

FleetWatch

EMag Vol 83 / 2024

South Africa's Leading Online Trucking Magazine



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Cover Story Breaking the Mould 2

Truk Afrik, Grindrod and Tubemech recently partnered on a large order for Sitrak trucks. Patrick O'Leary talks to the team to unpack the reasons for their choice. Serving up a whole new plate of food for thought!



Brake & Tyre Watch Brake and Tyre Watch training goes cross-border..... 8

The team visited Walvis Bay in Namibia, invited by the Namibian Roads Authority.



A Personal Experience The hardships of the long distance driver 18

Ayhana Pietersen of LMC Express joined one of their drivers to experience a long-haul trip up close.



NBCRFLI urges the well-being of drivers to become a priority 24

Role players and operators are once again urged to ensure driver health and safety does not take a back seat.

Manufacturers Changing of the guard 28

There's a new head of Daimler Trucks Southern Africa. Maretha Gerber is the first woman to head up the group as President and CEO and is making history for the entire truck OEM side of the industry.

Hino SA aims to grow sales by 10% in 2024 30

Hino is in pursuit of a market share of 10% in the overall South Africa truck market.

A sign of the times..... 32

Patrick O'Leary took a look at UD Truck's new 'beast'..... an armoured projection vehicle geared for the South Africa market.

Volvo launches new trucks worldwide..... 35

Volvo Trucks has launched a new range of energy efficient models for world markets.

FAW Trucks South Africa supports community project..... 37

It's not only about selling trucks – we share a tale which shows the warm heart of trucking.

Logistics bpSA outsources secondary transport business..... 38

bpSA has awarded DPWorld and Makwande the secondary transport business of bpSA.

Insights into keeping the shelves stocked 40

Solly Engelbrecht of the Spar group shares insights into logistics challenges faced by the retail sector.

Unitrans launches top class facility 42

A new state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence is unveiled.

Rhenus expands warehousing nationwide 44

Rhenus expands with new warehouses in regional hubs.

How to meet critical ESG targets.... 46

Bidvest's Lenushka Parranath shares interesting insights.

5 Fleet Management trends for 2024 48

Webfleet shares FM trends on the horizon for 2024. Give us your views

plus

- Takealot goes green.....50
- JC Auditors launches free 'safety' related training52
- Enhancing skills of drivers in Mozambique.....
- Industry pledge is proposed for the tyre industry56
- Tyres driving on tyres58
- Ctrack Freight Transport Index – latest stats.....60

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

Advertising
Michelle O'Leary
083 303 0705
michelle@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
060 508 1996
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
Mariëtte Martin

Published By:
Big Fleet Media
85 Pecanwood Drive
Pecanwood Estate
Hartbeespoort 0216

083 303 0705
083 513 9708
060 445 3234

e-Mail: General
michelle@fleetwatch.co.za



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BREAKING THE CONVENTIONAL MOULD



“European Technology - Made in China”. That simple statement was what grabbed the attention of Wes Mommsen and Chris Pinto, CEO and Sales Director, with back-up from COO, Dave du Plessis of Mpumalanga based Mompin Trading, trading as Truk Afrik. The description was directed at Sitrak, the Chinese truck tractor which had been launched in South Africa by parent company Sinotruk. Acting on their intuition and industry experience, they investigated further, liked what they saw and have not looked back since being appointed an accredited dealer for Sinotruk in May last year writes Patrick O’Leary.

Hands-on experience in the trucking industry is probably one of the best qualifications a dealer can have when evaluating whether or not to take on a new truck brand in South Africa – especially if that brand is of Chinese origin. That latter statement may seem a bit harsh but even Jeff Zhong, regional director of Sinotruk, admits that the Chinese connection was a factor which had to be taken into consideration when evaluating entry into the South African long-haul market.

Sinotruk is certainly not new to the African region and apart from operating the Sitrak and HOWO brands in neighbouring countries for many years, the company stayed away from the local long haul arena, concentrating more on the mining and off-road/construction sectors where they sold HOWO water-bowsers, dumpers and other models. It is thus that while operating in South Africa since 2017, Sitrak has not been a recognised brand on our highways.

And it’s not as if they didn’t want to. It was more out of respect and consideration for the sophistication and maturity of the South Africa long haul transporters. “So many brands have come into South Africa and not all have survived. You have to have respect for this market and you have to have patience. You cannot just come into this market and expect to sell trucks because this is not a ‘chance’ market. It needs heavy investment and you have to earn a reputation for quality otherwise you will not be trusted,” says Zhong.

It was because of this realisation that the company took the first step towards a sustainable presence by setting up its head-office as an OEM for the region in South Africa back in 2015. “We wanted to show that we are serious about this market; that we didn’t want to just sell product without a long term commitment to our customers.”

The homologation of the first HOWO models – for off-road – was done in 2016 and in 2017, it started to sell; “but not into the logistics sector as we know there is a big difference between off-road and logistics and we were not prepared for the latter.”

Zhong says that in targeting the long haul logistics sector, they knew they would be competing against the European brands, not only in quality but also on aftersales backup.

“HOWO, developed out of the Steyr technology stable, is very reliable in heavy-duty work but we knew we still needed to upgrade our technology with more international co-operation,” he says.

On this front, Sinotruk and Volvo Group officially signed a joint venture project in 2003 on heavy commercial vehicles and in 2009, Sinotruk (Hong Kong) Co., Ltd officially signed a contract with MAN to implement strategic co-operation in capital, technology, products, market and other aspects. Following these moves, the Sitrak branded vehicle was officially launched in 2013.

It was announced at the time that MAN would license its TGA truck, engine, chassis and axle technology to Sinotruk which, in turn, would contribute its manufacturing and sales network to the partnership. This deal proved to be a visionary one for both companies when one considers the statement made by the then Chief Executive of MAN, Hakan Samuelsson, who said: "MAN's investment in Sinotruk lays the foundation for the joint development of a new heavy truck series tailored to emerging markets."

Visionary it certainly was and today Sinotruk has a factory in China which manufactures MAN engines, chassis, axles and even cabs, all based on MAN technology – and it is this that is incorporated in the Sitrak models in South Africa; except for the gearbox where a ZF gearbox is fitted.

And that brings us back to the "European Technology Made in China" slogan. But it was still not enough to give full comfort to a sustainable presence and it was thus in 2020 that Sinotruk first started testing its Sitrak

model in South Africa and did so by giving the trucks to certain fleets to test in real operations.

"We tested for two years to get the specifications right. Yes, we knew we would enjoy a price advantage over the premium brands but that is not what we wanted as our only advantage. We wanted good fuel consumption, reliability and Total Ownership Costs that would be attractive to our customers. Apart from that, we also wanted to put in place a good support network – both in terms of spares availability as well as dealerships. We are serious about this market and we wanted to show this" says Zhong.

AND THIS IS where Chris Pinto, Wes Mommsen and Dave du Plessis of Truk Afrik enter the picture as one of the companies which has been signed on as an accredited dealership. And it wasn't just a quick opportunistic sign-up. Far from it as Sinotruk found itself dealing with men who have a vast amount of experience in the industry going back many years.

Pinto has been a trucking man for as long back as he can recall spanning from being a diesel mechanic to Managing Director of ERF Trucks South Africa. Apart from working in various roles with transport companies, he has also operated in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia and knows these markets well. In essence, he is a trucking man through and through – one of the "old school"

trucking types who is not into quick sales based on discounts but into long term relationships based on mutual understanding and respect where meeting the needs of his customers over the long term over-rides any short-term gains. Wes Mommsen is equally trucking minded having grown up around the trucking arena with his late father, Don, being well known in the industry as one of the legends at the former Imperial Logistics. ▶ 6



THE TEAM

From left: Chris Pinto (Sales Director), Wes Mommsen (CEO – Mompin Trading t/a Truk Afrik), Ron van der Westhuizen (Head of Transport and Solution Development, Grindrod Freight Services) Frans Visser (MD – Grindrod Logistics Africa), Johan Stoltz (General Manager – Tubemech Logistics).





The Truk Afrik, Tubemech, Grindrod, Sinotruk deal is not just a big order. It serves up a whole new plate of food for thought.

THE TRUCKS

► 5 Dave du Plessis comes from a financial background and looks after the money.

With this background, the meeting with Sinotruk's Jeff Zhong was more about whether Mompin Trading wanted to take on the Sinotruk dealership rather than the other way round.

"We wanted to ensure that not only was the product right for the market but that the parts back-up and other essential services were in place," says Pinto, adding that having fully investigated the company's structures, systems and processes they were convinced that by taking on the dealership, they could offer the market a valued added product and service. The deal was signed on May 24, 2023.

Things have moved fast since then and the developments that have taken place show ideally the "old school" way of working together and linking hands for the good of all. It shows the value of 'relationships' rather than transactions.

Putting a few early orders through, Pinto then visited Tubemech Logistics, a well-established company which, among other brands, operates a number of MAN trucks. With the Sitrak 6x4 G7 480 truck tractor models incorporating MAN technology, Pinto suggested that they run a trial to compare fuel consumption and other operational parameters.

"We ran a demo over two weeks between Belfast and Swaziland and the cost per kilometre was extremely impressive which led to Tubemech placing an order for 20 of our trucks," says Pinto, adding that the drivers also gave positive feedback on the safety and comfort features of the cabs.

But that was not the end of it. Truk Afrik needed a workshop in Nelspruit and Tubemech had space in the former premises of Volvo which they had taken

over. A deal was struck between the two companies and Truk Afrik moved into the Nelspruit premises of Tubemech from where they now run their sales and service dealership. This has now also been extended to Middelburg on a similar shared premises basis.

The modern world with its fast paced social media tends to overlook the importance of relationships and yet that is what the trucking industry – in its purity – thrives on. The above outlines how three companies – Sinotruk, Truk Afrik and Tubemech Logistics – have benefited by linking hands in win-win relationships. But it goes further....

Tubemech Logistics has been one of the many sub-contractors for Grindrod Logistics Africa for some years specifically hauling coal from Mpumalanga into Swaziland from where it is then railed to Maputu harbour. It was last year that Grindrod decided that although they were running between 500 to 600 trucks through sub-contractors, they did not have a presence on the road – and they wanted to change this.

Ron van der Westhuizen, Head of Transport and Solution Development, Grindrod Freight Services, and a man well versed in trucking, was the man driving this and when he discussed the need for a visible presence with Tubemech, the Sitrak brand came into the picture based on Tubemech's experience with these models.

