck," says Marcois van Staden, Head: Isuzu Finance.

Enlarging on the financial benefits EasyGO will have for SMMEs, Uren says that being off-balance sheet, EasyGO is a straightforward profit and loss statement expense, like the office photocopier or the office plants. "This has multiple advantages such as a lower debt burden as the vehicle is rented not owned which, in turn, allows the business to use its credit elsewhere to grow the business."



▲ Safety upgrades on the new generation Isuzu N- and F-Series models include Daylight Running Lights



▲ The Isuzu NPR 400 AMT is fitted with Euro 5 technology to reduce emissions.



▲ The Isuzu NQR 500 Rollback. Couple Isuzu's 'Ready to Work' and 'EasyGo' options and the buyer can get up and running without delays. And check the wide selection of offerings across all industry sectors below.





Ready to Work

Coupled with the new EasyGo option is Isuzu's 'Ready to Work' offering which provides an off-the shelf truck solution which enables operators to get up and running without delays. These are, in essence, pre-built trucks with various bodies - depending on the application – already built on meaning that the customer does not have to wait for the truck body to be built once the vehicle is acquired.

"The time saved because the vehicle does not have to go to a body builder can be anything from 60-180 days, depending on the configuration. This allows a business to start generating revenue almost immediately – a key win in the trucking space. Coupled to our rental offer, this represents a game-changing moment for access into the trucking economy for small businesses," says Uren, adding that 'Ready To Work' products include a variety of van bodies and drop sides.

10th year as market leader

Although the past three years have not been easy for any truck manufacturer, the good folk at Isuzu have every reason to smile due to the fact that Isuzu Motors South Africa (IMSAf) and the Isuzu Truck brand once again maintained their top position in the South African truck market for 2022 - celebrating their 10th consecutive year as the truck market leader.

Our growth can be attributed to relentless hard work of the Isuzu Team, the backbone being the dealer network and their relationships with our customers

Craig Uren

The South African truck market including van and bus recorded total sales of 30 153 units for the 2022 calendar year, an increase of 11.4% overall on 2021 numbers, with Isuzu's growth at 4.7%. Isuzu achieved a total sale of 3 304 units of the total market, excluding vans and buses – a record performance for the brand which smashed the previous year's total by an increase of 4.76%.

The Medium Commercial Vehicle market increased by 17.8%. Isuzu sales in this category increased by +10.12% compared to 2021.

The team

◀ A happy crew of Isuzu Trucks people who work as a team to make it all happen. From left: Sinethemba Cobo, Thembaletu Mthimkhulu, Mo Ebrahim, Tshilidzi Rasithithi, Lisa van Aswegen, Mpho Nkhumeleni, Esti Beaumont and Hanlie Pieters.

▼ Craig Uren, Senior Vice President Revenue Generation Southern African Customs Union, Isuzu Motors South Africa.



The Heavy Commercial Vehicle market increased by 19.6%. Isuzu sales in this category increased by 0.24% compared to 2021.

On achieving 10 consecutive years of market leadership, Uren says: "Our growth can be attributed to the relentless hard work of the greater Isuzu team, the backbone of which is our dealer network and their relationships with our customers."

Talking Trucking

There's a lot for Isuzu and its customers to celebrate and especially given that challenges such as global and domestic supply chain issues impacted many sectors of the South African economy in 2022. And let's not forget the Covid pandemic lockdowns, the KZN riots, the floods and many other calamities that hit our country over the past three years.

To get a better feel for the past challenges faced and what lies ahead, *FleetWatch* editor Patrick O'Leary sat down for a chat with Craig Uren to explore how Isuzu handled all this and still came through smiling. So grab a cup of coffee, get comfortable, sit back and click on the video on page 24 to listen to us talking trucking. □

Intelligent insight in extraordinary times



In 2022 the South African Institute of Civil Engineering (SAICE) accorded a D-grade rating on South African infrastructure, the lowest rating since scorecard inception sixteen years prior. This rating means that our infrastructure is not coping with normal demand and is being poorly maintained. This state of the built environment is part-reflected in the worsening state of our roads network on which fleet businesses are reliant. Poorly maintained infrastructure and poorly marked roads contribute toward increased levels of inconvenience and a higher risk of road incidents.

Tracker's Track and Dispatch IQ (TDIQ) service offers heightened transparency across all the critical metrics that can play a role in safeguarding against possible incidents. Should fleet vehicles be involved in road incidents, some of the data that may be required in a subsequent investigation, such as vehicle tracking, trip reports and journey plans, as well as communications between the company, driver and client can be provided through the integrated artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning capabilities of TDIQ.

"It's unfortunate to see the poor state of South African roads," says Tracker Business Solutions Executive, Kobus Visagie. "But the lessons we learn from these challenges are invaluable to our capacity for innovation. Our technology grows smarter with each set of collected data, as we adapt toward more extreme road conditions. This helps us build more robust systems and add greater value to our fleet clients."

Tracker's technology can play a crucial role in incident management and post-incident investigations as road hazards increase.

Tracker AI Dashcam integrates two-way visuals to monitor driver behaviour and road conditions. Reviewing this footage would easily identify whether a driver used all preventative measures to mitigate a risk or manage a situation. And AI insights could very well alert

the driver to possible hazards ahead of time.

Tracker Track and Dispatch IQ plays an essential role in real-time route management and planning of alternate, safer routes when obstructions, heavy traffic congestion or poor road conditions are flagged.

"Logistics companies can solve many of their challenges by harnessing the benefits of trusted telematics technology from reputable companies," Visagie continues. "Data from our vast customer network inform the business and technological services we continually develop."

Daily disruptions to logistics operations arising from load-shedding, civil unrest or crumbling infrastructure can severely impact customer experience through compromised service delivery and can affect onward maintenance or growth in earnings. This in addition to a rising cost burden of accidental damage, fleet maintenance and escalating fuel costs.

"Even the small act of diverting vehicles to more efficient routes around high traffic situations arising from a labour strike or dysfunctional traffic lights starts to make a significant financial difference over time to businesses facing these economic pressures," explains Visagie. "Tracker is using data to unlock business efficiency for our customers. We are committed to delivering data-driven solutions to ensure that businesses continue to meet their promises and their targets through this time of disruption on our roads." he concludes.

Real Insurance Solutions for Transporters



Merx Underwriting Managers specialises in Heavy Commercial Vehicles and further offers a range of comprehensive solutions for Goods in Transit, Commercial, Agricultural, Personal Lines as well as associated value-added products.

We provide a full underwriting, claims and claims recovery function for the Heavy Commercial Vehicle market. Operating from two offices in Gauteng, we serve the needs of our clients throughout South Africa.

Our insurer is Old Mutual Insure, with whom we have a full binder facility.

For more information please visit our website: www.merxum.co.za

Underwritten by:



Old Mutual Insure Limited is a licensed FSP and Non-Life Insurer.



Transporters – it's time to make your legal stand

For too long now transporters have been the victims of numerous criminal actions that are crippling the industry. These include hijackings, public violence, illegal road closures, intimidation of drivers by various groups - to mention just a few. I believe it is high time that the transport industry makes a legal standpoint to invoke our constitutional rights that are so well embedded in our Constitution - such as "the right to freedom of movement".



▲ Shaun McGuone, Director, Investipol

▲ More than 300 trucks were removed from queuing on the N2 National Road by armed men and escorted to the outskirts of Empangeni where they were staged at the old airport and surrounding areas.

Equality

9. (1) Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

Freedom and security of the person

12. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right—

- (a) not to be deprived of freedom arbitrarily or without just cause;
- (b) not to be detained without trial;
- (c) to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources;
- (d) not to be tortured in any way; and
- (e) not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. ▶ 31

COMMERCIAL LIQUID ENGINEERING THAT KEEPS YOUR FLEET MOVING

Powerful engines like that of trucks, buses, and tractors are required to meet the high-quality demands of a business. In order to transfer heavy equipment from one place to another, carry passengers over long distances or plough meters of land – fleet managers and entrepreneurs therefore need an oil engine that is reliable, efficient and increases the lifespan of vehicles. As stringent emission guidelines increase, finding the right oil has become increasingly critical with many fleet owners requiring an oil that provides fuel economy benefits and extends oil drain intervals, without compromising on protection and performance.

Fortunately, there is an innovative and technology powered oil brand to cope with higher engine pressures.

Liquid engineering that empowers fleet operations to thrive

Following over 100 years Castrol has produced liquid engineering made of advanced lubricants that serve the industrial, transport, and agricultural sectors. Its branded products are recognised globally for innovation and high performance through its commitment to premium quality and cutting-edge technology.

Whatever kind of heavy-duty vehicles you operate, Castrol has the expertise and products you need to ensure operational efficiency. The brand is committed to making sure that your heavy-duty engine oils are specifically engineered to deliver a longer life and continuous service intervals, even under severe operating conditions.

Commercial vehicle oil brands that make a difference to your business

Each product brand in Castrol's innovative range of oils address a different engine need and appeals to different consumer profiles, to ensure that your

vehicles can perform at their fullest potential.

To help you prepare and maintain your vehicle for operations such as construction, landfill, mining, farming and more, Castrol has introduced Castrol VECTON with unique SYSTEM PRO TECHNOLOGY™. To meet the demands of the agricultural sector, is this advanced part-synthetic heavy-duty diesel engine oil that offers longer oil life. This exceptional diesel oil conforms to latest engine oil specifications and is available in three viscosity grades.

Castrol VECTON also delivers up to 45% extra performance reserve* that fights oil breakdown by controlling oxidation, reducing deposits, and neutralising harmful acids and maintaining viscosity.

Also designed to provide superior protection within diesel engines, is Castrol CRB Multi, a versatile, multi-purpose, heavy-duty engine oil that helps commercial vehicles to operate efficiently and last longer.

Castrol CRB Multi's versatility makes it a highly practical solution for heavy-duty workshops and mixed fleets. Its multipurpose functions help keep your engine clean by protecting against oil thickening and deposit build up in critical engine parts, delivering engine protection for a long and healthy engine life.



Drive sustainability now and in future

For a long and healthy engine life, choose Castrol, with equipped liquid engineering capabilities that guarantee your commercial vehicle engines to operate at their best. Castrol VECTON and Castrol CRB Multi adhere to the Original Engine Manufacturer (OEMs) recommendations, making it a credible choice to help keep your business moving and avoid unexpected downtime.

* Based on tests conducted on 81% of the whole Castrol VECTON range by volume based on 12 months sales up to March 2017.

For more information visit the official Castrol website.

Advanced technology in modern engines requires modern oil Choose the right oil for your fleet.

IT'S MORE THAN JUST OIL.
IT'S LIQUID ENGINEERING.



► 29

Freedom of movement and residence

21. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement.

Freedom of trade, occupation and profession

22. Every citizen has the right to choose their trade, occupation or profession freely. The practice of a trade, occupation or profession may be regulated by law.

The Constitution clearly states that everyone is equal in terms of the law, that meaning that every citizen has equal rights in terms of the Constitution. No one person or group of people has more rights than you.

The way forward for us needs to be that of legal compliance:

- Every time one of your trucks is prohibited from travelling freely down a road, a criminal case needs to be opened.
- Every time one of your trucks is removed from the road by armed thugs, a criminal case needs to be opened.
- Every time one of your trucks is damaged by protesting groups of people, a criminal case needs to be opened.

It is your right to open a criminal case with the South African Police Services and we need to start getting the number of cases together so that senior police officials can do something about the crimes that are affecting this industry so badly.

For instance, recently at Richards Bay more than 300 trucks were removed from queuing on the N2 National Road by armed men and escorted to the outskirts of Empangeni where they were staged at the old airport and surrounding areas. Admittedly there was chaos on the roads. However, these armed men had no legal right to remove the trucks and escort them to this unauthorised destination.

If each and every driver opened a criminal case of hijacking (as the truck drivers were taken at gunpoint against their will) and intimidation, we would have had about 300 cases or more opened on one day. When the national police commissioner looks at these statistics and sees 300+ cases of hijacking in one small area on one day, he would have to send resources to investigate and resolve the issue. When no cases are opened there are no statistics

and the police commissioner is happy that there is no problem.