Although Van Der Westhuizen had full trust in the word of Tubemech, being a long-time trucking man which included being General Manager for Operations in the 'late' Barloworld Logistics, he wanted his own proof of the pudding.

"We thus went through a process of evaluating a number of different makes of trucks doing a Total Cost

of Ownership on all the models," he says, adding that what swung the deal towards Sitrak was not only the favourable capital price but also the fact that he felt comfortable with the relationship that existed between Truk Afrik as the sales and service dealer and Tubemech.

This latter point was important because the idea was for Grindrod to purchase the trucks from Truk Afrik and then have Tubemech operate them on behalf of Grindrod on a rental basis.

It all fitted together ideally because the relationship between Tubemech and Grindrod was already well established as a tried and trusted one and the relationship between Truk Afrik and Tubemech regarding shared facilities in Nelspruit meant that there would be an in-house service centre which would minimise any downtime due to the centralised workshop facility.

Read between the lines and this was a tri-party 'partnership' with benefits for all. As a result of all of this, Grindrod placed an order for 100 G7 480 Sitrak 6x4 units of which 20 were recently delivered. "We will get the balance delivered over time as the market dictates the need," says van der Westhuizen.

So yes, a favourable price was a factor in the selection by Grindrod of the Sitrak units over some of the premium brands but it certainly wasn't the only factor. Read between the lines and here we have a prime example of the principles of "old school" trucking relationships and trucking experience coming into play to reach a favourable outcome for all – and in a very different way than one would imagine.

The Truk Afrik, Tubemech, Grindrod, Sinotruk deal is not just a big order. It serves up a whole new plate of food for thought. ■



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Enthusiastic Trainees

▲ **Walvis Bay, Namibia:** The in-depth training provided the group of trainees with expertise to be able to identify faults on trucks.

Brake & Tyre Watch training goes cross-border



The FleetWatch Brake & Tyre Watch Project, a flagship initiative dedicated to promoting road safety and vehicle maintenance, successfully concluded its event held in Walvis Bay, Namibia on

March 25th and 26th, 2024. The event drew a total of 56 delegates from various sectors, including Examiners, Women in Transport, and Law Enforcement Officers.

The two-day event commenced on March 25th at the Protea Hotel in Walvis Bay with a theory day that facilitated engaging discussions and insightful questions. Participants had the opportunity to delve deep into the intricacies of vehicle roadworthiness, gaining valuable knowledge to enhance road safety practices.

On the second day, participants were divided into teams and guided through practical demonstrations featuring a 'good condition' truck and trailer generously sponsored by Iveco's client, Blaauw's Transport SA.



This hands-on experience allowed attendees to apply the theoretical learnings from the previous day in real-life scenarios, emphasising the importance of practical training.

During the inspections, a total of five trucks underwent thorough assessments, resulting in an impressive pass rate with four trucks meeting roadworthy standards. However, one vehicle showcased a concerning failure, highlighting the critical need for rigorous vehicle maintenance and inspection protocols.

The event's success underscores the dedication and commitment of Walvis Bay, Namibia, to prioritise road safety initiatives. *FleetWatch* extends sincere appreciation to all partners for their unwavering support, recognising that their contributions were instrumental in facilitating this impactful event including Bridgestone SA, ZF Commercial Vehicle Distribution South Africa Pty Ltd (Wabco), ORAFOL Vehicle Wraps, BPW Axles, MiX Telematics, JC Auditors, JOST, IVECO, DP World, Santam Heavy Haulage and Accident Specialist. □



▲ All our expert partners gave insightful presentations on the first theory day with prizes handed out for correct answers. From left above are: Christoff de Clerk of BPW Axles, Henry Smith of MiX Telematics, Dries Venter of Bridgestone SA and below left, Johan van der Merwe of ZF Aftermarket (Wabco).

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DAY TWO PRACTICAL TRAINING

This is where delegates get to put knowledge into action, guided by all the trainers. Trucks taken off the road are inspected and passed or failed.



▲ Each team has a Brake & Tyre Watch check-list of potential faults which have to be ticked off under the guidance of the team's expert trainer.



▲ Teams prepare to inspect a rig for visible faults before it goes onto the pit for a detailed under-carriage inspection.



▲ Patrick O'Leary, FleetWatch expresses gratitude to the Roads Authority in Namibia for extending the invitation to train traffic officials.



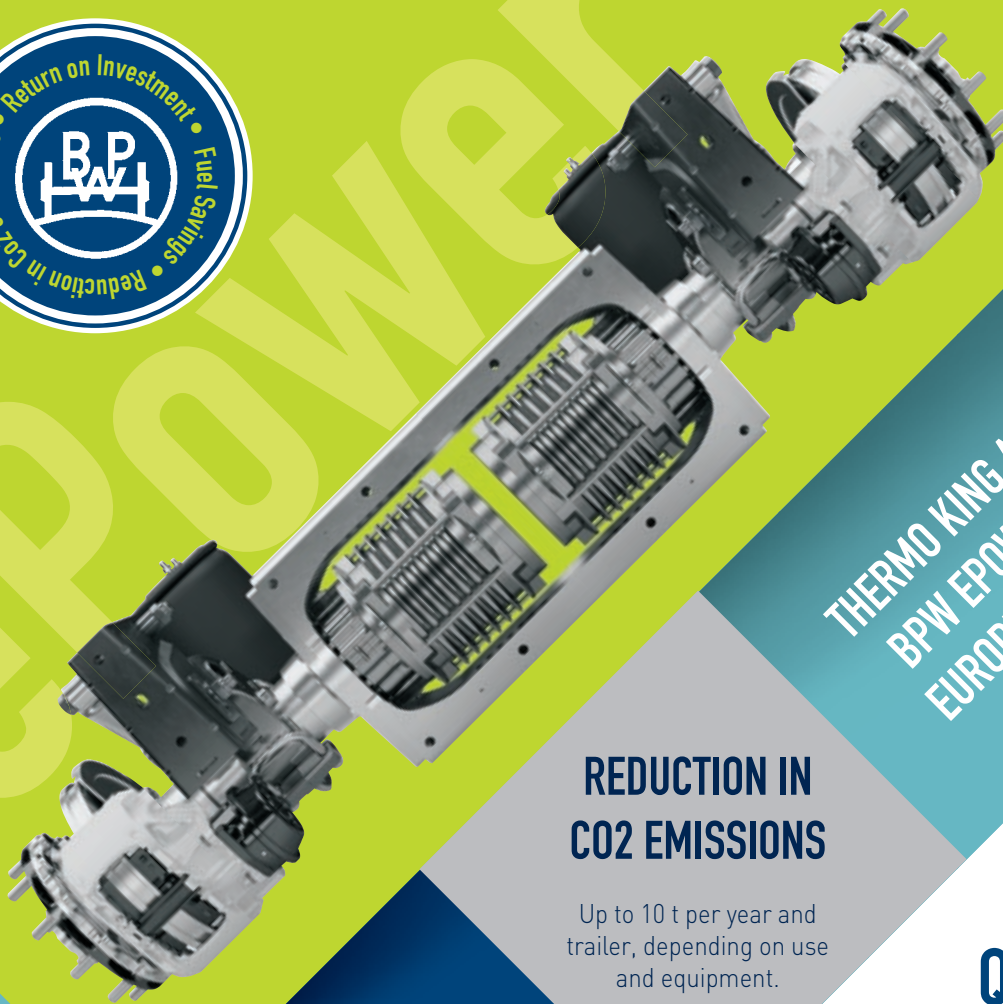
▲ Expert brake systems trainer Johan van der Merwe of ZF Aftermarket (Wabco) (centre), answers questions from traffic officials on the working of braking systems on trucks.

◀ In the pit checking the axle and braking components.



▲ Craig Proctor-Parker of Accident Specialist unites everyone and organises the delegates into teams to kick-start the practical training on the second day.

◀ Flippie Bronkhorst from JC Auditors – a seasoned driver trainer – takes his team of officials through the all-round inspection of a rig covering essential roadworthiness criteria such as lights, indicators, conspicuity tape and more.



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A large white semi-truck is shown from the side, driving on a multi-lane highway. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow that reflects off the road surface. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The truck's headlights and taillights are visible, and its reflection is seen on the wet pavement.

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**Thanks to all our
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Watch Partners**



The Iveco Team

▲ Nahvad Tooispan (Sales Executive, ACV Walvis Bay), Elvis Mutseura (Product Marketing Manager, IVECO SA), Marna van der Merwe (Branch Manager, ACV Walvis Bay), Luzaan Boois (Service Advisor, ACV Walvis Bay), Kholofelo Molapo (Marketing Assistant, IVECO SA)

Iveco steps up with the 'right' truck

EVERY EVENT sees the *Brake and Tyre Watch* team partnering with a manufacturer to show delegates what a well-maintained truck looks like.

Learners see all the parts as they are meant to look and this provides a yardstick to be able to detect faulty issues in trucks they inspect.

For this event our manufacturer partner was Iveco SA, who teamed up with ACV of Walvis Bay and Blaauw's Transport SA.

Thanks must also be given to the local team at Iveco who provided a spacious Iveco Daily to transport the BTW team around Walvis Bay and beyond - and a driver was included! Thanks to you all.

Demo Iveco Truck

▼ Thanks to Blaauw's Transport SA who supplied the Iveco truck for inspection and training purposes - they are doing it right with their well-maintained trucks gracing Namibia's roads.





▲ The space between the brake linings and the brake drum is big enough to float the Queen Mary in there. No brakes!

Total Gemors

Only one of the five trucks tested was found to be unroadworthy which is the best result we've had in ages for a Brake & Tyre Watch event. Maybe 'unroadworthy' is too kind a word to describe the one 'total gemors' that was pulled off the road. It was fit only for the furnace.



▲ Not sure why the Suzi hoses. There's no brakes on the trailer anyway.

► Not sure who would want to steal anything from this rig but the owner was not taking chances with the battery.



▲ The driver said he only loads empty containers as full containers would fall through the rusted trailer deck. Eieeesh!



▲ One under-inflated tyre and a totally deflated inner tyre on the set of twins on the rear axle. There's plenty of clean air in Namibia. Why not use some of it to pump your tyres?

BTW goes "live"

► The Brake & Tyre Watch event was paid a visit by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation which put out the accompanying news item (right) on its NBC Digital News channel. Click on the picture right to see how they covered the event.

Also there was reporter Leandra Mouers from Namib Times who featured some shots of the practical sessions and spoke to some of the participants. Here's the link to the Facebook post.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2142062876127468>



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Brake & Tyre Watch

Brake & Tyre Watch CAMPAIGN

FleetWatch magazine, along with its traditional partners in this project stage the highly successful **Brake & Tyre Watch** road safety initiative on a quarterly basis nationwide.

Background

Brake & Tyre Watch is a groundbreaking initiative designed to heighten awareness among transport operators about efficient braking and tyre checks, linked to comprehensive preventative maintenance on trucks. This includes critical safety elements such as lighting and reflectives. The project goes beyond awareness, aiming to empower Traffic Officials with specialised knowledge, enhancing their ability to intervene more effectively and remove unroadworthy heavy vehicles from our roads.

| DATE | LOCATION | INSPECTED | FAILED | % |
|---------------|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Feb 2006 | Gauteng-City Deep | 24 | 21 | 88% |
| Feb 2007 | Middleburg | 35 | 24 | 69% |
| May 2007 | Centurion | 41 | 17 | 41% |
| March 2008 | Midway KZN | 26 | 10 | 38% |
| June 2008 | Kroonstad | 8 | 7 | 88% |
| Feb 2009 | Western Cape | 25 | 25 | 100% |
| June 2009 | Bloemfontein | 54 | 26 | 48% |
| Nov 2009 | Pietermaritzburg | 12 | 11 | 92% |
| March 2010 | Port Elizabeth | 16 | 6 | 38% |
| July 2010 | Rustenburg | 7 | 5 | 71% |
| Dec 2010 | Limpopo | 11 | 10 | 91% |
| Feb 2011 | Estcourt | 24 | 20 | 83% |
| June 2011 | Nothern Cape | 24 | 20 | 83% |
| Sept 2011 | JHB - Langlaagte | 24 | 18 | 75% |
| Feb 2012 | Midway KZN | 12 | 11 | 92% |
| May 2012 | Klerksdorp | 16 | 14 | 88% |
| Aug 2012 | Tshwane | 25 | 17 | 68% |
| Nov 2012 | Krugersdorp | 13 | 11 | 85% |
| Feb 2013 | Port Shepstone | 9 | 6 | 67% |
| May 2013 | Donkerhoek | 19 | 14 | 74% |
| Aug 2013 | Western Cape | 41 | 19 | 46% |
| Nov 2013 | Marian Hill | 41 | 29 | 71% |
| Feb 2014 | Tshwane | 12 | 4 | 33% |
| May 2014 | Mpumalanga | 13 | 12 | 92% |
| August 2014 | Ekurhuleni | 32 | 19 | 59% |
| Nov 2014 | Heidelberg | 10 | 8 | 80% |
| March 2015 | Potchefstroom | 30 | 21 | 70% |
| May 2015 | Ermelo | 11 | 7 | 64% |
| Aug 2015 | Durban | 14 | 11 | 79% |
| Nov 2015 | Langlaagte | 15 | 11 | 73% |
| March 2016 | Estcourt | 10 | 8 | 80% |
| May 2016 | Ekurhuleni | 12 | 10 | 83% |
| Aug 2016 | Brackenfell | 13 | 11 | 85% |
| Nov 2016 | Kimberley | 10 | 7 | 70% |
| Mar 2017 | Mokopane - Polokwane | 12 | 8 | 67% |
| May 2017 | Pinetown | 6 | 4 | 67% |
| Aug 2017 | Bloemfontein | 5 | 4 | 80% |
| Nov 2017 | Maropeng | 8 | 6 | 75% |
| Feb 2018 | Beaufort West | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| May 2018 | Musina | 8 | 7 | 88% |
| Sept 2018 | Nelson Mandela Bay | 6 | 5 | 83% |
| Nov 2018 | Western Cape | 6 | 5 | 83% |
| Feb 2019 | Bapong | 13 | 11 | 85% |
| Mar 2019 | Donkerhoek | 4 | 3 | 75% |
| May 2019 | Windhoek, Namibia | 6 | 4 | 67% |
| Aug 2019 | Harrismith | 7 | 6 | 86% |
| April 2023 | Bapong | 6 | 5 | 83% |
| Jun 2023 | Springs | 6 | 5 | 83% |
| Oct 2023 | Donkerhoek | 6 | 5 | 83% |
| March 2024 | Walvis Bay, Namibia | 5 | 1 | 20% |
| TOTALS | | 798 | 551 | 69% |

Training Day

Prior to the hands-on testing day, Traffic Officials undergo crucial training. This free-of-charge training, facilitated by industry partners, focuses on the quality of brake maintenance, determining braking efficiency, identifying tyre faults, and addressing general issues. Each full-day session includes practical checks with roadworthy trucks and trailers, ensuring officials are well-equipped for their vital roles in maintaining road safety.

Practical Test Day Event

The hands-on test day unfolds at a selected Vehicle Testing station within the chosen province. Randomly selecting trucks from main routes and urban centers, the inspection pits and Brake Roller Test ascertain the state of brakes and braking systems. Close collaboration with Provincial Traffic Officials and SAPS enables a comprehensive check for trailer defects and other faults. The rationale is to challenge common accident attributions, emphasising that proper brake maintenance is pivotal in preventing failures.

Practical Test Day FleetWatch's Concerns

FleetWatch addresses a worrying trend in operators skipping maintenance intervals due to economic pressures. Published results serve as a stark reminder that brakes and tyres, despite being hidden components, are paramount safety items demanding meticulous upkeep. The initiative aims to curb this trend by shedding light on actual findings, advocating for the highest maintenance standards.

Gratitude to Partners

FleetWatch extends sincere thanks to its dedicated partners. Their unwavering passion and commitment significantly contribute to the project's success, reinforcing the ethos that if **Brake & Tyre Watch** helps save just one life, it will have all been worthwhile. **Join us in making a difference on the roads – because safety matters.**

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A Personal Experience

The hardships of the long distance driver

◀ Ayhana Pietersen, operations assistant, long haul division of LMC Express, pictured with the truck in which she travelled on a round trip from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape and back with driver, Tyrone Frans.

How many people working in the operations departments of transport companies truly understand what their drivers go through? How many have actually got into a truck and travelled with a driver to get a better idea of life on the road? Judging from what drivers tell us, not many and it is perhaps because of this that there is often conflict between operations and drivers. It is thus that when FleetWatch got wind of a story from Ayhana Pietersen, operations assistant, long haul division of LMC Express in Montague Gardens, Cape Town, telling of a trip she undertook with a driver, it really caught our attention. LMC Express transports refrigerated goods nationwide between the major centres with branches in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Gqeberha and Durban and one of her main tasks is to interpret the telematics reports on driver habits. With a firm belief in combining theory with practical application, she decided to join one of the drivers on the open road. Here, in her own words, is what she experienced.

My goal was to understand the driver's scores and gain first-hand experience, observing the technical aspects of driving errors as reported by our Telematics Report system. Additionally, I wanted to engage in a discussion with the driver and learn more about how he felt.

Initially, I expected that I would be strictly observing Tyrone Frans' driving but our journey evolved into many discussions. Having had no experience with 18-to-20-hour trips, I would like to share my perspective on the hardships of a long-distance driver.

Firstly, for a dedicated long-distance driver, the truck he or she drives means more than most people realise. It is a bond between man and machine that no one can understand until one has experienced long nights and endless roads. This bond makes no sense to many people since trucks are simply seen by them as vehicles that obstruct cars on roads. A mutual respect exists between the driver and his truck. The driver looks after and takes responsibility for his charge so that he is guaranteed safety. The truck, on the other hand, performs well because it is well-maintained. The

It takes a lot to stay laser focused and a great deal of experience to stay awake for an insane number of hours... with only 'power naps' when needed.

distance they drive becomes their therapeutic interaction. This package deal is non-negotiable.

My road trip started in Cape Town heading to Durban and then to Gqeberha via East London. My eyes were soon opened to how closed-minded the ordinary driver can be

on the road. I say 'ordinary' because the limits a long-distance driver pushes himself to are not as easy as they seem.

My driver, Tyrone Frans, is a young man of 22 years who has created a career for himself in driving trucks by being passionate about his job and taking an interest in various types of trucks. He is our youngest and one of the most self-motivated long-distance drivers.

He kept the drive interesting and informative during the trip in the LMC 220 we have affectionately named Phoenix. He explained the struggles of dangerous roads and the expenses of life on the road.

At the beginning of the trip at the Cape Town depot, I was excited but I quickly tired and battled to stay awake, dozing while Tyrone continued to stay alert and travel. I realised that I had been taking advantage of sleep and comfort. ► 20

▼ "The scenery along the road was beautiful and peaceful and I was in awe of how someone gets to see this almost every other day. The silence was relaxing and allowed time to reflect." - **Ayhana Pietersen.**





► 20 The scenery along the road was beautiful and peaceful and I was in awe of how someone gets to see this almost every other day. The silence was relaxing and allowed time to reflect.

As the hours passed, my focus dwindled while Tyrone remained alert. It takes a lot to stay laser focused and a great amount of experience to be able to stay awake for an insane number of hours, only to have 'power naps' when needed.

The cost of food from garages takeaway restaurants or small grocery expresses on the road is expensive and, in many cases, there were no alternatives. Drivers live on takeaways, snacks and liquids, buying from the same people, who become acquaintances.

Sometimes, even the road itself causes complications. The driver must be hyper-aware in certain areas, not just because of his own life but also because of the responsibilities that come with the vehicle and the client's cargo. Hijacking is a danger, especially at night and while the truck is fully loaded. It takes a skilled mindset and a determined soul to go through such aspects more than once. But one thing is for sure, LME Express drivers are hard workers and quick thinkers.

The career of a long-distance driver is difficult and they receive

Hijacking is a danger, especially at night with a fully loaded truck.

very little recognition. Drivers travel day and night through areas we wouldn't consider driving through. Often the driver is allocated extra tasks to an already stressful journey. Their sacrifice ensures that most of the resources our company needs are available to us.

Respect should be reciprocated in the same way we respect other roles. In some cases, the drivers may not be right but for many, the job they love carries a heavy burden of expectations. There were times on the journey when I thought, why am I putting myself through this, but it was a wonderful experience. It has given me a better understanding of what long-distance drivers deal with every day.

Sitting in a truck seat for hours hurts and I tried everything to feel comfortable. Your legs go numb; your back gets sore. It is virtually impossible if you are not used to it. The situation is very unpleasant but by giving up so easily, I would not have been a good sport. I pride myself on going the extra mile, so I gave myself a pat on the back for that.