Every time your truck is held in illegal road closures by protesting groups, this impacts on your constitutional right to freedom of movement and freedom of trade to make a honest living. Remember - it remains an offence in terms of the National Road Traffic Act, 1996/and Regulations for any person to block a public road. Refer to Regulation 319 for ease of reference.

"Hindering or obstructing traffic on public road

(1) No person shall wilfully or unnecessarily prevent, hinder or interrupt the free and proper passage of traffic on a public road.

(2) Subject to the provisions of the Act or any other law, no person shall place or abandon or cause to be placed or abandoned on a public road any object that may endanger or cause damage to traffic on such road."

Can you see the positive impact if each and every truck driver were to open a criminal case for each of these incidents. As I have stated above: The way forward for us needs to be that of legal compliance. □



YOUR RIGHTS

Every time one of your trucks is damaged by protesting groups of people, a criminal case needs to be opened



▲ Technical Director Hennie Lubbe: "The key to running a successful transport business is to know exactly what your fixed and operational costs are. In that way you can spec a vehicle to ensure maximum profitability."

▼ A number of changes to suit Ni-Da's spec had to be made by Iveco on the Iveco S-Way before the order of 150 S-Way 430 and 10 S-Way 470s truck tractors was placed.

RELATIONSHIPS GET THE ORDERS



When you spot the four-man management team from Ni-Da Transport arriving at a new truck launch event, you know there's the potential of a big order hanging in the air. Patrick O'Leary heard from the folk at Iveco some of the background as to how one such order came about from Ni-Da Transport for the new Iveco S-Way models launched in March last year and saw this as an ideal opportunity to dispel the 'price only' myth that is often attached to truck buying. He thus visited the Ni-Da headquarters in Newcastle to get a handle on some of the behind-the-scenes systems and processes that lie behind the massive orders meted out by Ni-Da Transport.

You often read it on social media. It goes something like this: "I want to get into trucking. What truck should I buy - Scania, Iveco, Volvo, MAN or Mercedes-Benz?"

No, my friend. You're not buying a car where your lifestyle image takes precedence over technical specifications and total cost of ownership. There's a lot more to buying a truck than the badging on the front – a lot, lot more.

A truck is not a fashion statement although it must be said that the modern trucks of today are really good lookers and have well-appointed cabs for driver comfort.

However, a truck remains a business tool which exists to make you money - if selected correctly to suit a specific task taking into account a whole lot of operational and cost criteria. Ni-Da understands this well.

When one considers a company like Ni-Da Transport, one can't think small. Founded in 1988 by Nico Oosthuizen, who remains managing director of the Ni-Da Group to this day, Ni-Da Transport has grown over the years into one of the largest operators of side-tippers in the country with over 600 rigs running both locally and cross border.

The role this company plays in the economy is substantial and especially given the commodities boom which, over the past few years, has earned South Africa billions in foreign revenue at a time when the country really needs those bucks. If it were not for companies like Ni-Da Transport, South Africa would have lost out on the commodities boom for the simple reason that rail has failed on so many levels.

A recent article quoted Tharisa, one of South Africa's chrome producers, as saying that the company now uses trucks instead of trains to transport 80% of its chrome to port, a shift seen over the past two years due to Transnet's poor performance. "Historically, it was the other way

around. Two years ago, it was 80% rail and 20% road. Unfortunately, we're putting more trucks on the road, but it's a necessity to export and move product to end-users," chief executive Phoevos Pouroulis was quoted by Reuters as saying.

South Africa is the world's biggest producer of chrome which is essential in the manufacture of stainless steel. And of course, there are other commodities being hauled by Ni-Da to cater for increased demand from world markets. One is coal, which is now being urgently sought by countries in Europe. Germany, for example, is reopening its coal fired power stations given the cut-off of gas supplies from Russia as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine. South Africa is one of the countries benefitting from this new demand.

The size of this company and the role it plays in South Africa's economy is not really imparted when one arrives at the gate of its head-quarters in the historically rich town of Newcastle in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The entrance is flanked by a tall Ni-Da sign and when you pass through the gate, there's a small parking area for cars in front of the offices. What didn't impress was a large pothole on the road sitting smack-bang in front of the gate entrance. Not on the premises but on the road. I hate potholes. I'll

come back to that.

The size and status of this company only starts to hit when you walk inside and pass through an office section with numerous staff sitting behind computers monitoring, recording and doing a whole whack of other things people do on computers. I was met by my host for the day, Technical Director Hennie Lubbe, and I commented as we walked through part of the office section that the admin activities must be huge judging by the number of people with eyes on the screens. "Oh, that's just our fuel control and monitoring department," he replied casually. Gonas! Past that section were banks of more computers with busy staff live tracking vehicles on the road – among other functions.

It was when we walked out the office section into the yard that one got an inkling of just how many trucks this company operates. A herd of rigs were lined up in the yard in perfect order and that was just a fraction of the fleet. Hundreds of other trucks were out loading and offloading from multiple collection and drop off points around the country as well as cross-border. One merely has to head out on the open roads and you cannot but help notice the number of Ni-Da trucks running.

It is all these vehicles that Lubbe



▲ Having already done their homework on the new models, the management team from Ni-Da Transport arrive at the Iveco S-way truck launch event last year: From left: Managing Director Nico Oosthuizen; Technical Director, Hennie Lubbe; Financial Director Danie Wessels; and Operations Director Pieter Kwakernaak.



▲ An aerial view of Ni-Da's Newcastle depot yard. What you see is but a fraction of the fleet of over 600. The others are out on the road doing the job.



▲ Every rig returning to the depot is put over the post-trip inspection bays where they are checked for any faults.

and his team keep their eyes on for their roadworthiness, reliability and operational excellence. And he is well qualified to do so. Let's go back to the year 1979 – that's 43 years ago.

Many of the 'golden oldies' in the industry will remember a company called Truck Makers. Based in Rosslyn, this was a huge facility with its own stamping press plant which, among other activities, would bash out vehicle panels on massive presses.

Truck Makers was also responsible for manufacturing the legendary Samil and other military vehicles to world-class standards.

It was here that Lubbe entered the automotive world starting off as a technician and then qualifying as one of only three Quality Engineers in South Africa certified by the American Society of Quality Control. It was in this area that his non-compromising stance on quality was imbedded – a stance that he exhibits in Ni-Da to this day.

Working with Truck Makers brought him close to Iveco and in 2005, he became head of aftersales for Iveco for the Middle East and Africa from the DRC downwards. At that time Frans Cloete, another legend in the industry, was head of the sales department for Iveco.

It was during this time that Lubbe saw the Ni-Da Group as one he would like Iveco to get into. "I made it my mission to target Ni-Da and

it was in 2006 that the new Iveco Stralis 430 gave me the ammunition I needed to get through the door," he recalls. It was in that year that he delivered 25 Iveco Stralis units to Ni-Da and in 2007, he got another 50 Stralis units into the company.

"The feedback we got on the performance of those models was great but there were some parts supply and technical back up issues that we had to attend to. This was perhaps understandable as the Stralis was one of the first of the new technology trucks to enter the market," Lubbe recalls.

At the end of 2007, he was appointed Customer Service Director of Iveco where he oversaw the total parts, warranty and after-sales operations of the company. This was an invaluable time for him as he had a lot of say into fleets and the issues that fleets were facing. It gave him a better understanding of the relationship that must exist between a truck OEM and its customers.

The experience he gained of smoothing the parts supply and back up services to clients

gave him the foundation of knowledge and insight into the real problems truckers face when such services are not in place. He saw the negative impacts from a transporter's perspective and it is thus parts supply and back-up is a critical criterion to this day if any OEM wants to deal with Ni-Da Transport.

In 2010, Lubbe received a call from Nico Oosthuizen. He wanted to meet. The proposition presented to Lubbe was to head up a new transport company for the Ni-Da-Group hauling yellow equipment for Bell. Oosthuizen wanted Lubbe to run the operation and after being on the OEM side for so long, Lubbe decided to cross the line into the operations arena of fleets.

He thus joined the Ni-Da Group in 2010 and soon after, Ni-Da secured a contact for hauling 45 000 tons of coal a month from Middleburg to Maputo in Mozambique.

Lubbe was put in charge of this contract and did this for almost one year but then, missing his real passion as a technical rather than operations guy, he asked for a transfer to the workshops where he later became Director of the Technical Department.

At that stage, the fleet consisted of around 180 vehicles serving, among others, the Iscor contract with flat decks. Also in the fleet were 23 tautliners and some tankers.

All vehicles were registered for Dangerous Goods and all drivers had a DG certificate.

In this position, Lubbe now had under his wing not only the Stralis models he had sold into the company when he worked for Iveco but also a number of Scania and Volvo units.

An Iveco Trakker 420 tipper was in the yard when I visited standing almost as a tribute to the origins of this company which Oosthuizen started as a supplier of sand and stone to the building industry of Newcastle and surrounding areas. He soon realized the potential for growth when he identified the need for reputable transporters and



Tyre management

▲ With a fleet as large as Ni-Da's, tyres are a huge expense and sophisticated management systems are in place to manage each one of the thousands of tyres. Note the torque wrench. Good practice.



successfully entered the transport sector as Ni-Da Transport.

The launch of the MAN TGS range gave MAN an entry into the Ni-Da fleet when the company bought 40 TGS units in 2010. There were now three vehicle brands in the company - Iveco, Volvo and MAN - and that is how it remains to

The Stralis was one of the first of the new technology trucks to enter the market.

Hennie Lubbe
Technical Director, Ni-Da



this day. “I don’t believe in putting all your eggs into one basket and we’re happy now that we have the right mix,” says Lubbe.

All three OEMs know that although the individual relationships are strong, there is never room for complacency - and never must anything be taken for granted. It’s a win-win scenario that has been built up that, most importantly, is not based on an off-the shelf sale for any of the OEMs.

Take the Iveco S-Way as an example. Launched in March last year as a replacement for the Iveco Stralis, one would imagine that it would have been a natural entry into the Ni-Da group seeing as the Stralis had been running successfully in the company for many years. Not so. Bringing a new model onto the market does not present an automatic assumption of purchase based on any past success

Iveco therefore supplied Ni-Da with a few demo models which were put into operation in the fleet to assess their suitability – and it

▼ Out on the roads one cannot help but notice the large number of Ni-Da trucks and running and contributing positively to the South Africa economy as they do.

wasn’t just about fuel consumption as a number of inputs were given to Iveco to implement if they wanted to get their new range into the Ni-Da fleet. Without going into full details of the requirements, here are just a few examples.

The fuel tank capacity on the launch model was, for example, too small at 540 litres. Ni-Da specs a minimum of 600 litres fuel tank capacity on its truck tractors so an extra 200 litre tank had to be fitted. No easy or quick task but it was done.

Adjustments also had to be made to the 5th wheel taking off the ripple plate and supplying the normal 5th wheel pedestal instead. Emergency Brake Assist was deemed by Iveco as being an optional extra but Ni-Da wanted it as standard fitment. All models had to come standard with EBS – the higher version of ABS. So too with LED lights. Interesting is that Iveco assumed that with Ni-Da operating a lot in the off-road arena, they would prefer the rear lights to be standard and not LED. Not so.

“You bash one of those and you’re looking at between R8000 to R12000 per replacement unit – not to mention periodical bulb replacements when the filaments break. The rear LED lights thus give

a far longer life and are, overall, a cheaper and more reliable option,” says Lubbe.

This last issue on LED versus standard lights is a good example of spec’ing according to an operator’s realities and experiences. It also shows the attention to detail when taking into account total life-cycle costs. Interesting.

With fuel being such a major operating cost in any fleet, fuel consumption tests were also conducted where the S-Way models were compared with other makes using the same routes, the same payloads and the same schedules so as to give an apple-with-apple comparison. On this point, Ni-Da was happy with the results achieved.