It was refreshing to be proven wrong, where you have set out to look for faults and errors. There are those minor imperfections but there is beauty in it all. For that, I commend our drivers for being stronger than we give them credit for. In the end, I do hope we all understand that life on the road requires strength, a good mentality and an immense amount of faith.

Editor's Footnote: *FleetWatch* compliments LMC Express on allowing Ayhana Pietersen to leave her desk in the operations room and go out on the road so as to get a hands-on feel of what a driver's life is like out there. This should be compulsory for all operations personnel for it will build a camaraderie between the ops people and the drivers which will lead to better communications and understanding – especially when the 'stress' times hit. If any other companies decide to follow this example, let us know what comes of it. □

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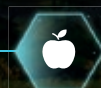
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- Stellenbosch - Protea Hotel, Technopark: 14 May 2024.
- Umhlanga - Gateway Hotel: 16 May 2024.
- Pretoria (Lynnwood) - CSIR Convention Centre: 23 May 2024.
- Webinar (Online, with eBooks): 27 May 2024.

The main presentation topics are as follows:

- AARTO – Detailed discussion on the latest provisions of the Act, as amended, and the 2024 Regulations and Demerit Point System.

The registration fees for the workshop are as follows:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 delegate | R3 400 per person; |
| 2 delegates | R3 200 per person; |
| 3 to 5 delegates | R3 000 per person; |
| 6+ delegates | R2 800 per person. |
| Webinar | R2 800 per person. (with e-books) |

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), refreshments and lunch.

- National Road Traffic and Road Transport Legislation: Summary of approved bills and upcoming regulations.
- Economic Regulation of Transport Bill, BI-2020: Impact and Role of the Transport Regulator.
- Border Management Authority Act, 1 of 2020: Discussion on the Authority's role in law enforcement, cross-border transport, and management at border posts, ports, and airports.

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**Trucking Wellness thrives**

◀ The Trucking Wellness initiative is funded by the NBCRFLI and supported by donor organisations such as Daimler Trucks Southern Africa, N3TC & Reef Tankers, as well as several provincial health departments. Seen here is Maretha Gerber (right), recently appointed as President and Group CEO of Daimler Trucks Southern Africa, on a visit to one of the Trucking Wellness clinics situated along the N3 corridor.

NBCRFLI urges well-being of drivers to become a priority

The National Secretary of the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics industry (NBCRFLI), Musa Ndlovu says it is about time all role-players in the trucking industry recognised the vital contribution truckers make in our economy and that their health and safety cannot take a back seat.

Ndlovu was speaking as a panelist at the Truck Driver Safety and Wellness Symposium themed “Your wellness is our concern”, held recently.

“If we are to ensure sustainable prosperity for the industry, the ▶ 26



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► 24 well-being of the truck drivers should be a priority across the board. Without truck drivers, the economy stops” said Ndlovu.

He added that while talks of collaboration and amalgamation of resources to address the challenges of safety and wellness faced by truck drivers were a step in the right direction, it was important that existing health and wellness initiatives for truck drivers were given the necessary support, referring to Trucking Wellness.

Ndlovu used the platform to highlight the contribution NBCRFLI has made - and continues to make - towards the health and wellness of truck drivers through Trucking Wellness and the affordable health insurance benefit administered on behalf of Council by health care provider, Affinity Health.

Trucking Wellness, formerly known as Trucking Against AIDS, has made significant progress in the fight against HIV&AIDS in the Road Freight and Logistics industry, especially among long-distance truck drivers, commercial sex workers and those at risk such as driver spouses and partners.

Located strategically across major trucking routes and truck stops, twenty Trucking Wellness clinics and a fleet of mobile wellness clinics have saved lives

and impacted truck drivers in the health arena.

Since inception, 978 269 truck drivers and women at risk have been reached through training and education. Of these, a total of 608 860 have been treated and 91 947 have been treated for sexually transmitted diseases. An estimated 33,2-million condoms have been distributed.

The Trucking Wellness initiative is a sterling example of a successful and sustainable public-private partnership. It is funded by the Council and supported by donor organisations (Daimler Trucks Southern Africa, N3TC & Reef Tankers) and several provincial health departments.

Ndlovu pleaded with the road freight and logistics industry to support Trucking Wellness to secure the safety, health and wellness of truck drivers and sustainability of the industry.

An interesting aside is that according to Tertius Wessels, project manager of Trucking Wellness, the drivers – over 200 were present – who popped into the outside Trucking Wellness exhibit, knew of the clinics and had nothing but good things to say of the services rendered through these clinics to truck drivers around the country.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Editors' Comment: Musa Ndlovu's comments during the panel discussion were perhaps spurred as a response to a pre-event press release announcing the Truck Driver Safety and Wellness Symposium event as a collaborative effort between the Department of Transport and the SaferStops Association.

Without going into the full contents of the press release; one sentence stated: "Besides fatigue, there are numerous other health and wellness challenges that truck drivers face, including: unavailability of sufficient medical facilities along the route; unavailability of health and wellness facilities at truck stops".

The words "unavailability of health and wellness facilities at truck stops" gives no acknowledgement to the 20 Trucking Wellness clinics situated at truck stops around the country – or the mobile clinics that visit company depots and other venues - that for many years have catered solely to truck driver wellness. It also gives no acknowledgement to the contribution NBCRFLI has made - and continues to make - towards the health and wellness of truck drivers through Trucking Wellness. Or to the support of companies like Daimler Trucks Southern Africa, Reef Tankers and the N3TC.

The point is that the word "unavailability" implies there is nothing out there to cater to truck driver wellness and that is wrong. The NBCRFLI, through Trucking Wellness has done incredible work in the field of truck driver health and wellness over many years and, as Ndlovu said, would welcome collaborative efforts to do even better.

Perhaps one can read behind his words the aged old maxim "don't reinvent the wheel" and thus his urging for existing health and wellness initiatives for truck drivers to be given the necessary support.

What is concerning to *FleetWatch* is that it seems the Department of Transport is unaware of Trucking Wellness. That is the impression I gained from sitting in on part of the symposium and also from the press statement issued prior to it. Or, if they are aware, it's a distant awareness rather than solid collaborative support. Mmmmmmm! ❑



▲ The National Secretary of the National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics industry (NBCRFLI), Musa Ndlovu, (left), positioned Trucking Wellness as a well-established network doing invaluable work in the driver wellness arena and called for further support of this successful and sustainable public-private partnership. On his right is Gavin Kelly, CEO of the Road Freight Association.

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MANUFACTURERS ON THE MOVE



◀ Michael Dietz passes on the truck keys to Maretha Gerber who takes over as President and Group CEO of Daimler Trucks Southern Africa from April 1st.

History has been made. No, we're not talking about some politician actually keeping to a promise made. We're talking about history being made for Daimler Trucks Southern Africa (DTSA) and indeed for the entire truck OEM side of the industry.

For the first time in the history of the industry, a lady (I hope that's politically correct) has been appointed as the head of a major truck manufacturer. The lady is Maretha Gerber - a born and bred South African - who now heads Daimler Trucks Southern Africa as President and Group CEO taking over the head honcho position from that grand man Michael Dietz who has headed off to Dubai where he has taken up the position of President and CEO of Regional Centre Middle East and Africa where he will be responsible for the Daimler Truck operations in some 67 regions. Both Maretha and Michael has started in their new roles, effective 1 April 2024.

Gerber holds a degree in marketing and has more than twenty years' experience within the Daimler organization, including previously Daimler Chrysler and Mercedes-Benz South Africa. She held various management roles across sales, marketing, and dealer network in these companies before moving to a Dealer Principal role in the Mercedes-Benz dealer network in Own Retail. In 2018 she moved back into Head Quarters as the Head of Mercedes-Benz Trucks and subsequently became the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Mercedes-Benz Trucks and FUSO Trucks.

Changing of the guard

An historical first

MANUFACTURERS ON THE MOVE

Together we have had a lot of success. This amazing and unique country and its people will forever hold a special place in my heart.

Michael Dietz



Michael Dietz, who has now passed on the South Africa baton, joined the Daimler company in Germany in 1990 as sales executive. After numerous roles in sales, he was appointed as the Head of Key Account Management: Mercedes-Benz Trucks Germany in 2002. Two years later, in 2004, he took over as Director Government Business, Diplomats & Special Vehicles. In 2011 he was appointed the Global Head of Sales, Marketing & Services, Mercedes-Benz Special Trucks and thereafter Global Head of Marketing Mercedes-Benz Trucks in 2015. Michael joined DTSA in January 2020.

Commenting on her appointment, Gerber said: "I am honoured to be given this opportunity and am excited to work with the experienced leadership team and talented employees at DTSA and to lead the group of companies to new heights. Together with our dealers and general distributors, we look forward to contributing to further growth and success and to build a brighter future for all stakeholders."

As for Dietz, who arrived in South Africa in January 2020 to be immediately shoved into Covid lockdown, he has nothing but good to say of Gerber. "With your

proven track record, DTSA is left in very capable hands. May you thrive in your new role."

He also warmly thanked customers, the DTSA network and DTSA group of companies' employees for an amazing four years. "Together we had a lot of success. This amazing and unique country and its people will forever hold a special place in my heart."

Having had close interactions with both Gerber and Dietz over the past years, *FleetWatch* can attest to them being two very special people who have a passion for all things trucking - and especially for the welfare of their customers as well as the industry at large. While holding high positions in one of South Africa's premier companies, both have always retained a sense of humility being accessible to all. In short, they are both 'feet-on-the-ground good guys'. Oops, sorry, I gotta now change that to one good guy and one good lady.

So it's a huge congratulations to Gerber on this giant move. *FleetWatch* wishes you all the best of luck and success as you head off on your new path. And our best wishes also go to Dietz as he takes on his new mammoth task. The glass ceiling in the OEM arena has been solidly shattered. □

"I am honoured to be given this opportunity and am excited to work with the experienced leadership team and talented employees at DTSA, leading and look forward to leading the group of companies to new heights."

Maretha Gerber



◀ Following successful pilot tests of the Hino Hybrid, one of the demo test units has now been put into full operation within the Toyota organisation. Here Anton Falck (right), Vice President of Hino South Africa, hands over the keys to Anand Pather, Vice President, Customer Service for Toyota South Africa Motors. Further demo units will be tested at coastal conditions before full market introduction.

Hino South Africa has set an ambitious target to grow its sales volume by 15% to 3 800 units in 2024, compared to the 3 300 units it retailed in 2023. This in pursuit of a market share of 10% in the overall South African truck market forecast of 34 800 units in 2024.

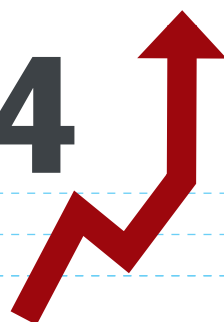
This was announced by Anton Falck, Vice President of Hino South Africa, at a briefing at the Toyota Africa Parts Centre in Ekurhuleni. The theme was “Moving to the Next Level” and the presentation showed how Hino intends reaching its targets.

“The overall truck market in South Africa grew by 9% in 2023 over 2022, going from sales of 30 149 units in 2022 to 32 907 last year. Medium and heavy truck volume remained almost the same, while the big growth was in the extra-heavy segment which rose by 21,5% from 15 191 units sold in 2022 to 18 458 units retailed in 2023. This meant that 56% of total truck sales in South Africa in 2023 were in this premium category,” said Falck.

“We were not a serious competitor in that market for much of 2023 but now we are pinning our sales increase on the new Hino 700 range to boost our overall market share. The new model has been well received in the market and what is

interesting is that many of the buyers are purchasing a Hino for the first time. We are forecasting to more than double our extra-heavy truck sales

Hino SA aims to grow sales by 10% in 2024



from the 377 units sold this year to 750 in 2024," he added.

Hino sales in South Africa, which included the Hino 200 trucks - which are reported as sales in the light commercial vehicle segment - totalled 3 329 units in 2023. This placed Hino South Africa in eighth place among Hino distributors around the world, with Hino selling 135 203 trucks and buses globally last year.

Falck says trading conditions in the truck market were tough in 2023 and he is pleased that Hino South Africa was outstanding in two important surveys during the year. One was Datatrack, which is a quarterly research on fleet operators' feedback on customer experience in dealing with local truck manufacturers and distributors. Here Hino topped the combined score as well as for sales, service, and parts throughout the year.

Then the Hino dealer network gave Hino SA positive feedback in the NADA Dealer Satisfaction Index survey about the relationships between the two entities and here Hino won a Platinum Award for the fifth time.

More good news for Hino was the sixth place overall achieved by Team Hino Sugawara in the Dakar Rally. Importantly, this marked the 33rd finish in succession by a Hino truck in this gruelling annual race, further underlining the brand's reputation for reliability and durability.

New offering

Falck made an important announcement of a new offering from Hino SA in the extra-heavy truck segment. This is a Guaranteed Future Value plan (GFV) on the Hino 700 2841 and 2845 truck-tractor models. The GFV offer includes a three-year finance period, a 360 000 km term (120 000 km per year), and end of term options to retain or return the truck. It includes a Service and Maintenance plan and the standard Hino Connect management system. Monthly terms start from R41 500 with future value at 40%.

"The target market for the GFV offering is truck operators who prefer not to invest substantial

amounts of capital at the outset and want an even flow of monthly expenses, against the challenges of defleeting or replacing the fleet. These are also operators who prefer to use Hino dealers for their service and maintenance," explained Falck.

An insightful presentation on the workings of the impressive Toyota Africa Parts Centre which manages the Hino parts supply with at least one delivery a day to each dealer and special priority given to the supply of parts for Vehicle Off Road (VOR) orders was also given. (*FleetWatch* will highlight more of this part of Hino's operations in a future edition).

Hino Hybrid

Falck also outlined Hino's global programme to reduce emissions by using hybrid diesel-electric powertrains in the future. Namlog has been operating a pilot Hino 300 Hybrid while there are further requests to evaluate this model in actual use.

A back-to-back comparison between a Hino 300 Hybrid and a normal 300-Series diesel over 100-200 km trips in Gauteng, carrying an average load of 579 kg, showed a fuel and emissions saving of about 20% in favour of the Hybrid. Drivers reported no difference between the two trucks in terms of driving them.

The Hino 300 Hybrid uses a parallel system where the engine drives the wheels through the transmission and simultaneously drives an electricity generator. When running in easy conditions the truck can run on the electric motor alone, depending on the remaining power in the batteries as controlled by a dedicated computer.

"Hino Motors Japan and its worldwide distributor network are fully committed to carbon reduction with an ultimate objective of a zero situation and the company is using a mix of different solutions from battery electric to hybrid, hydrogen fuel cells and hydrogen as a combustible fuel. We will be part of this programme and the Hino 300 Hybrid will be our first step," said Falck. □

New faces at Hino



New General Manager

The occasion was also used to announce the appointment of Itumeleng "Tumi" Segage as General Manager at Hino South Africa. The appointment follows the retirement of Pieter Klerck who will now be honing his fishing skills in Mossel Bay. Itumeleng, who will be reporting to Anton Falck, has been working in the motor industry for over 18 years and has extensive experience in all aspects of the business, with an in-depth knowledge of the dealer network.



New man from Japan

A warm welcome was also extended to Masafumi Kawabata of Hino Motors Japan who has been appointed Senior Executive Co-Ordinator of Hino South Africa. He takes over from Yusonori Otani, who served in this position from February 2020 and is now returning to Japan. He was previously based in Japan as Project Manager for Extra Heavy Commercial Trucks and Buses in markets outside Japan.



◀ The new SVI-armoured UD Kuzer RKE 150 for ultimate protection of the driver and passengers in a host of operations.



A sign of the times

It is perhaps a sign of the times in South Africa that you when you arrive at a truck OEM press conference, instead of seeing on display the latest high-tech truck with all new safety features incorporated under a sleek aerodynamically designed cab as we did in the past, you're confronted with a sort of box like cab which has the aerodynamics of a brick-wall and features flat ballistic glass bolted into each window frame with gun-ports in the windscreen and side windows. It's a beast rather than a beauty.



▲ The SVI-converted UD Kuzer truck offers its driver and front passengers comprehensive B6 protection against assault rifles up to 7.62x51 mm (including AK47, R5 and R1) without compromising comfort.

◀ The cab features flat ballistic glass bolted into each window frame with gun-ports in the windscreen and side windows.

That is what was on display at a UD Trucks Southern Africa (UDTSA) press conference held earlier in the year, and I found it interesting that during the presentation by Filip Van den Heede, Managing Director of UDTSA, one of the overheads slides which showed how UD Trucks is structuring its actions around being Better for People, Better for the Planet, and Better for Growth, the latter point was illustrated with this armoured chariot. Mmmm! Growth in South Africa certainly does need armoured protection. A sign of the times.

This specially armored UD Kuzer RKE 150 truck follows a venture between UDTSA and SVI Engineering, a leading specialist manufacturer of armored products in South Africa. The SVI-converted UD Kuzer truck offers its driver and front passengers comprehensive B6 protection, without compromising either comfort or performance. Further, the conversion is fully approved by UDTSA and the new armoring solution can be ordered through any UDTSA dealer local network, with the standard manufacturer warranty remaining in place.



Trading its entire standard cab for a version custom made from bullet-resistant steel and featuring top-quality ballistic glass, the truck offers its driver and front passengers comprehensive B6 protection against assault rifles up to 7.62x51 mm (including AK47, R5 and R1).

The conversion is fully approved by UD Trucks Southern Africa. As such, the new armouring solution can be ordered through any dealer in the local network, with the standard manufacturer warranty remaining firmly in place.

“We developed this cab-replacement solution not only for clients transporting high-value cargo – such as electronics, cigarettes and even food products – but also for several other applications. For example, since the UD Kuzer’s load body design is adaptable to various customer requirements, it can be configured as a cash-in-transit (CIT) vehicle or even an armoured personnel carrier (APC). In addition, we offer the option to shorten the chassis, if required,” says Jaco de Kock, CEO of SVI.

Drawing on its extensive experience in the military field, the Bashewa-based firm decided that

rather than employing integrated door, fender and pillar armour, SVI’s engineers opted to replace the entire cab with a custom-made crew compartment, further minimising the possibility of ballistic gaps. This solution – which includes an escape hatch in the roof – saves weight compared with the normal armouring process, as the standard cab is entirely removed. As such, after the addition of the replacement cab and a standard box body, the SVI-armoured UD Kuzer RKE 150 boasts a payload as generous as 3 700 kg.

The flat ballistic glass bolted into each window frame allows for fuss-free replacement should damage be sustained during an attack. The unique cab construction furthermore protects engine components and includes a tilting nose plate to facilitate routine maintenance, ensuring serviceability remains as close as possible to that of the standard truck.

Remember the old joke of someone asking an Irishman what he does for a job and the Irishman answers: “I’m a rear gunner in a bakery van.” Well, seems that joke now applies to South Africa. Except, it’s no joke. It’s real. □

▲ Filip Van den Heede, Managing Director of UD Trucks Southern Africa, spelt out how the mission of UD Trucks is to structure its products and actions to be Better for People, Better for the Planet, and Better for Growth. Note that the new SVI-armoured UD Kuzer RKE 150 is used as the illustration for ‘Growth’. And it’s not off the mark as growth in South Africa certainly does need armoured protection.

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for the People**



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Volvo launches new trucks worldwide

News from Volvo Trucks is that the company has unveiled an all-new heavy-duty truck platform for the North American market in parallel to a new heavy-duty truck range for Europe, Australia and markets in Asia and Africa.

New energy efficient models - including trucks running on electricity and renewable fuels - will reduce CO² emissions and take the company closer to the target of having a net-zero emission product range by year 2040. This means a significant overhaul and expansion of Volvo Trucks heavy-duty offering globally and a vital step to reduce the carbon footprint from the product portfolio.

"This is a bold move," says Roger Alm, President Volvo Trucks. "We are launching new best-in-class trucks that will set a benchmark for energy efficiency and reduction of CO² emissions across the entire product range. They have been designed to accelerate the journey towards our ambitious 2040 net-zero emission target, but they also offer higher levels of safety,

productivity and uptime for our customers."

The North American market gets an all-new energy-efficient platform, cutting fuel consumption by up to 10 percent* while also enhancing the safety level significantly. The new platform will be the base for a range of new models in the coming years, using the company's broad palette of electric- and renewable fuel technologies, as well as efficient combustion engines.

First out is the all-new Volvo VNL model, replacing Volvo's best-selling truck on the North American market for long haul transport. Sales are set to start in the end of the first quarter of 2024.

In Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa, Volvo is launching the new Volvo FH Aero – optimized for energy-efficient heavy-duty transports. The new aerodynamic Volvo FH, which lowers energy consumption and CO² emissions by up to five percent*, comes with a choice of propulsion systems including electric, biogas and diesel. The new Volvo FH Aero will be rolled out market by market during 2024 and 2025, with sales starting in the first quarter of 2024.