What is interesting is that although some of the adjustments required by Ni-Da would place a higher price tag on the units, price was not the prime consideration. The correct spec for the job was what counted. “We look at lifetime costs and our road to success is not to cut costs that, on the surface, may seem high but in reality serve to lower your overall costs. The key to running a successful transport business is to know exactly what your fixed and operational costs are. In that way you can spec





a vehicle to ensure maximum profitability," says Lubbe.

If bought, Iveco would also have to enter into a Full Maintenance Contract on all units sold. This was to tie in with Lubbe's change to the maintenance and service parameters on the entire fleet when he took over as technical director.

"I introduced Full Maintenance Contracts with all three OEMs which includes top up oil, batteries and other consumables not normally included in such contracts," he says.

The rationale behind this decision enabled the company not only to cut back on the number of bakkies it had for its service operations – thereby saving more cost - but also to shift the main workshop functions away from its area of responsibility to enable a more solid concentration on its core functions.

What was kept in place, however, were the post-trip inspection bays where every rig returning to the depot has to go over a pit for inspection. If any minor fault is picked up by the technician or reported by the driver, it will be fixed on site by Ni-Da mechanics. If anything major is picked up, it then

becomes the responsibility of the relevant OEMs. Regular scheduled services are also done by the OEMs under the respective FMC contracts.

Hennie Lubbe has his office towards the bottom of the depot where he can smell the diesel and grease from the nearby check-bays. However, when all his checks and balances are done, he moves up to the board room where he is joined by the other three members of the management team – Managing Director Nico Oosthuizen, Financial Director Danie Wessels, and Operations Director Pieter Kwakernaak.

Their specific criteria are then put into the pot to enable a fully qualified decision taking all the management disciplines and requirements into account. So no, it's not all about up-front price or discount. Far from it.

FleetWatch has always stated that trucking is about relationships not transactions and when that relationship proves to be a win-win for both parties, the smiles are wide – and especially when the four-man management team from Ni-Da Transport arrives at a new truck launch such as they did at the Iveco S-Way launch with an order

▲ It's a tough and rough world in which these trucks operate but pride shines with each rig visiting the depot going through the on-site wash-bay.

for 150 S-Way 430 and 10 S-Way 470s truck tractors.

And the beauty of this lies not only in the order itself but in the fact that the average age of the Ni-Da fleet is no more than three years with a vehicle replacement programme being firmly in place to ensure the fleet keeps up with the latest technology available in the market. So there will be more such orders in the future.

Now how good is that for a long-term, sustainable and profitable relationship between a transporter and his OEM suppliers? It's the way to go.

Do you recall the pothole on the road directly in front of the entrance I referred to earlier. Well, I looked to avoid it when I exited and saw it had been filled in with a fresh patch of tar. I asked the gate guard if the municipality had come to fix it. "No," he replied. "Our people from inside came out and fixed it."

I smiled as I drove away. Ni-Da hates potholes as much as I do. □



The ‘great supply chain disruption’ to continue in 2023 warns SAPICS

Big data and analytics have been ranked as the most important topics in supply chain in 2023

Unprecedented disruptions and volatility in recent years have stretched supply chains to breaking point and the bad news is that in 2023, we can expect the “Great Supply Chain Disruption” to continue to challenge industries around the world. This is according to SAPICS, The Professional Body for Supply Chain Management in Southern Africa.

War, raw materials shortages, rising energy costs and extreme weather conditions are just some of the factors that will disrupt global supply chains in 2023, warns the non-profit organisation that is striving to elevate, educate and empower the community of supply chain professionals across Africa.

“In South Africa, the electricity crisis will continue to challenge businesses across all sectors.

The negative impact on energy-intensive and irrigation dependent agricultural industries in particular will resonate through the entire supply chain - from the farm to consumers, who will have to pay more and have fewer competitive options available on supermarket shelves," says SAPICS president MJ Schoemaker.

"This year, businesses must strive for optimised execution, risk reduction and enhanced agility and responsiveness in their supply chains. It will also be critical to identify new ways to gain a real competitive advantage," she stresses.

Supply chain trends

The latest supply chain trends report compiled by the US-based Association for Supply Chain Management (ASCM), of which SAPICS is a Premier Elite channel partner, unpacked the latest supply chain trends that businesses must leverage in 2023 to achieve these goals.

The report ranked big data and analytics as the most important topics in supply chain in 2023. They enable organisations to mitigate disruption through greater visibility, synchronised planning and execution, data-driven decision-making, predictability and supply chain agility. The implementation of predictive and prescriptive analytics - as well as advances in big data, algorithms and robotics - will have wide-reaching effects in 2023, the report found.

Digital supply chains were ranked second in ASCM's key trends in 2023. "Leading organisations will be advanced in their adoption of digital supply chain capabilities. If not, they will be left behind by agile, more proficient competitors," cautions Schoemaker.

She notes that supply chain risk and resilience will be prioritised by successful organisations in 2023. The diversification of suppliers, production capabilities and transportation processes will

be some of their key strategies, according to ASCM's trends report.

Forward-thinking organisations will also explore alternative materials and non-traditional partnerships, while many supply chains will become more compact and localised. Resilient supply chain design will also be critical to mitigating adverse events faster than the competition, providing excellent customer service, and generating value and market share.

Artificial intelligence

In 2023, artificial intelligence and machine learning will have a much greater impact on supply chains because processing huge datasets in real time demands these capabilities. Using smart logistics solutions, based on the internet of things and next-generation robotics, will be a focal point of supply chain design.

The ASCM report foresees more supply chain transformation via intelligent robotics in 2023. ▶ 40

**Extreme weather conditions
are just one of the factors
that will disrupt supply chains in 2023**



“Labour shortages, supply disruptions and demand surges are compelling organisations to tap into robotics. Driven by rapid technological advancements and greater affordability, both mobile and stationary robots will assist workers with warehousing, transportation and last-mile delivery tasks. Safer, more efficient warehouses, with fewer people in them, will drive down costs. Although the initial capital investment will be high, the cost savings are primed to be dramatic.”

According to Schoemaker, there is certainly a robotics trend in South Africa but she says that loadshedding may put a spanner in the works unless the businesses have their own energy source.

“In South Africa, finding the balance between efficiency and employment is also difficult,” she adds. “Many companies are cross skilling their staff to be more diverse and therefore are able to place them in other roles.”

Data security and cybersecurity are also hot topics that will impact supply chains this year. The more digital supply chains become, the more vulnerable their global networks are to cyberattacks.

“This interconnectedness means supply chain partners can inadvertently expose each other and their customers to privacy breaches, identity theft and worse,” ASCM’s report noted. More organisations will invest in redundancy, firewalls, advanced anti-hacking technologies and employee training in 2023.

Sustainable supply chains

Circular and sustainable supply chains will be on the agenda of all organisations aiming to future-proof their businesses. “There is growing recognition that the traditional linear business model of take, make and waste must change. It has ecological as well as economic disadvantages, making raw material more expensive and increasing the likelihood of shortages and volatility,” explains Schoemaker.

Continuous logistics disruptions in 2023 will drive the need for



Data and cyber-security are also hot topics which will impact on supply chains in 2023. The more digital supply chains become, the more vulnerable their global networks are to cyber attacks.

MJ Schoemaker
President, SAPICS

constant master data maintenance, as well as refined logistics parameters and inventory levels.

“Logistics organisations must create the conditions necessary for a seamless interaction among multiple transportation networks and their digital replicas,” ASCM’s report recommended. It also found that many of them will be rethinking the physical connections among warehouses, highways, ports, waterways and air transportation.

Looking at the situation in South Africa, Schoemaker notes that transportation in the country is mainly road freight due to the deteriorating rail infrastructure. She says that issues at the ports - whether strikes or failing machinery - are challenges for the trucking industry as well as for businesses.

“Alternative routes may become a necessity and improved security for the truck. Due to the fact that load shedding is constantly being adapted to different levels, it is difficult to plan when freight is needed, which will also impact cost as well as the efficiency of supply chains.

“While supply chain challenges will continue in 2023, we can expect to reap the benefits of lessons learnt in recent years,” Schoemaker contends. “The pandemic and other disruptions highlighted the importance of supply chains for everyone. Supply chain management is better understood today. It is an increasingly attractive and sought after profession. There is more emphasis on supply chain qualifications and continuous skills development.

As the Professional Body for Supply Chain Management, SAPICS will continue its drive to professionalise supply chain management. By professionally designating individuals, SAPICS aims to increase supply chain management competence, knowledge and skills, and industry professionals will have prescribed values and ethics to uphold. This will enable the profession to rise to the challenges of the continuing Great Supply Chain Disruption,” she concludes. □

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◀ Established in 1983 in Napier in New Zealand, Fastway Couriers is now a globally franchised courier company with over 30 years' experience and a presence in New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and South Africa. The business has over 1 700 franchises, they operate over 44 million small parcel deliveries annually. They have over 150 000 customers and over 2 200 parcel connection agents.



▲ Founded in 1987, City Logistics' 14 depots supports a fleet of over 1 000 vehicles, travelling more than 170 000 km's per day across Southern Africa.

Heavyweight logistics player taps into the e-commerce market

City Logistics, the largest privately-owned logistics provider in South Africa, and private equity management company Clearwater Capital have partnered to acquire 100% of franchised courier company, Fastway Couriers South Africa. Clearwater Capital has acquired a 30% minority stake.

The acquisition has created one of the largest turnkey logistics providers to the fashion, retail and e-commerce sectors, says Ryna Gaines, City Logistics' CEO. "The combined businesses of City Logistics and Fastway offer one of the most affordable delivery options in South Africa for SMEs and corporates," he says.

The Fastway acquisition allows City Logistics to provide its existing and future customers a valuable small parcel solution. The two companies count Mr Price group, Home Choice and The Foschini Group among the list of shared customers.

"This is a strategic investment, giving us the opportunity to increase services offered to our existing clients, to serve a new customer base and to provide solutions for a market that requires options to reach their end customers. With the anticipated growth of e-commerce, it is a critical part of our growth strategy," says Gaines.

South Africa is the 41st largest market for e-commerce. Global

e-commerce sales are expected to increase over the next few years with South Africa's yearly growth rate of 8% between 2021 and 2025 expected to outperform the global average of 6%

"This transaction will further assist the growth opportunity that lies with global e-commerce retailers like Alibaba and Shein, where imports are brought to one central place for final distribution to end customers. This is a service that Fastway is likely to develop further in the future," says Gaines.

Clearwater Capital is a private equity fund manager founded in 2004 on the principles of marrying strategic and entrepreneurial insight with operational excellence

to generate superior returns. The business currently manages assets of approximately R1bn.

Entrepreneurship support underpins Clearwater Capital's reason for investment. "Fastway's unique regional franchise model provides an opportunity for micro-entrepreneurs to benefit from the growth opportunity in the e-commerce sector," says Keval Mehta, Clearwater Capital's Executive Director. "Logistics companies are increasing their workforces and technology to keep up with increasing e-commerce demand, and in doing so are contributing much-needed jobs," he adds.

Logistics companies are increasing workforces and technology to meet e-commerce demands

Capital growth investors and entrepreneur supporters, Clearwater Capital, partner with leading trade players like City Logistics to unlock opportunities and growth. Afripack, with whom Clearwater partnered in order to grow and ultimately sell the business to global flexible packaging player, Constantia Flexibles, is one of the company's accomplishments.

The Fastway transaction, which includes Fastway Couriers' National Master (Fastway (South Africa)), as well as Fastway (Johannesburg) and Fastpost, follows on City Logistics' acquisition of Fastway (Cape Town) and Fastway (Durban) in 2021. Fastway will continue to operate as normal, servicing its existing routes and using existing suppliers. Fastway will report to the board, which will include members of City Logistics and Clearwater Capital. □

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training drivers



The importance of training

Should licensed drivers with reasonable experience be trained and retained at regular intervals? The answer to this question must be an unhesitating YES.