"The wide range of trucks we are launching will enable our customers around the world to reduce their CO² footprints, no matter where they are on their sustainability journey. The supply of green energy varies from market to market and therefore as a global

▲ In Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa, Volvo is launching the new Volvo FH Aero – optimized for energy-efficient heavy-duty transports. The new aerodynamic Volvo FH comes with a choice of propulsion systems including electric, biogas and diesel. The new Volvo FH Aero will be rolled out market by market during 2024 and 2025, with sales starting in the first quarter of 2024.

truck manufacturer, we need to offer our customers a range of decarbonization solutions – from efficient combustion engines that can run also on renewable fuels to electric powertrains, enabling the shift to fossil-free transports," says Alm.

The move reflects Volvo Group's commitment to decarbonisation built on three pillars – one that incorporates battery-electric, and hydrogen powered fuel cell electric solutions, as well as internal combustion engines running on renewable fuels.

This major launch also includes the company's first model developed only with a battery-electric powertrain, designed for city transport. In total, Volvo Trucks' electric offering expands from six to eight models, covering a large part of the transport needs worldwide.

*Actual fuel economy may vary depending on many factors i.e. driving speed, use of cruise control, vehicle specification, vehicle load, actual topography, the driver's driving experience, vehicle maintenance, and weather conditions. □



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FAW Trucks SA supports community outreach

FleetWatch always loves it when we hear of members of the trucking fraternity reaching out to help society for it shows the warm heart of this industry – and here we have another case in point.

Apart from doing incredibly well with their truck sales chalking up 440 units sold in March, FAW Trucks South Africa is also giving back to society as evidenced by their participation, in partnership with FAW Paarl - MyRide Commercial, in the 15th Annual

Truckers Function held in Vredendal which is aimed at raising funds for old age homes in the surrounding areas, including Vredendal, Lutzville, Klawer, Van Rhynsdorp, Nieuwoudtville, Clanwilliam, and Lambertsbaai.

MyRide Commercial, a dealer representative of FAW Trucks South Africa, sponsored one of its FAW JH6 28.500FT units for auction for a 3-month demo period. The event, which attracted participation from other leading brands, successfully raised an impressive amount that will be used for numerous local old age homes that were beneficiaries of the function.

This marks the second consecutive year that FAW Paarl, MyRide Commercial, has participated in the Truckers Function on behalf of FAW Trucks South Africa.

The Truckers Function, initiated by organiser Ben Nel 15 years ago, has been a consistent platform for the transport industry to give back to the community, focusing on supporting elderly care facilities in the region. FAW Paarl's involvement in this annual event showcases the brand's overall commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those in need.

Levoy Van Der Merwe, Chief Operations Officer, FAW Paarl, says they were honoured to be a part of this meaningful initiative. "By contributing to the Truckers Function, we aim to support the incredible work being done by old age homes in the area and help improve the quality of life for our elderly community members."

The 15th Annual Truckers Function's resounding success highlights the transport industry's united efforts to create a positive change in society and FAW Trucks South Africa and FAW Paarl have stated their commitment to continuing their support in the future.

Trucks have received a lot of flak over the past two years due to the huge volumes of trucks that have taken to the roads. However, while the number of trucks certainly has increased, *FleetWatch* would like to remind the critics that it is due to the total failure of rail in catering to the country needs – particularly in the commodities arena. In fact, trucks have come to the rescue of South Africa in this arena and it is heart-warming to see that while catering to the business side of the country, members of this fraternity continue to give back to society in many ways, as this story so clearly illustrates. Up Trucking! □



By contributing to the Truckers Function, we aimed to support the incredible work being done to raise funds and assist old age homes and elderly community members.

Levoy Van Der Merwe
Chief Operations Officer

▲ MyRide Commercial, a dealer representative of FAW Trucks South Africa, sponsored one of its FAW JH6 28.500FT units for auction for a 3-month demo period at the 15th Annual Truckers Function held in Vredendal to raise funds for old age homes.



bpSA outsources secondary transport business

▲ Impeccable looking rigs from Makwande Supply & Distribution which is an RTMS accredited company.

bp Southern Africa (bpSA) has entered into an agreement with two logistics companies - DPWorld and Makwande Supply & Distribution - to take over its secondary transport business.

"The outsourcing decision is aligned to the bp strategy of outsourcing highly specialised, important but non-core functions as we transform from an international oil company to an integrated energy company with a streamlined vision. Most importantly, this is a continuation of our focus on contributing meaningfully to the transformation of the industry," says bpSA CEO Taelo Mojapelo.

Both companies are aligned to bpSA's transformation agenda. Makwande, which is 100% owned by black women, is a Level 1 B-BBEE contributor, while DPWorld's South African business is a Level 2 contributor.

DPWorld will be operating from Alrode (Alberton), Pretoria, Rustenburg and Cape Town depots, and Makwande will be operating from Durban, East London, Gqeberha and Rocky's Drift (White River) depots. In terms of the agreement, a total of 226 bpSA employees will move to DP World and Makwande.

"We thought long and hard about

this move because of the impact it would have on our colleagues who have been an integral part of the business," says Mojapelo. "We took great care and collaborated with labour unions to find the most feasible solution that would ensure we secured jobs for all impacted employees.

Outlining the rationale behind this move, Mojapelo says that outsourcing the secondary transport business to specialist entities helps improve bpSA's operating standards and efficiency, as third-party specialists have the depth and capacity to invest in world-class technologies, driver training and effective monitoring mechanisms.

"In South Africa, we are among

the last of the major industry players to operate an in-house secondary transport operation and the rest of the global bp business also outsources its transport operations," she added.

Makwande is not new to bpSA, having benefited in 2016 from bp's enterprise development programme. "We subsequently supported bp's secondary transport business, which helped us to become more viable," says Nona Chili, Makwande CEO. "This next stage of our relationship with bpSA is an exciting one for us, especially given how rigorous the selection process was. We are committed to creating value for bpSA as we continue to grow Makwande



**Outsourcing the
secondary transport
business to specialist
entities helps
improve bpSA's
operating standards
and efficiencies**

Taelo Mojapelo
CEO bp SA



We are committed to creating value for bpSA as we continue to grow and further uplift communities by more job creation.

Nona Chili,
CEO Makwande

and further uplift communities through more job creation.”

Mark Rylance, Chief Operating Officer: Logistics for DPWorld in sub-Saharan Africa sees this partnership as unlocking new opportunities for growth and success for both organizations.

“Underscored by our shared commitment to delivering long-term solutions and innovation, this partnership will reap the benefits of combining bpSA’s established customer networks with our expertise in providing value-adding logistics solutions,” he says. □



▲ DP World will be operating from bpSA’s Alrode, Pretoria, Rustenburg and Cape Town depots.



This partnership will reap the benefits of bpSA's established customer networks with expert added value logistics solutions.

Mark Rylance,
COO DP World



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Insights into keeping the shelves stocked

There are a handful of people among the over 62-million South Africans who ever give any thought as to how the products they buy reach the shelves and yet behind each purchase – whether it be a simple chocolate bar or a trolley full of goodies - there lies a huge effort to keep the shelves stocked, all of which fall under the general banner of retail logistics supply chains. In this article, Solly Engelbrecht, National Logistics Executive at The SPAR Group in South Africa, gives some insight into the logistic challenges faced by the retail sector emphasizing the importance of

continuous improvement, innovation and adaptation in the evolving landscape of retail logistics supply chains. There so much more to keeping the wheels rolling and the shelves stocked than meets the eye. Over to Solly....

In the movie, *Any Given Sunday*, Al Pacino, gave a motivational speech on driving forward towards success. He stated that: “The inches we need (for

success) are everywhere around us.” Logistics is all about the small inches that result in a continuous forward drive towards success.

Retail logistics supply chains continue to evolve rapidly. At The SPAR Group, with six distribution centres (DCs) nationwide and a fair size fleet, keeping pace with these changes (and focusing on

the inches) will be integral to success. The key going forward will be building on our strengths while navigating the various challenges on the South African landscape - disruptions through protests, attacks on drivers, failing infrastructure, load shedding and port chaos.

It is imperative that



▲ Solly Engelbrecht, National Logistics Executive, SPAR Group.



major retailers, like The SPAR Group, on which people depend, ensure stock levels are healthy, demand is matched, and the supply chain is working like clockwork no matter how challenging the environment outside. Driving excellence, reliability and efficiency is key for success – but we will need to keep innovating to stay ahead to get the “inches”.

From a safety perspective, we are very fortunate with only a few trucks lost to crime in the past three years. We are also moving forward with technology, harnessing data insights and benefiting from tracking and other high-tech solutions to ensure trucks are rerouted away from high-risk areas to ensure our drivers remain safe.

Meanwhile, technology is driving efficiency on other fronts – two of our DCs are offering paperless deliveries to our retailers and this year and we intend to extend this solution.

Solar a powerful solution

The rollout of solar is a powerful solution in the fight for cheaper, reliable, and renewable energy. Due to the 24/7 nature of our operations and the need for refrigeration in our Perishables warehouses, we will be adding to our solar capacity at three of our DC's this year.

While initially we spent capex on Solar Plants, we are now using PPA's (Power Purchase Agreements) to

▲ "Technology is driving efficiency on other fronts – two of our DCs are offering paperless deliveries to our retailers and will be extended this year."

avoid major capital outlays through partnerships. While this rollout depends on available roof space, it is a win-win for all involved. In addition, we are looking at the possibility of wheeling power into our DCs and possibility of other power generation options.

At all our DCs, we have seen a more managed increase in our electricity costs due to the solar solutions. We will still need to rely on Eskom to take care of night-time cooling and power needs for now, though our planning does include reducing this reliance over the long term.

Going forward, the focus on efficiencies across the entire retail supply chain – from trucks and the cold chain to people, production, and supply – will only intensify and require new thinking and new approaches to all parts of our business.

It would be remiss to not say that we have faced significant challenges with the rollout of a new SAP IT system. But I am pleased to say that things are beginning to settle and we are starting to see improvements. I have no doubt we will win back the loyalty of our retailers affected by the initial problems.

Six key areas

The six key areas we are looking at building on in the logistics space are as follows:

- Operational excellence,
- Financial stability,
- Customer service,
- Governance and compliance,
- Building a SPAR performance, culture, and
- Innovation in support of the overall SPAR Strategy towards 2028.