The cost of not training
Let's assume as a result of limited knowledge and skills, there is a lack of understanding of the tasks to be done on the part of the drivers. Drivers unwittingly add costs to your trucking operations. Over three fundamental assumptions for two popular trucking tasks, Table 1 illustrates the knock-on expenses that flow from under-trained drivers. Please note below: This is purely for illustrative purposes. The figures are not current as they vary over time.

The knock-on expenses depicted below should be seen as loss of profit in any trucking operation. A 100-vehicle fleet could be foregoing \$1.25 million in the case of 8-ton payload volume runs and \$4.24 million in the case of 36-ton payload inter-link runs.

Driver evaluation
Before drivers can be effectively trained and motivated it is necessary to evaluate and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each driver.

Criteria for evaluating drivers
Your analysis of the driving job, the personal rating scale and the assessment of driving skills should provide sufficient information to formulate objective non-discriminatory criteria to evaluate in-service drivers and future appointments. There are a few suggestions to cover most of the important tasks and discipline drivers must put into practice.

Table 1 - An example of costs incurred by untrained drivers

Expense	8-ton Payload Volume Run	36-ton payload inter-link
Fuel	65 000 to a year	200 000 to a year
Maintenance & Repairs	10 535	31 600
Tires	1 452	7 100
Time	457	2 339
TOTAL	12 264	42 839

Average additional OPEX 12 264 42 839
Assumptions: Increased fuel consumption is based on 3 litres/100km at 80-100 per litre and a 2% increase in maintenance, repair and tyre costs. The assumptions exclude fuel theft, abuse driving, harsh braking, crashes, accidents, etc. Please note: Figures above are purely for illustrative purposes as prices vary over time.

The important task of assessing and evaluating drivers must be done by a competent, objective and experienced person or organisation

the driver's job

Unpacking and defining the driver's job

While it took the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa to recognise truck drivers as "essential workers", it is increasingly clear that the Truck Driver Institute (TDI) in the USA also truck drivers as being the "most essential employees". They point out that drivers spend most of their time working alone, often for long periods, and are entrusted with valuable equipment and freight belonging to someone else. This factor alone, says the TDI, makes the business of trucking unique. In most modern industries, work is performed under close supervision or intense collaboration. Motivated by crews and personnel or, technically, group effort is the norm in the other transport modes (air, sea and rail).



What is the driver required to do?
• What do you expect from the driver?
• What will the drivers expect from you and the job they are being asked to do?
• What will your customers expect from your driver?
• Consider discipline and courtesy. Are these important attributes needed to do this job?

Are physical requirements and age a consideration?
• What level of literacy is needed to do the job properly?

When a detailed description of the driving job is in place, it becomes easier to decide on the key attributes and characteristics you should be looking for when compiling a job description. You should be looking for when compiling a job description. You should be looking for when compiling a job description. You should be looking for when compiling a job description.

A detailed description of the driving job makes it easier to decide on key attributes and characteristics needed for the position profile.

Managing your Drivers...
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AMAZING RECOVERY ... Hino bounces back

If there is one truck manufacturer which can look back at its performance over 2022 as being absolutely amazing, it is Hino SA. All was going well for the company up until April 2022 when those devastating floods hit KwaZulu-Natal and all plans for the year were thrown out the window- or more accurately, went down the drain.

Who will ever forget the pictures that emerged of the Toyota Prospecton plant being totally under water? It was unbelievable with the whole plant being flooded and all operations halted. No-one could even get into the plant for the first three days after the rain stopped.

The extensive flooding and subsequent clean up took a heavy toll as 78 built-up trucks or completely knocked down (CKD) kits of components were declared unsalvageable and were scrapped and destroyed so that none of these vehicles or the affected



▲ Pieter Klerck, General Manager of Hino South Africa has every reason to smile given the performance of Hino during 2022. "Our sales and production results were far better than anticipated when we originally surveyed the extent of the flood damage."

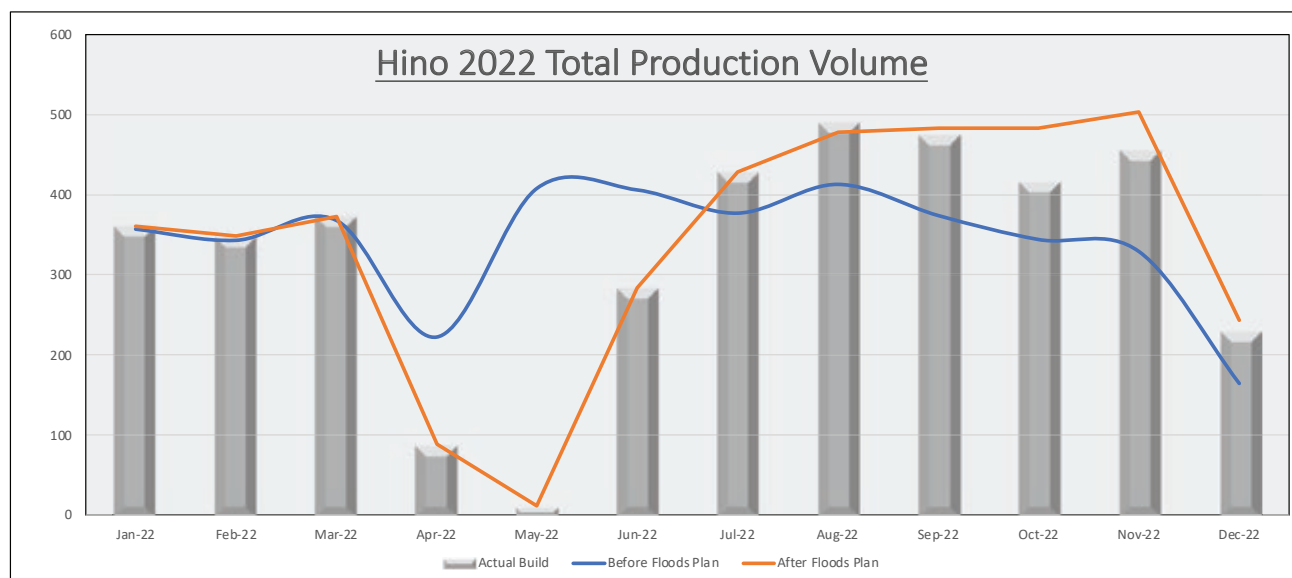
components reached the market.

Hino lost approximately 550 vehicles out of scheduled production before production restarted on May 23. About 100 assembly line workers went home for the first week after the floods and then returned to the plant in batches in the following weeks to assist in the comprehensive flood recovery programme.

It is against this background that *FleetWatch* lifts its hat to Hino South Africa on its remarkable recovery last year from what turned out to be a 41-day shutdown of its plant.

Hino SA's original production plan for 2022 required 4 105 trucks to be assembled. This was revised down to 4 085 units and actual production came within 124 units of meeting this target, which was an excellent achievement considering the extent of the damage in what was arguably the biggest natural disaster in global motor industry history.

MANUFACTURERS ON THE MOVE



	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Actual Build	361	348	373	89	12	284	428	490	474	416	455	231	3961
Before Floods Plan	357	343	368	222	408	406	377	413	374	344	329	164	4105
After Floods Plan	361	348	373	89	12	284	428	478	483	483	503	243	4085

And how's this for an achievement? In terms of sales for the year, Hino SA posted a sales figure of 3 333 trucks, which was 9.4% higher than the figure for 2021 - and only 417 units below the original retail sales target for 2022 of 3 750 units.

The 3 333 vehicle sales were made up of 606 200 Series models which are included in the light commercial vehicle segment. (The Hino 200 was previously marketed as the Toyota Dyna). Hino 300 Series sales, in the medium commercial vehicle segment, amounted to 1 512 units (up from 1 421 in 2021). Hino HCVs also showed increased volume with 995 units sold in 2022, compared to 744 in 2021. However, Hino sales in the extra-heavy category at 213 units were below the 338 trucks sold in 2021 as the company awaits the arrival of the new generation 700 Series.

"The year 2022 was a tough year for Hino and I'm delighted at the manner in which all those concerned - be they team members at the assembly plant or our loyal dealer network - made every effort to lessen the effect of the enforced shutdown and the result was that our sales and production results were far better than anticipated when we originally surveyed the extent of the flood damage," says Pieter Klerck, General Manager of Hino South Africa, adding that "the cherry on top

▲ This graph shows Hino South Africa's production recovery after April and May 2022. A truly sterling effort by all. Hino lost approximately 550 vehicles out of scheduled production before production restarted on May 23.

was our ability to keep up the high customer experience standards that have been a major feature of our success in recent years."

The year ahead has numerous challenges – not least of which is load shedding. However, this example of the resilience of South Africans such as the good folk at Hino SA to overcome massive set-backs gives confidence that set-backs can be overcome – although admittedly, it would be a lot easier if all politicians had been swept away in the floods.

Well done Hino South Africa. *FleetWatch* salutes you. May you have a successful 2023, dubbed the 'Year of the Solar Panel'. □

DEALERS ON THE MOVE

New Volvo dealer for Eswatini

Volvo Trucks South Africa has appointed a new aftermarket and service dealer in Matsapha, Eswatini. The newly appointed dealer, Motruck, has more than two decades of experience in commercial vehicle service and maintenance, and vast knowledge of the local industry.

“We currently have 19 dealers in South Africa and representation in Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and now in Eswatini. This move brings world-class support closer to some of the larger Volvo Trucks fleets operating in Eswatini, and cross border into South Africa,” says Waldemar Christensen, MD of Volvo Trucks South Africa. “With the Volvo Trucks vehicle parc continuing to increase, we are strengthening our reach with a focused strategy of bringing support right to our customers’ doorsteps.”



Eswatini has close economic ties to South Africa which it depends on for about 85% of its imports and 60% of exports. The country is also a member of the Common Monetary Area (CMA), with Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa. For this reason, many South African logistics companies run cargo to and from Eswatini, with additional support required to ensure the productivity of their fleets.

The Motruck operations are strategically located in the Matsapha industrial area, with easy access to numerous major roads, including the MR3 highway. Several of Volvo Trucks’ major fleet customers also have their depots and headquarters in the area.

▲ Waldemar Christensen, MD of Volvo Trucks South Africa: “With the Volvo Trucks vehicle parc continuing to increase, we are strengthening our reach with a focused strategy of bringing support right to our customers’ doorsteps.”

“Through skilled technicians, genuine parts and specialised tools, Volvo Trucks dealers are committed to keeping our customers’ trucks in peak condition and on the road as much as possible,” says Christensen. “We believe that the quality of our dealerships and the level of sustainable support they provide along the major trade corridors in the region, adds significant value to our customers’ operations.” □



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MiX Telematics partners with Isuzu to provide an OEM fleet management solution for its latest trucks

MiX Telematics, a leading global provider of connected fleet solutions has partnered with OEM Isuzu Trucks to develop ISUZU Insight, an end-to-end solution designed to provide fleet operators and owners with the necessary tools to manage their vehicles, regardless of fleet size.

"We have been a service provider to Isuzu for more than four years with all Isuzu Trucks manufactured after January 2017 fitted with the Beame recovery device during the production process. Because of the widespread truck hijackings and vehicle theft which is rife in South Africa, and the increased chances of a vehicle being recovered with a wireless recovery solution, ISUZU Motors South Africa (IMSAF) partnered with MiX Telematics to assist them to protect their assets," explains Henry Smith, Fleet Sales Director (Africa).

During 2018, MiX entered into a discussion with IMSAF about a possible connected asset strategy in line with global trends. Smith says it was important for ISUZU to maintain pace with rapidly advancing technology, especially from an African perspective which has an added security risk when compared to most other continents. "Our initial role was a trusted advisor in terms of what we perceived the trends to be as a global organisation, and also what telematics solution would work best in our local market."

ISUZU then developed a scope of work that was ultimately put out to tender, which MiX Telematics was proud to clinch. Smith points out that many months of discussions and solution development followed, with the aim of introducing the custom OEM solution with latest new generation ISUZU truck range this year - the FX-, F-, and N-Series trucks.