We will be driving very specific innovation projects. At the end of the day, it is people who are running machines and people must execute the decisions that will create the results that matter.

This is why we are focused on developing logistics technical skills and leadership levels across our business. Our recent syndicated project management programme, which entailed eight groups and involved 70 people, is a great example of innovation in action. It has delivered excellent results and is now moving on to the implementation phase across our DCs. I expect to see some powerful solutions coming to the fore as the best ideas from within our company are tested and implemented.

Ultimately, we are redeveloping our logistics strategy to drive an agile, reliable, sustainable supply chain network to ensure retailer success. As the market becomes even more sophisticated and complex, we will ensure we keep our eyes wide open.

Editor's Footnote: South Africa can be hugely thankful for companies like the SPAR Group which see to our daily needs through totally dedicated efforts to achieve efficiencies across the entire retail supply chain to the benefit of all South Africans. When one compares the 'deliveries' of the private sector to 'deliveries' of Government SOE's, it's like chalk and cheese. *FleetWatch* salutes all who operate in this arena and, of course, especially to the trucking link in the supply chains. We salute and luvya all. □



Unitrans launches top class facility

Cost efficiencies and safety – for both drivers and vehicles – are primary considerations for any logistics or freight company and Unitrans has taken this to a new level with the launch of its newly upgraded Centre of Excellence (COE).

“The launch of our upgraded COE marks a significant milestone for Unitrans and the industry as a whole,” says Jacques Greeff, Executive of Solutions at Unitrans. “We are thrilled to unveil this state-of-the-art facility that will drive value creation and operational excellence for our clients across Africa.”

The modern supply chain is driven by ‘big data’ with information coming directly from trucks on the road, fleet management systems and other services. The COE collects and analyses this data and provides real-time solutions and information to all relevant departments, as well as to drivers on the road – for example, instant route changes to avoid traffic jams and the like.

By harnessing the power of technology through the COE, Unitrans is able to process large-scale data into actionable business intelligence.

“Our focus is on empowering our clients with real-time insights and predictive analytics that drive informed decision-making and enhance overall operational performance,” says Greeff. “Through our centralised platform and data-driven approach, we are unlocking new possibilities for supply chain optimisation and cost efficiency.”

Unitrans is committed to developing bespoke solutions to provide optimal results for its customers. “We believe that the future of supply chain management lies in the integration of data-driven insights and advanced technology and our COE is designed to be a game-changer, offering our clients a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving marketplace.”

Greeff describes the COE as an enabling tool that serves to optimise operations, mitigate risks and enhance safety and security measures – ultimately contributing to the increased efficiencies of its customers’ supply chains. Some of the tangible benefits of the COE include fleet optimisation, reduced standing times and an overall boost in vehicle efficiency. While none of these concepts are new, the Unitrans COE uniquely balances risk mitigation

◀ You could be forgiven for thinking you’ve entered a NASA space rocket control room when you walk into Unitrans’ upgraded Centre of Excellence.

Our focus is on empowering our clients with real-time insights and predictive analytics

**Jacques Greeff,
Executive of
Solutions at Unitrans**

imperatives and efficiency targets with sustainability objectives.

Predictive analytics

Predictive analytics means leveraging historical and real-time data to forecast future outcomes. By analysing large-scale data sets, businesses can gain valuable insights into patterns, trends and potential risks, allowing them to make informed decisions and mitigate operational challenges effectively.

In the context of a logistics business, predictive analytics can transform risk management practices by identifying potential issues before they escalate, reducing operational risks and improving operational cost efficiency significantly.

Through the continuous analysis of data related to factors such as weather conditions, traffic patterns, equipment maintenance and driver behaviour, transport and logistics companies can proactively address potential problems and optimise their operations for efficiency, safety and sustainability.

“Ultimately, with the integration of advanced predictive analytics tools and large-scale data analysis, it is conceivable the supply chain industry could not only reduce operational risks but potentially eradicate them altogether,” says Greeff.

Who was it that said “Big Data is the new gold”? Seems Unitrans is mining this gold through this new state-of-the-art centre. □

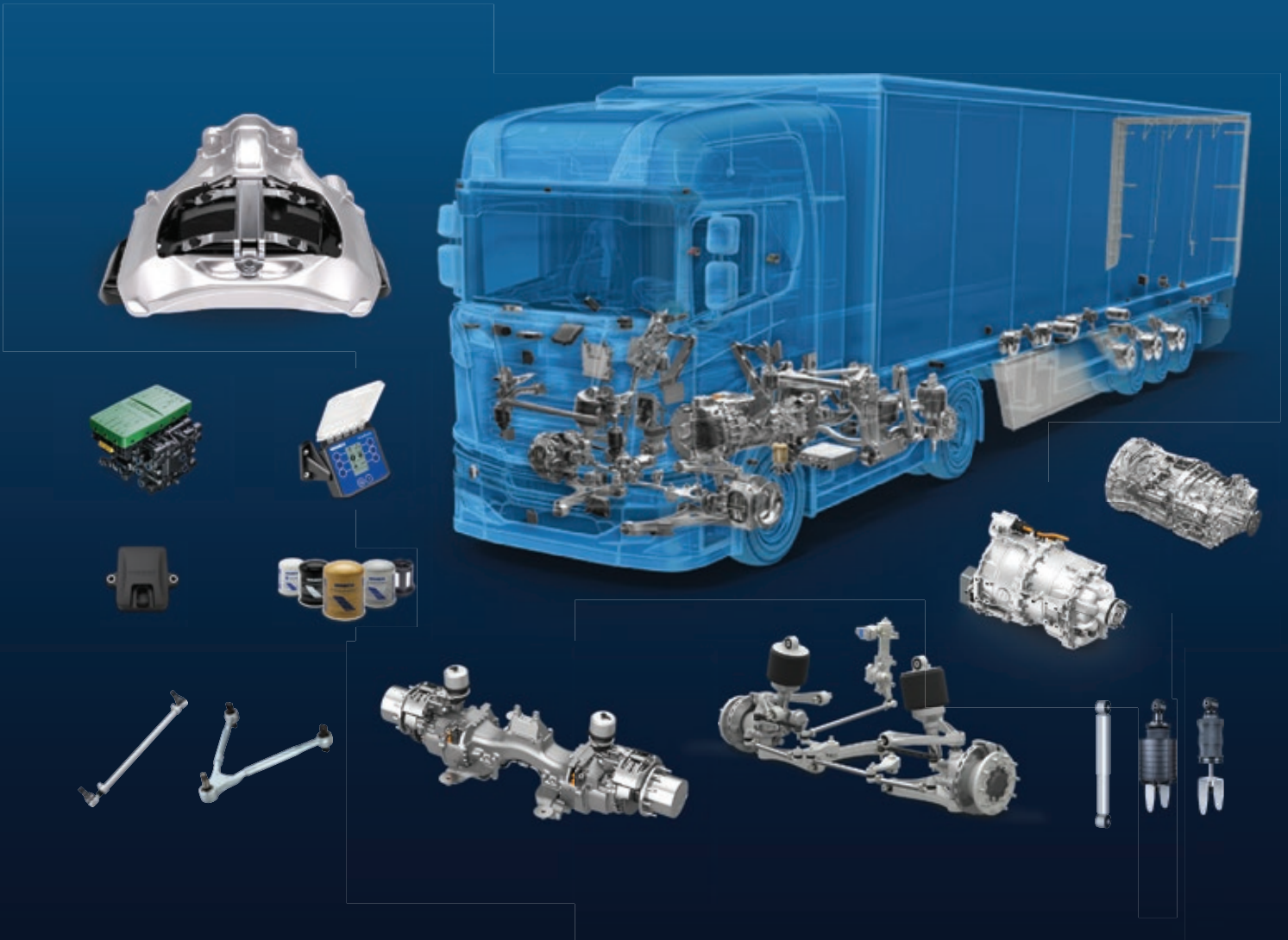


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Rhenus expands warehousing nationwide

Rhenus South Africa has expanded its warehousing capacities in South Africa with the opening of new warehouses in Pretoria and East London and modernising and extending its existing site in Port Elizabeth.

The company already has a strong presence in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban and has now expanded its network of warehousing sites on the east coast as part of its expansion goals thus closing a gap on the map for its customers.

A new 3 000 square metre warehouse in Samrand near Pretoria and a new 2 000 square metre facility in East London have been unveiled and the facilities at the existing site in Port Elizabeth underwent modernisation, increasing the available space to 1 100 square metres.

“Throughout and since Covid, many customers realised they had

insufficient stock holding and that a just-in-time approach doesn’t always work in terms of meeting customer demand, combined with speed to market,” says Cornell van Rooyen, Head of Warehousing at Rhenus South Africa.

“This is especially true in these volatile times characterized by declining transport volumes, delays at ports, poor rail infrastructure, a weakening currency and energy challenges like load shedding.”

According to Van Rooyen, the new warehouse in Samrand provides optimum conditions for the express courier service and the contract logistics activities of Rhenus. It also

▲ Rhenus South Africa's new 2 000 square metre facility in East London features a bonded warehouse, temperature-controlled cold and hot storage and a robust security infrastructure..

expands the range of production, industrial and commercial logistics services along the N1 motorway, which connects Gauteng with the north-south corridor.

In East London, the new warehouse plays a crucial role in simplifying import procedures and improving the competitive advantage of local businesses. The facility features a bonded warehouse, state-of-the-art temperature-controlled cold and hot storage and a robust security infrastructure. For customers, these improvements increase efficiency and reduce operating and maintenance costs.