Smith explains that MiX approached the OEM's requirement by first determining if there was sufficient data available for a use case. "Working very closely with the ISUZU engineers we established that there was a definite use case, and that moreover we could provide meaningful data to all stakeholders from the asset owner to the dealership and ultimately the OEM itself. We also had to ensure that we really crafted the solution in terms of what the value proposition looked like from a customer perspective."

An intensive two-year period followed during which ISUZU Insight finally took shape. This custom-built OEM solution comprises a comprehensive fleet management platform built to reduce operating costs and risk, increase profitability, and enhance customer service. The involvement of MiX in supplying the latest telematics solutions means that drivers and fleet owners now have access to comprehensive data about their vehicles, drivers, and the fleet as a whole.

The ISUZU Insight telematics solution, which comprises a sophisticated on-board computer pre-installed in the truck on the

production line, allows for drivers and vehicles to be monitored 24/7 via the online platform for efficiency and safety purposes. Behaviour related to good driving can also be monitored and corrected if necessary due to advanced reporting and analytics. Simply keeping tabs on fuel consumption, for example, can result in an immediate 15% saving in fuel costs, points out Smith.

Activity timelines accessible via the online platform illustrate utilisation patterns and assist in optimising fleet efficiency. In addition, servicing and licencing schedules can be managed by means of automated reminders. Customer service is further enhanced with features such as a 'find the nearest vehicle' function. This allows fleet managers to identify the closest vehicle to a customer site and to direct them accordingly.

ISUZU Insight is a subscription service available to customers at all ISUZU dealerships – either as an upfront fee for a specified contract period added or as a monthly subscription fee from R299 per month. MiX Telematics also offers a range of compatible value-added services and peripheral accessories that can be integrated into ISUZU Insight. These include the Beame stolen vehicle recovery service (pre-installed device), AI dashcams, Track and React 24/7 fleet bureau service, in-cab voice kit, panic button and breathalyser.



■ Henry Smith,
Fleet Sales Director (Africa),
MiX Telematics

An ISUZU customer that wants to continue using their existing telematics service provider can subscribe to ISUZU Insight to access the online platform – the data will be supplied via API portal enabled by MiX Telematics – but will not have the advantage of the rich analytics and insights provided via the MiX on-board hardware and the range of services and add-on accessories only offered by MiX.

While the ISUZU connected truck concept is focused on commercial vehicles at present, Smith anticipates the OEM to extend its telematics solution to passenger vehicles in the near future. This means that ultimately all vehicles will have embedded telematics hardware. "It calls for deep integration in conjunction with the OEM, allowing us to provide world-class management data to all stakeholders. Connected vehicles invariably mean connected customers that we can stay in contact with throughout the value lifecycle of the vehicle."

Smith explains that the telematics solution is engineered directly into the vehicle as opposed to being an aftermarket fitment. "The value that we bring to the table is that MiX Telematics have been around for over 25 years and understand both the technology and the market driving it. From a solutions perspective, it means we can supply ISUZU and its customers with the latest technology and developments," concludes Smith.

For more information, email fleetsa@mixtelematics.com.

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IN SIGHT

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Annual Road Traffic and Transport Legislation Workshop is on again

The annual Road Traffic and Transport Legislation Workshop run by transport legislation guru Alta Swanepoel is once again being held this year with workshops being run in all the major centres. The 2023 events mark the 24th staging of these workshops which have proved invaluable in the past in keeping transporters and others up to date with the latest - and pending - legislation.

Apart from the main topics listed further below, good news from Swanepoel is that due to the many enquiries received by her office from companies, traffic officers and industry representatives on everyday road traffic issues, an added value component of this year's workshops is that an easy reference hand-out has been compiled on the following issues:

▲ Alta Swanepoel of Alta Swanepoel & Associates will be unpacking an array of information pertaining to transport legislation at the upcoming round of national workshops.

- Driving licences, professional driving permits, foreign drivers and other matters relating to drivers.
- Registration and licensing of vehicles, 21-day grace periods for licensing, temporary permits, homologation of vehicles, alterations, colour changes, and modifications to vehicles.
- Specific requirements on roadworthiness, information plates, braking requirements, fire extinguishers and LED/illegal lamps.
- Overload control, requirements for permissible masses, consignor and consignee responsibilities and calculations for legal loads.
- Requirements for taxis, staff vehicles, UBER services, etc.

Lively debate around these issues is expected and will give transport operators, traffic officials and others the chance to clear up what are often confused interpretations of legislation which result in, for example, erroneous fines being issued. There's an old saying that ignorance of the law is no excuse. Well, now the ignorance levels can be shelved and clarity introduced. Knowledge is power Yeah! This aside, the main presentation topics will be as follows:

Developments regarding road traffic and transport legislation.

The latest information on the:

- NRTA Bill B7 of 2020 and Regulations.
- NLTA Bill, B7 of 2016.
- Economic Regulation of Transport Bill, BI-2020.
- Border Management Authority Act I of 2020.

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- The latest on the Constitutional Court Case and the way forward for road traffic offences and infringements.
- Tripartite Developments
- Progress on Road Traffic and Transport Model Laws in the region.
- The Transport of Dangerous Goods
- The latest update on legislation and specifications.

It's a full and interesting value-added programme which will be held at the following venues and dates:

- Stellenbosch: Protea Hotel, Technopark - 23 May 2023
- Gqeberha (PE): Southern Sun, The Marine - 25 May 2023
- Umhlanga Ridge: Protea Hotel, Fire & Ice! - 1 June 2023
- Pretoria (Lynnwood): CSIR Convention Centre - 6 June 2023
- Webinar: Online: 13 June 2023

REGISTRATION

1 delegate:	R3 400 pp
2 delegates:	R3 200 pp
3 - 5 delegates:	R3 000 pp
6+ delegates:	R2 800 pp

The fee includes VAT, the workshop documentation, an updated copy of the National Road Traffic Act and Regulations (hard copy or e-book on USB), the reference hand-out, refreshments and lunch.

To register contact Lizette at admin@altaswanepoel.co.za to request a registration form or visit the website at: <https://www.altaswanepoel.co.za/Home/Workshops>.

Now available on the lighter side of the commercial vehicle spectrum, is the new 517 Sprinter Panel Van launched by Mercedes-Benz Vans South Africa to supersede the former 516 Sprinter line-up. The key enhancement of this 517 Sprinter model is a new, state-of-the-art OM654 engine. Thanks to this upgrade in engine technology, the 517 Sprinter will receive a 5kW increase in engine output as well as improved fuel efficiency.

The all-aluminium OM654 diesel engine impresses with its powerful drive, efficiency and low noise and vibration levels. Thanks to its improved performance, the 517 Sprinter provides top-tier businesses with the ideal vehicle to transport goods more efficiently whilst reducing their environmental impact.

Marinus Venter, Head of Product and Marketing for Mercedes-Benz Vans South Africa, says: "We are immensely excited to have updated our popular Sprinter 516 Panel Van line-up with this next-generation of

The new 517 Sprinter Panel Van

▼ The 517 Sprinter Panel Van from Mercedes-Benz Vans South Africa is claimed to be more powerful, fuel-efficient, comfortable and environmentally friendly than its predecessor.

engine technology. The Sprinter 517 will give fleet owners access to even greater efficiencies while maintaining all the innovative safety, comfort and quality that Mercedes-Benz is so well known for."

The key innovations of the new OM654 engine include:

- Increased rated output and torque.
- A compact and lightweight engine design, thanks to a full-aluminium housing and an innovative placement of engine equipment.
- Reduced fuel consumption and CO2 emissions, due to the inclusion of steel pistons with combustion bowls, NANOSLIDE® cylinder coating and fourth-generation common-rail injection.
- Low heat losses and favourable running conditions, owing to the placement of the exhaust-gas-cleaning technologies, close to the engine, for improved temperature management and efficiency. □



Cartrack's AI powered technology keeps drivers safer

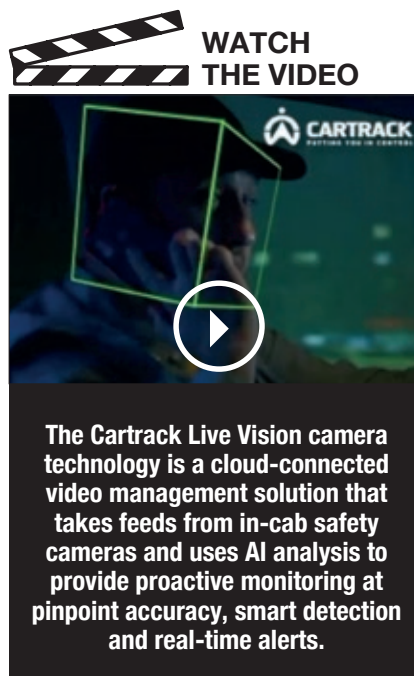
Cartrack (wholly owned by Nasdaq-listed Karoo Limited) has enhanced its video and sensor based safety technology - powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) - that takes its accuracy in capturing high-definition video of critical events to the next level, helping to prevent incidents and keep drivers safer on the roads.

The Cartrack Live Vision camera technology is a cloud-connected video management solution that takes feeds from in-cab safety cameras and uses AI analysis to provide proactive monitoring at pinpoint accuracy, smart detection and real-time alerts. This camera technology is proven to protect drivers and lower costs and contributes towards the safety of millions of drivers and commuters on South Africa's roads.

The Live Vision camera technology works in sync with Cartrack's on-the-ground operations cloud platform and IoT device to give any enterprise complete control and a full view of their fleet operations. The fleet manager will receive these alerts in real time and can log in to Cartrack's web platform or mobile app to watch any of the camera footage via livestream, ensuring that preventative action can immediately be taken if necessary.

AI Enhancements

Key driver safety features and high-risk situational alerts were enhanced to be more precise and advanced, using AI to capture events that were previously not possible. Forward-collision warning, distracted and fatigued driving and smoking, yawning and cellphone detection have been added as new events on Cartrack's Live Vision to automatically detect when incidents are about to happen.



Cartrack's AI technology will track the driver's head pose to alert to distracted driving, and the fatigue indicator will monitor whether the driver's eyes are open, alert and focused on the road. These enhanced features are critical events that are captured in real time and delivered to the fleet manager for preventative coaching and training, while in-cab warnings audibly alert the driver to avoid dangers on the road.

With Cartrack's enhanced camera technology the likelihood of tampering is minimized given immediate AI alerts in such instances.

Enterprises can use the benefits of camera technology to empower drivers through wellness initiatives

within the workplace and ensuring that they are always keeping road safety top of mind.

Cartrack's National Commercial Manager, Bret Smith, says the AI-powered camera technology makes it possible for fleet managers to remotely support drivers and to manage fleets more effectively.

"AI technology and telematics have a pivotal role in measuring and coaching drivers on behaviour and ensuring that they are aware of the risks on the road. Fleet owners face challenges in managing driver behaviour on short and long-haul trips, particularly with driver fatigue, safety and speed being largely self-regulated. AI is changing the way we view risk management and is a necessity for any business to assist with better decision-making, improving safety and enhancing operational efficiencies.

"As an operational partner to our clients, we understood this need and enhanced our technology to assist fleet owners to have more control, save on operational costs and improve safety for their drivers," says Smith.

With Cartrack's Live Vision AI-powered camera technology, fleet owners can monitor:

- **Forward collision warning** – Cartrack's Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS) cameras track the distance to the vehicle in front of a driver's vehicle, alerting the driver and generating an alert if it is too close. The technology accounts for speed and other factors to further increase safety.
- **Distracted or fatigued driving** - The camera tracks the position or orientation of the driver's head and eyes. If the driver is looking away from the road for a dangerously long period, it will alert the driver and generate an event.
- **Smoking, yawning and cellphone detection** - The Driver Monitoring System (DMS) camera will detect if the driver is smoking, yawning or talking on a cellphone and trigger an event recording. □



◀ An aerial view of the Dunlop tyre manufacturing plant in Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal. Founded in October 1973, the plant celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Sumitomo Rubber SA to invest

Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (PTY) LTD (SRSA) is set to inject new life into its Dunlop tyre manufacturing plant in Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, as the production facility marks its 50th anniversary this year. The Dunlop Ladysmith production facility first opened its doors in October 1973 and the company has lined up a series of exciting investments that will see the plant improve local production capacity, expand product lines and create new job opportunities.

"The 50th anniversary of our Dunlop Ladysmith manufacturing plants marks an exciting time for us as we look to build on this impressive history and create a brighter future for the region," says SRSA CEO, Lubin Ozoux.

"We want to increase our impact on creating employment in South Africa over the next few years and months. We will, therefore, be investing in machinery and systems that will ensure that we have capability locally to meet the requirements of Original Equipment manufacturers, gain efficiencies to better serve the local market and create a better and safer experience for motorists on the road."

The new investment drive follows previous phases of expansion at the facility. In 2018, SRSA officially launched its new, state-of-the-art,

180 000m² Truck and Bus Radial (TBR) factory at the plant, facilitating local manufacture of truck and bus tyres which it previously imported. This involved an investment of over R2.1-billion and marked the second phase of SRSA's multi-billion-rand investment to upgrade and modernise the Dunlop plant's capacity.

Prior to this, SRSA had also modernised its passenger car, sport utility vehicle (SUV) and light truck tyre manufacturing capabilities at the plant. "These investments have enabled us to increase manufacturing output and meet the needs of the region's tyre markets, particularly in the latter part of our five decades of operation at the plant," says Ozoux.

He adds that as the manufacturer of tyre brands including Dunlop, Sumitomo and Falken, SRSA strives to deliver the newest, most groundbreaking tyre innovations. Flagship brand Dunlop now offers tyres for the full spectrum of motoring applications – passenger, SUV and 4x4, light truck, truck and bus, and motorcycle – and the majority of these are manufactured locally at the Ladysmith plant.

Stringent manufacturing processes ensure that Dunlop not only meets, but exceeds, global standards. On-going research and development – anchored by the technical design expertise of its Japanese parent company Sumitomo Rubber Industries - are incorporated in product design, resulting in enhanced performance, safety, and longevity of Dunlop tyres.

In 2013 SRI, a leading Japanese listed global manufacturer in the



▲ Lubin Ozoux CEO Sumitomo Rubber South Africa: "The investments lined up for the Dunlop Ladysmith manufacturing plant will not only improve capacity but will also provide more job opportunities for the local community."

premium automotive tyre and industrial rubber product market, situated in Kobe Japan, secured the rights to use the Dunlop brand throughout the African continent. The subsequent establishment of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (Pty) Ltd in 2014 accelerated the pace of the company's vision of expansion and development of innovative technology and safety throughout the continent.

"As a resident tyre manufacturer linked to a global multi-national organisation and a proud member of the South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC), we look forward to an exciting future in South Africa, with a renewed commitment to delivering world-class products to our customers.

"The investments lined up for the Dunlop Ladysmith manufacturing plant will not only improve capacity but will also provide more job opportunities, creating a positive impact on the local community. We believe that the future is bright and we are proud to continue to serve as a trusted brand that delivers quality, reliability, and safety on the road," says Ozoux. □

Dunlop's truck and bus tyres keep fleets on the road

FLEET OWNERS will know all too well how extreme weather conditions, poor road maintenance and high volumes of load-bearing traffic have affected South Africa's road infrastructure, with dire consequences for commercial trucks and buses.

With 80% of our road network now said to be older than the 20-year design life and 30% of our roads considered to be in poor to very poor condition, the South African government recently announced it will undertake a labour-intensive road construction and maintenance programme including resealing, blacktop patching, pothole repairs and maintenance of gravel roads.

For tyre manufacturer, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA), supporting the commercial transport and logistics sector where the rubber meets the road, is critical.

The company produces light and heavy truck and bus radial (TBR) tyres from its Ladysmith facility in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in addition to passenger car and sport utility vehicle tyres, distributing the popular Dunlop, Falken and Sumitomo tyre brands in 48 African countries.

CEO of SRSA, Lubin Ozoux, says, "We know that fleet owners and drivers are under constant pressure to meet challenging delivery targets, maximise cost per kilometre (CPK), and reduce fleet downtime – all while ensuring on the road safety at all times. At SRSA, we recognise that high quality, durable and technologically advanced tyres, along with after-sales training and support, are essential for keeping these fleets moving and getting drivers and cargo safely to their destinations."

Ozoux said SRSA has welcomed its big gains in the TBR market, which is in recovery and where vehicle manufacturers are favouring local content.

"Our locally produced TBR range is designed using advanced Japanese technology, tested against Africa's challenging road conditions, and manufactured in South Africa. It brings innovation and high performance to the market and we're constantly seeking out improved solutions, with a strong focus on safety, and ongoing research and development," he says.

SRSA's state-of-the-art purpose-built 180 000m² TBR factory in Ladysmith enables the company to meet the needs of the truck and bus tyre markets in both South Africa and on the African continent. The TBR tyre plant was the second phase of an investment of R970 million – bringing the total investment into the facility since 2014 to more than R2 billion.

SRSA also has a fast-growing Dunlop Commercial dealer footprint throughout the major cities and popular routes, to help with 24-hour breakdown support, new tyre sales and tyre retreading. This is especially useful for long-distance fleets and those operating on cross border routes.

Buying cheap is expensive

When it comes to buying tyres, the biggest mistake some fleet operators make is to look at short term savings instead of long-term investments into their fleet, because of the cost pressures they face.

Professional transport operators recognise the impact of



■ High volumes of load-bearing traffic continue and affect South Africa's road infrastructure resulting in considerable damage to critical items such as tyres.

tyre cost vs tyre performance and the necessity of fitting the correct tyre for the application. They also understand how vehicle and tyre maintenance affects safety, reputation, fuel saving, and prevents unnecessary breakdowns and insurance claims.

"TBR tyres are sold on performance, casing strength and retreadability that relates to cost per kilometre or CPK. Every cent per kilometre that the end user can save will assist his bottom line, keeping his business running in a very cut-throat operating environment. We're really proud to offer a CPK guarantee where we will pay out the transporter should our tyre not outperform his fleet's current tyres," says Ozoux.

SRSA innovations include the Dunlop Energy Control Technologies (DECTES) developed by SRSA engineers following extensive research and development into the needs of the truck and bus industries. DECTES combines design innovation and compounding technologies to deliver an up to 30% reduction in tyre rolling resistance, reduced frequency of tyre maintenance and rotation, enhanced re-treadability, improved fuel consumption, enhanced abrasion resistance and slower, more even tread wear. All of this prolongs tyre life for fleet owners and positively impacts their bottom line.

After-sales service is a big focus for SRSA, which it views as vital to encourage a solid foundation of trust and communication with its transport sector clients. It urges fleet operators to partner with reputable dealerships who employ trained experts in the field.

SRSA uses a number of systems – both human and machine driven – to assist in compiling data and to support fleet customers with correct tyre application and improved outcomes in safety, mileage, cost containment and life span. This is fed in and out of SRSA's data management system, Digitrak, and used to monitor tyre mileage performance from

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“cradle to grave”. SRSA is also trialling remote tyre pressure monitoring and recording over routes travelled, with alarms set to alert the driver when the tyre pressure is too high or too low.

It has an In-field Technical Services (ITS) team based in all regions, and into Africa, to examine the performance parameters of fleet tyres. ITS personnel advise customers on tyre application and performance including tyre scrapping data analysis, load studies, route studies, pressure checks, fleet tyre surveys and any mechanical issues, such as misalignment, missing valve extensions and more.

“Our infield technical services division becomes an extension of our customers’ business, offering a value-added service and helping to ensure that fleet tyres perform at their optimum, while supporting business growth, staff development, and on-the-road safety,” says Ozoux.

Regular education and training are offered to commercial customers to upskill their staff. Training and blended learning are also offered to its own dealer network.

Key training outcomes include an understanding of passenger and TBR tyres, safety requirements, fit and strip procedures, truck and trailer wheel alignment, trailer maintenance, and how to work out CPK.

Peace of mind for fleet operators

An exciting, recent development is that SRSA became the first tyre manufacturer to offer truck tyre insurance at no additional cost to the customer, through its Dunlop Sure package of tyre cover.

It’s available on Dunlop’s locally manufactured premium drive tyre, the SP835A, in size 315/80R/22.5 and is valid for 18 months from date of purchase. Full tyre replacement is offered in the first six months for irreparable truck tyre damage from all road hazards, without any costs for tread already used, and only fitment costs for the customer’s account. On approval of the claim, the Insurer will order a replacement tyre on the customer’s behalf and have it delivered to their Dunlop store. For claims after the first six months, the remaining tread will be calculated and a credit paid to the dealer directly by the Insurer. The truck tyre insurance is available exclusively from Dunlop stores in South Africa, eSwatini, Botswana, Namibia and Lesotho, and activated when the Dunlop dealer registers the policy on the customer’s behalf via the Dunlop Dealer Portal within seven days of purchase and receives a policy number.

Recently, SRSA has been showcasing its Dunlop Sure offering through its innovative “Pothole FM” marketing campaign featuring the first ever radio studio to be set up inside a pothole, from which local comedian Robby Collins recorded a radio ad for the brand.

“We know the state of our roads is no laughing matter, especially for truck and bus fleets. But whether it’s potholes, road works or lengthy dirt roads, we wanted to show how Dunlop Sure tyre cover can help South African drivers be as confident on the road as they are off the road,” says Ozoux.



■ The Dunlop In-field Technical Services team (ITS), becomes an extension of their customers’ business, offering a value-adding advisory service.

For more on how Dunlop can support you in getting the most out of your fleet’s tyres, visit <https://www.dunloptyres.co.za/Tyre-Range/BusTruck>. Dunlop is the first tyre manufacture to offer a locally produced Drive tyre (the SP835A) and boasts an extensive range of truck and bus tyres for all axel positions, including Steer, Drive and All Position. Tyres are available for long-haul application (such as and the SP320A), for ordinary highway usage on mid and short-distance (such as the SP571), for predominantly off road use (such as the SP925A) or for mixed use, both on and off-road (such as the SP581, the SP281, or the SP931).



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Logistics sector continues its recovery in March 2023

The South African logistics sector continued its recovery in March, with the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index reaching its highest level since September, the last month before the crippling Transnet strike hit the sector.

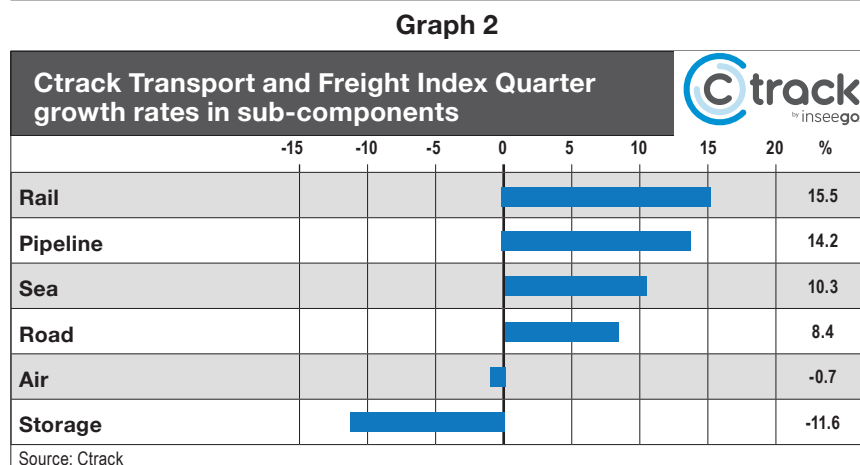
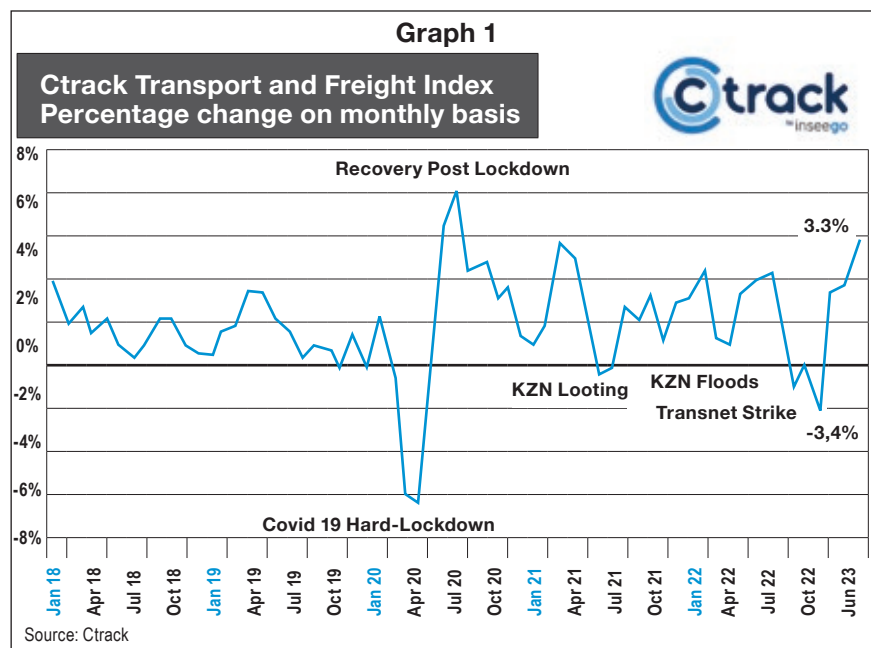
During March, the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index increased by a notable 3.3%, the third consecutive monthly increase and the highest monthly increase since April 2021, reflective of a synchronised recovery. In addition, five of the six sub-sectors measured by the Index increased on a monthly basis, accelerating much needed momentum in the sector.

On an annual basis, the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index is tracking 3.3% higher than a year earlier. While this is still only a blip on the graph compared to the annual growth rate of 13.6% recorded as recently as in August 2022, all indications are that the sector is on a firm positive trajectory.

One of the characteristics of the logistics sector is the varying discrepancies in the performances of the different sub-sectors. While this has proved to be a major positive in the sector's resilience, a more synchronised recovery, as was observed in March, is encouraging. In March, four of the six sub-sectors still declined on an annual basis, whereas five of the six increased on a monthly basis, indicative of positive near-term momentum. March's improvement also confirmed a strong quarterly performance of the Index, which increased by a notable 6.6% quarter on quarter, representing a much-needed positive contribution to the country's GDP.

Interesting trends are emerging.

The performance of four sub-sectors, including Rail Freight, Storage and Warehousing, Sea Freight and



Pipeline Transport, remain below levels of a year ago. This strongly indicates that these sectors have still not fully recovered from the cumulative negative impact of the KZN flooding in April 2022 and the Transnet strike in October 2022.

Road Freight remains the most resilient of all sub-sectors, recording growth of 15.9% year on year at the end of March 2023. Air Freight has

remained stagnant compared to a year earlier.

“Strong recoveries have been recorded in the first quarter of 2023 in Rail Freight, Pipeline Transport, Sea Freight and Road Freight, showcasing that the logistics sector is firmly in recovery mode, following a dismal end to 2022,” says Hein Jordt, Chief Executive Officer of Ctrack Africa. ▶ 58

CTRACK FREIGHT TRANSPORT INDEX

Recovery of Sea Freight needs to increase

The Sea Freight component of the Index was one of the hardest hit when Transnet workers embarked on strike action in October 2022, and the results are still being felt, with Sea Freight declining by 10.9% in March compared to a year ago and still tracking 9.8% below the September 2022 pre-strike level. However, the sector has slowly been recovering from this low base, with growth of 10.3% recorded in the first quarter. Container handling increased by a notable 27.2% on a monthly basis in March but remains 17.9% below the September 2022 pre-strike level. Contributing to this slow recovery are notable discrepancies among the different ports. Container handling in Cape Town was only 2.6% below pre-strike levels in March, whereas the Durban port is still 14.7% behind, and The Port of Ngqura is performing a notable 40.2% lower.

In light of the importance of Sea Freight in the logistics sector, but also for the efficiency of trade in the broader economy, Transnet Port Terminals (TPT)'s is putting plans in place to enter into long-term agreements with original-equipment manufacturers (OEMs) for the supply and life-cycle maintenance of key port-handling equipment. It aims to position the business for significantly higher levels of efficiency across its 16 terminals, which have faced significant disruption in recent years. CEO Jabu Mdaki indicated that the strategy would be deployed in phases and involves contracting directly with the OEMs for 11 pieces of key equipment, initially starting with rubber-tired gantry cranes. "Over the next five years, TPT will invest in over 700

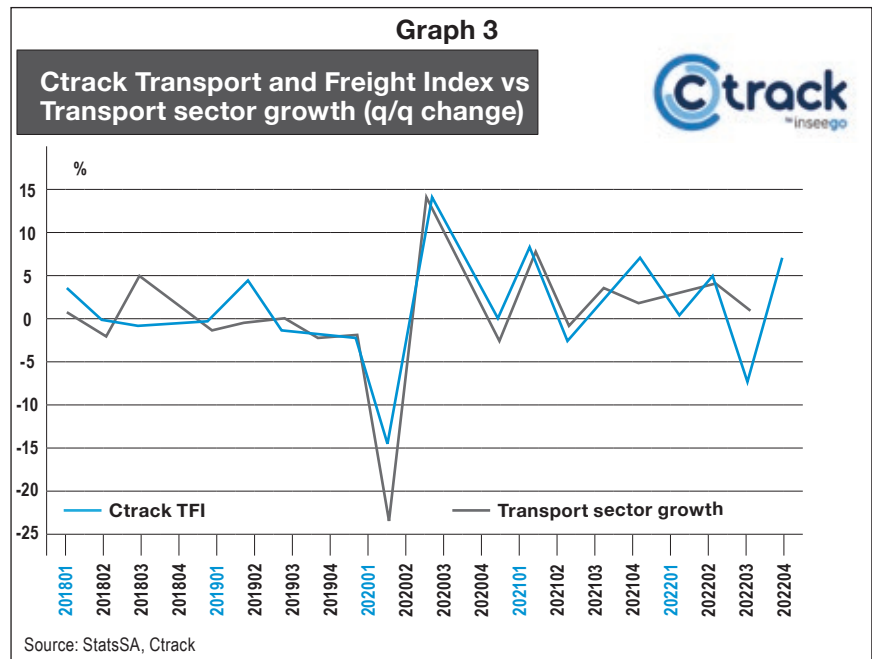
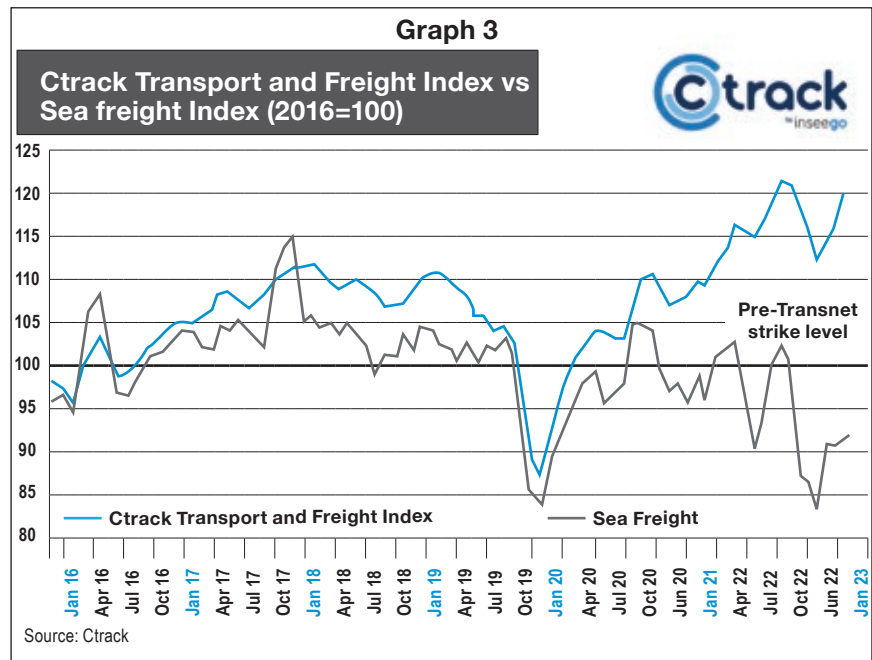


Table 1

Change in Ctrack Transport and freight Index in March 2023 Jan 2023 Tables							
Percentage change between	Rail	Road	Pipeline	Sea	Air	Storage and handling	Ctrack Transport and Freight Index
March 2023 vs March 2022 (y/y)	-13,2%	15,9%	-1,4%	-10,9%	0,0%	-20,8%	3,3%
March 2023 vs March 2023 (m/m)	11,3%	2,9%	3,2%	-0,9%	0,3%	-1,7%	3,3%
Quarter to March 2023 vs Quarter to Dec 2022 (q/q)	15,5%	8,4%	14,2%	10,3%	-0,7%	-11,6%	6,6%

Note: the row highlighted in blue is the main Ctrack Transport and Freight Index values used.
Source: economists.co.za, TNPA StatsSA, SARS, N3 and N4 toll concessions, ACSA, ACOC, IATA.

CTRACK FREIGHT TRANSPORT INDEX

pieces of equipment ranging from ship-to-shore cranes, rubber-tyred gantry cranes and straddle carriers to haulers, trailers and forklifts. Of this number, over 40% will be delivered in the next two years," said Mdaki, adding that the strategy has been approved internally and fully complies with the Public Finance Management Act.

"It is evident that the Sea Freight sub-sector has been an under-performer relative to the broader transport and freight sector since early-2021. A step up in efficiency would go a long way in restoring the sector to its potential and increasing its contribution to the broader economy. The plans being put in place are a great prospect, but implementing the strategy will be key," adds Jordt.

After reaching an all-time low in January 2023, Rail Freight continued to recover in March, though of an extremely low base. While still deep in negative territory on an annual basis, the Rail Freight component of the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index increased by 11.3% in March, which follows February's 6.8% growth. Strong growth of 15.5% was recorded during the first quarter, however on an annual basis, the Rail Freight component has declined by 13.2% year on year ending in March. This represents the 12th consecutive decline, confirming that rail remains the Achilles heel of the South African logistics sector, a position the sector will likely retain for many years to come.

During March 2023, the Road Freight component of the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index increased by 15.9% year-on-year,

representing the 24th straight month of double-digit annual growth rates. Taking a closer look reveals some interesting trends. The number of heavy trucks on the N4 toll routes continues to increase notably on an annual basis, a trend that has been firmly entrenched since August 2021, while the number of heavy trucks on the N3 toll route declined on an annual basis, though showing some growth in March 2023 compared to the previous month. Overall, Road Freight payload for the country decreased by a notable 9.1% in March compared to the previous month but showed continuous growth compared to a year earlier. The sector faces on-going challenges, including crime, sabotage and notable operational cost increases.

Air Freight, which turned out to be one of 2022's star performers, started the year on the back foot but picked up marginally in March, increasing by 0.3% while remaining flat compared to a year earlier. Mixed trends were observed; cargo load on planes increased by 11.2% on a monthly basis in March, following growth of 8.7% in February, while total consolidated airport flight movements also increased by a notable 16.2%. Other underlying components of the sub-sector declined. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), lower demand for air cargo is evident across the globe, reflecting multiple headwinds facing the global economy and spilling over to trading partner countries. Air cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs) to Africa decreased a further 3.4% year on

year in March, following February's 9.4% and January's 10% annual decreases.

The Storage and Handling sub-sector of the Index was under pressure for most of 2022, with a trend of declining inventory levels evident. The Transnet strike just worsened matters, resulting in a further 20.8% decline in March compared to a year ago, a monthly decline of 1.7% and a quarterly decline of 11.6%.

The transport of liquid fuels via Transnet Pipelines (TPL) increased by 3.2% month on month during March, resulting in a 14.2% quarterly increase. However, this is still tracking 1.4% lower than the year before.

Ctrack Transport & Freight Index and GDP growth

The transport sector defied expectations of underperformance in the fourth quarter of 2022 to be the best sectoral performer, and all indications are that the transport sector will save the day for the South African economy in the first quarter once again. March's solid improvements, as measured by the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index, showcased a strong quarterly performance of 6.6% in the first quarter of 2023.

"The ongoing challenges of harsh load shedding, high living costs, inflated production costs, rising wage demands and elevated interest rates mean that many sectors of the economy are either contracting or only showing marginal growth. In this environment, the transport sector's resilience creates a sliver of hope for the South African economy," concluded Jordt. □

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Ctrack continues to evolve into 2023

Ctrack, South Africa's leading telematics and fleet management provider, is continuously developing and refining its innovative hardware and software offering in order to provide its customers with the latest solutions in an ever-changing environment. Ctrack continues to strive to offer cutting edge solutions for the simple and effective management of a wide variety of movable assets.

"Ctrack understand that the environment in which we operate is constantly changing and that our customers are constantly facing new challenges. Out of necessity our solutions are always evolving, and we look forward to offering our customers the latest and greatest in telematics and fleet management into 2023," says Hein Jordt, Chief Executive Officer of Ctrack Africa.

When developing and refining their operation, Ctrack always considers the five pillars of fleet management around which all solutions are developed. Risk, Cost Control, Fleet Utilisation, Operations Control and Asset Control remain at the core of all the solutions that Ctrack offer.

The basis of Ctrack is their hardware solutions that have been designed and refined locally, here in South Africa and truly built in Africa for Africa. This includes everything from compact battery-operated tracking devices to a variety of camera systems,

allowing for the tracking and monitoring of a wide variety of movable assets across industries.

With the launch of Ctrack Crystal in 2022, fleet managers were given an all-encompassing, customisable platform. This new cloud based offering places ease of use at its core while combining existing functionality with a host of new features.

Ctrack Crystal is always on and is cloud-based, allowing access to high-level overviews or detailed reports from any device located anywhere in the world. These reports are presented in a user-friendly way that make the identifying of trends easier. Being cloud based allows for seamless live updates, ensuring that Ctrack customers are always able to take advantage of the latest innovative refinements.

Fully customisable functionality combines all the existing features that consumers have come to know and love, along with a variety of new features into a one-stop, do it all fleet management platform.

One of Ctrack's big advantages is their flexibility and making many of these bespoke solutions possible is their proprietary SMILE technology with which the opportunities are endless.

"Ctrack are able to listen to the needs of our customers and offer them locally engineered solutions that give them the exact results that they require to run their particular business safely and efficiently," adds Jordt.



With SMILE the same hardware can be used to offer an endless array of control and data in a format that makes decision making easy. The benefits of which have been proven in real world scenarios time and time again. Industries such as crane operators, mining and the farming community have specific needs, all of which can be accurately catered for by this technology.

A growing threat to tracking and telematics industry is that of GPS jamming. This unscrupulous practice not only interferes with the transmission of telematics data that has become a vital part of successfully running a fleet operation but can also prevent the tracking of vehicles or assets as part of a stolen vehicle recovery attempt. Ctrack's jamming mitigation can detect jamming interference and react accordingly by implementing several mitigation strategies, that will ensure that the integrity of the transmission and data remains unaffected.

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Ctrack's Driver Management tools provide multiple solutions to ensure that operations run effectively, efficiently and safely. These tools allow for the management of operators, access and behaviour across multiple vehicles and assets.

Ctrack's Bureau Service is the complete outsourcing of fleet control room activities, backed by highly proficient hindsight, insight and foresight

data analytics and reporting. Dedicated skilled fleet controllers meticulously monitor vehicle movements, incidents, alerts and alarms from a central support centre, which operates 24/7, and provides real-time support to optimise fleet operations.




"In an environment that can very quickly become overwhelmed by big data, providing feedback that allows for efficient decision making is critical to effectively managing

fleets," concludes Jordt.

Looking forward to 2023, Ctrack will be launching further enhancements to the popular Crystal software platform in the first quarter of the year, providing further proof that Ctrack's innovative fleet management software is unmatched in the market, providing peace of mind to fleet and asset managers in businesses big and small. □

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Roads face climate change challenges



▲ Roads are particularly vulnerable to extreme climatic events such as heat waves and sudden increases in rainfall resulting in flooding. In recent years we have seen a steady escalation in the frequency and magnitude of extreme weather-related disasters which can be accompanied by widespread damage to road infrastructure and transport assets.

◀ The vulnerability of South Africa's primary road network to severe flooding and climate change-related incidents was thrust into the public domain via the devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal which caused immeasurable damage to vital transport infrastructure.

Truck transport efficiency is dependent on good quality roads and in South Africa, this efficiency is impeded in many areas by unmaintained, potholed-riddled roads.

There is, however, another threat facing the quality of roads - one that I'll bet few of us have thought of. It's climate change and in this article, Solomon Kganyago, COO of Bakwena Platinum Corridor Concessionaire (Pty) Ltd, heightens our awareness of the impact of climate change on our road

infrastructure. His main call is for a national approach to coordinate on-going research of new materials and innovative construction methods which can mitigate the impact of adverse weather conditions on roads. I found it interesting. I hope you do too.

The vulnerability of South Africa's primary road network to severe flooding and climate change-related incidents has been thrust into the public domain over the past year. The devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal not only contributed to the unfortunate deaths of more than 450 people but also caused

immeasurable damage to vital transport infrastructure.

This should raise concerns about the overall quality of the country's road network and its ability to withstand future cataclysmic weather-related events - and such events are a certainty because of the climate crisis.

Bakwena manages and operates two vital stretches of the N1 and N4 roads stretching from Tshwane to Bela Bela, north towards Zimbabwe/ Zambia and linking Gauteng westwards, through Rustenburg and Zeerust, to the Botswana Border. These are economic arteries that are

key to the mining, agriculture and tourism sectors in Southern Africa, given the fact that more than 75% of the country's total freight tonnage is transported on roads.

A 2020 study conducted by the World Bank concluded that "Africa's development is highly dependent on an adequate, reliable road system". Good quality road connections expand access to jobs, markets, healthcare, education and government services. In predominantly rural provinces, such as Limpopo and the North West, a road is an essential lifeline that links isolated villages to economic opportunities.

Roads are particularly vulnerable to extreme climatic events such as heat waves and sudden increases in rainfall resulting in flooding. In recent years we have seen a steady escalation in the frequency and magnitude of extreme weather-related disasters which can be accompanied by widespread damage to road infrastructure and transport assets.

There is, thus, a clear need to make the country's road network more resilient to climate stress factors such as flooding and extreme temperatures. This can be primarily achieved through comprehensive maintenance to extend the lifespan of road networks which were built many decades ago, adapting to materials and construction methods that are in line with countries experiencing similar weather patterns. If this is not done in a planned and pro-active manner the climate will continue to cause substantial disruptions to transport

Africa's development is highly dependent on an adequate and reliable road network

World Bank
Study 2020

networks and lead to soaring costs for future repairs and rehabilitation of vital road arteries.

Most of the major storm water and bridge infrastructure on the NIN4 network is designed and built to withstand 100-year flood conditions. When heavy rain does occur in the region, all the rivers that cross the Bakwena route are monitored closely. There is a strong emphasis on routine and preventive maintenance of the 385km of road surface on the network, as well as the road verges, fencing and vegetation.

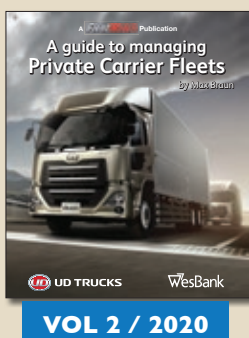
When it comes to the storm water infrastructure along the route, our teams conduct regular inspections to ensure that they are clean and capacity is optimal for all weather conditions. Inspections are also conducted on the road surface to check for cracks and subsidence of the road which can result in potholes. Defects are identified and repairs are made in terms of performance specifications, guided by the routine road maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrading

strategies. If left unrepaired these defects could deteriorate and endanger the lives of road users or cause serious damage to vehicles.

Early and preventive action saves both money and lives in the long-run. If the road network is not adequately maintained, the costs will eventually accrue to the entire economy. However, regular maintenance and timeous upgrades of roads have a multiplying effect on downstream economic activities.

What is needed is a national approach to coordinate on-going research of new materials and innovative construction methods which can mitigate the impact of adverse weather conditions on roads, and the CSIR can play a leading role in that regard, in collaboration with the Department of Transport. In addition, South Africa participates in international forums like PIARC (World Road Association) where climate resilient infrastructure and the impact of climate change on road infrastructure is discussed, and some of these measures can be implemented in South Africa.

PIARC aptly concludes: "Given the state of climate change, with its increasing apparent effects, winters have become uncertain, unpredictable and often exceptional, leading or forcing road facility operators to modify their practices over time. Beyond improving road-related practices, new policies and organizations need to be implemented so as to limit or avoid altogether the consequences of such episodes." □



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Roads continue to damage trucks & trailers

The shocking condition of some roads in South Africa is causing huge damage to vehicles of all descriptions, most notably trucks and trailers. So says managing director of Serco, Charl Coetzee.

“We’re seeing a lot of damage to suspensions, tyres, rims as well as air bags on heavy vehicles, a large amount of which has been caused by the state of roads in some parts of our country,” he says. And he is talking from hands-on experience as Serco has extensive repair facilities at its branches in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Gqeberha.

Coetzee adds that in many areas of South Africa, the state of roads – especially in country districts – is getting worse rather than being improved. Repairs to potholes and damaged sections of roads are often not done efficiently and soon fall back into disrepair.

▲ Roads like this are causing huge damage to trucks and trailers with Serco having seen a substantial increase in damage to suspensions, tyres, rims and airbags.

In some areas, members of the public have taken to repairing roads at their own cost.

Highlighting an example of a hazardous road, Coetzee says he frequently travelled between Schweizer-Reneke and Wolmaransstad in the North West province. “It’s about a 60km trip between the two towns and to be honest, there is hardly anything left of the road. One often sees vehicles broken down with drivers spending a lot of their time swerving all over to avoid potholes.”

Coetzee says that because of the bad condition of many roads in the North West and Limpopo provinces, it is dangerous for heavy vehicles to travel on them at night thus causing delays in deliveries.

A spokesperson for a national supermarket chain who asked not to be named says many roads in South Africa, especially those in urban and semi-urban areas, are in a poor condition with potholes being a serious hazard for the group’s trucks and trailers. He says their vehicles also suffer damage from overhanging trees, especially in country areas, on poorly maintained roads.

“We experience damage where our vehicles are unable to avoid potholes while branches from overhanging trees cause damage to windscreens, cabs, fridges, boxes and branding on the side of our big trailers. Our focus is on the safety of our drivers and the

current general condition of roads puts our drivers at risk. In some areas in South Africa, we specify that our trailers must be fitted with dual tyres to mitigate the risk of blowouts.”

Coetzee says that in the interests of the economy as well as motorists generally, South Africa needs a concerted national effort from authorities all over the country to rebuild our road network rather than doing patch-up jobs which often don’t last. “An efficient road transport network is vital for the prosperity of South Africa and the industry cannot perform at its optimum if so many roads are in a mess.” □



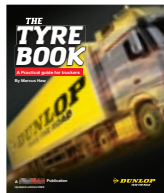
▲ This picture shows the sorry state of the R54 from Villiers to Deneyville in the Free State – and the sheer agony trucks have to go through. This road doesn’t need a patch-up job. It needs a total rebuild.

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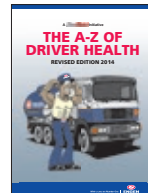
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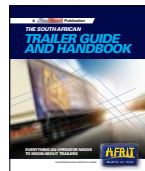
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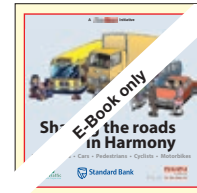
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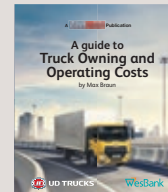
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