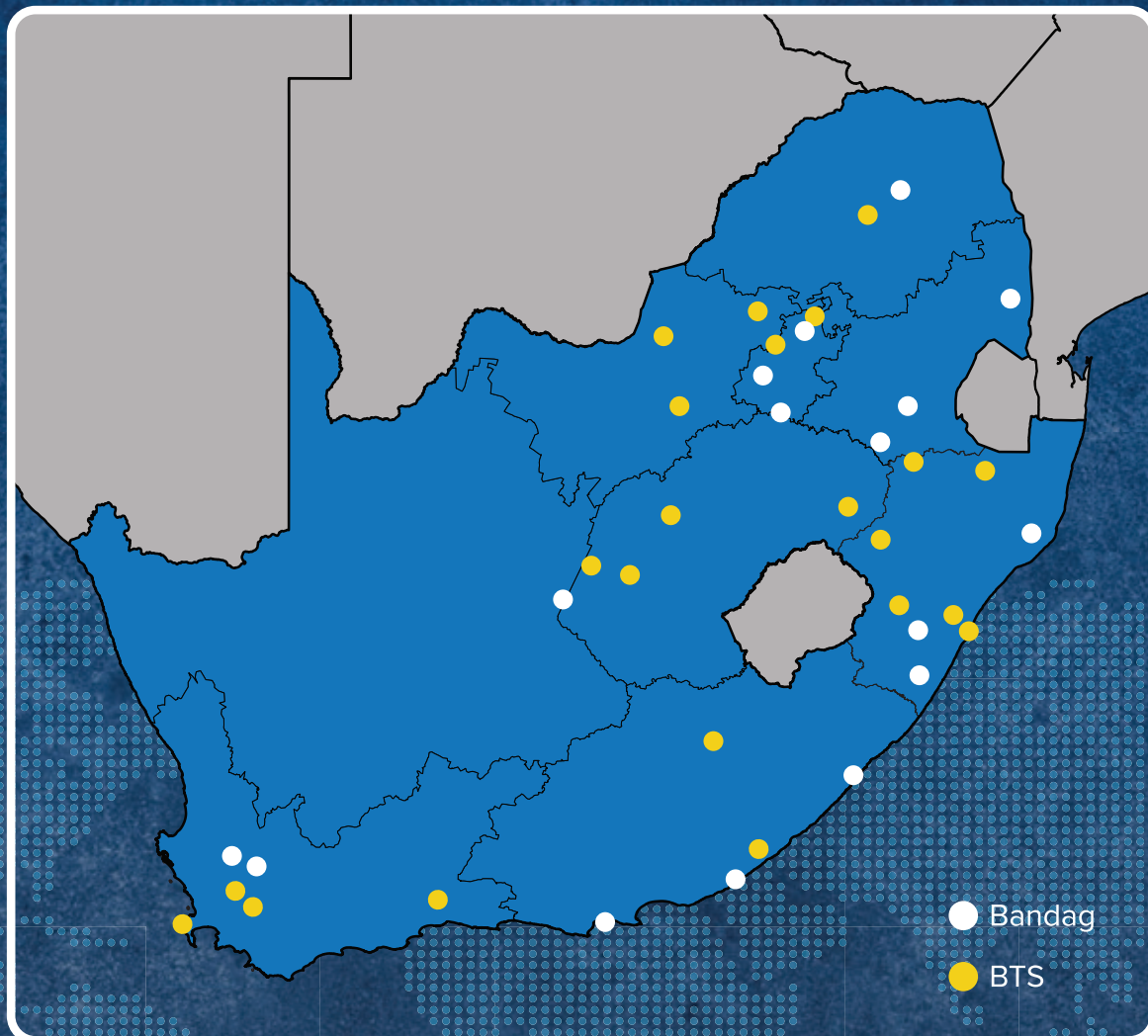
“With the targeted investment in regional hubs, we are complementing our existing business and at the same time offering the opportunity to medium-sized customers who may be considering switching to a more cost-effective outsourced storage solution in the current economic climate,” says van Rooyen. “We are optimistic that this strategic approach will lead to strong annual growth over the next three to five years.” □



▲ Rhenus South Africa's new 3 000 square metre warehouse in Samrand near Pretoria allows the company to expand the range of production, industrial and commercial logistics services along the N1 motorway.

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How to meet critical ESG targets

Environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) practices have become a global standard and many transport companies are focusing their attention on best practice compliance. However, as Bidvest International Logistics Head of Procurement Lenushka Parannath points out, it is not always easy for developing nations like South Africa to keep up – but there are ways to ease the journey.

With South Africa mired in an energy crisis, stagnant economic growth and high unemployment, it is often the case that companies have to safeguard their economic security before looking at ESG programmes.

On top of this, South Africa's supply chain is notoriously dogged by transportation issues. A South African Association of Freight Forwarders report for the week ending January 19 shows that the median border crossing times at South African borders increased by two and a half hours. The report also notes that the country's rail network continues to prove problematic. Throughput volumes from both iron

▲ Lenushka Parannath says that companies can gain at least some control by implementing ESG practices internally, an example being to optimise routes to reduce fuel consumption which can lead to a decrease in costs and a lower carbon footprint.

ore and coal export lines indicate that volume is down by some 20% compared to a few years ago.

While there is little indication that this situation can be meaningfully improved anytime soon, Parannath does suggest companies can gain at least some control by implementing ESG practices internally. An example might be to optimise routes to reduce fuel consumption which can lead to a decrease in costs and a lower carbon footprint.

"Given the right attention and focus, it is very possible for an ESG roadmap to be developed for a company. This not only helps to reduce costs and risks within an organisation but can also make it more attractive to investors," says

Parannath, adding that companies can also meet their ESG targets by working with the right suppliers.

Given that organisations are so interconnected, especially in supply chain and logistics, it is impossible for a company to meet its ESG goals independently and without collaborative efforts from all parties.

"I believe that the best way to get support to meet your ESG objectives, as well as help suppliers along their own ESG journey, is individualised collaboration and planning with the suppliers that have the most impact on your supply chain.

"Attempting to ask all your suppliers to conform to one standard questionnaire is not going to result in meaningful impact. Rather, organisations should work with their suppliers on specific objectives that are attainable, will have the most impact, and will still contribute to your overall objectives."

According to Parannath, companies generally ask for their suppliers' ESG policies and any specific ESG initiatives they have recently undertaken.

To measure a supplier's commitment to the environment, for example, an organisation might ask for specifics on how waste is managed. "Recycling and reducing single-use materials would be

one of the easiest performance measures to look at which wouldn't require massive investment from the supplier but would still show a commitment to the environment."

"Basically, we need to start moving past the standard policies that are in place and look at a few KPIs with high impact and measure progression on those over a contract period."

Parannath believes companies should consider the following when seeking to meet ESG objectives through suppliers, namely:

- Stop sending standard ESG questionnaires to suppliers.
- Have a good sense of what financial investment suppliers are willing to make to improve certain aspects of ESG.
- The ESG measurements against suppliers need to align with the company's willingness to increase rates with suppliers.
- If there is no willingness to increase costs, then ESG initiatives should be focused on areas like demand management, forecast planning and route optimisation which should lead to a more efficient use of resources.
- Set KPIs with suppliers and draw up a collaborative, realistic plan to achieve them.
- ESG measurements need to be specific and tailored to what is achievable by suppliers. □

"Given the right attention and focus it is very possible for an ESG roadmap to be developed for a company to help reduce costs and risks and make it more attractive for investors."

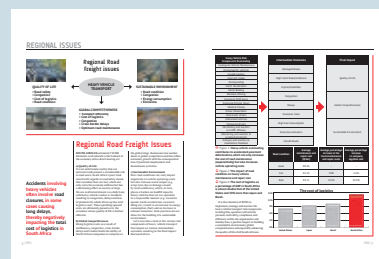
Lenushka Parannath

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5 Fleet Management trends for 2024

Fleet management is undergoing major advances and 2024 will be a decisive year in two key areas: safety and decarbonisation. In addition, technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) applied to automotive will drive new challenges and opportunities in the sector. In this article, Justin Manson, Sales Director at Webfleet, Bridgestone's fleet management solution, has compiled five fleet management trends that Webfleet sees as being on the global horizon for this year. Do you agree?



1: AI in the automotive industry

Artificial intelligence is revolutionising everything, from programming to data management, cybersecurity and training. It also plays a crucial role in the automotive industry, advancing issues such as autonomous driving, road safety and user experience. This trend will continue in the coming months, with AI being used to train autonomous vehicles, improve emergency braking systems, detect fatigue, predict vehicle maintenance and optimise routes in real-time, ultimately improving mobility in cities.

2: Sustainability

Reducing the environmental footprint has become one of the most important goals for companies globally, alongside meeting increasingly stringent emissions targets. Many European cities have already implemented Low Emission Zones (LEZ), and by 2030, Zero Emission Zones (ZEZ) will be introduced, permitting only vehicles that do not emit to circulate. Additionally, new regulations, such as the Corporate Sustainable Reporting Directive (CSRD), which will come into force from this month, will be a challenge.

3: Fleet Electrification

2024 will be the time to transition fleets to electric vehicles (EVs). Rapid technological advances, combined with a global commitment to sustainability, create a particularly favourable environment for electrification. According to a Webfleet study on the electrification potential of vehicle fleets, 61% of commercial vehicles in Europe could be replaced by an electric alternative. Moreover, companies with EVs save on average 5,665 litres of fuel per vehicle per year, R74,893.82 in costs, and 15 tons of CO₂ per vehicle per year. However, there are still challenges to overcome, such as the charging network, although the EU plans to distribute EV charging points on the main road networks.

The electric trucks on South



▲ Volvo Trucks SA and KDG Logistics put the first electric truck on SA's roads in 2023.

Africa's roads will be joined by vehicles powered by gas, specifically compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas, and fuel cell trucks. "A fuel cell truck is an electric truck that generates electricity from fuel cells powered by hydrogen stored in tanks. In a fuel cell, hydrogen and oxygen are combined through an electrochemical reaction to generate electricity, heat and water."

4: Smart Charging for electric vehicles

One challenge confronting companies with electric vehicles is smart charging. What's the point of using electric vehicles if recharging is done using non-renewable energies? The market is starting to implement systems that ensure the use of clean energy during the charging process of electric vehicles. This not only improves battery health and increases residual value, but also facilitates charging when grid costs are lower, leading to energy cost savings.

5: Fleet Safety

The World Health Organization (WHO), estimates that traffic accidents result in 1.3 million fatalities and 50 million injuries every year. To address this, a global strategy has been drawn up to reduce road deaths and injuries by at least 50% by 2030. The strategy involves establishing measures such as setting driving and resting time limits and using in-vehicle technology to promote safe driving styles. In the upcoming year, safety will be given even more attention in regulatory developments, particularly with regards to tachograph compliance.

Even better news is that there will be safer trucks on South African roads in 2024 and into the future. Global truck manufacturers are constantly striving to introduce innovative safety features. Unlike in the past, where many were optional extras, features such as lane guidance and collision avoidance are fast becoming standard features in the newer models. □



▲ Traffic accidents result in 1.3 million fatalities and 50-million injuries per year. A global strategy has been drawn up to reduce road deaths and injuries by at least 50% by 2030.

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Takealot goes green

FleetWatch ran a story of Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles partnering with DHL Express for the pilot test of the ID.Buzz Cargo fleet in South Africa. We mentioned that this ties in with the generally accepted view that the entry point for the wide-spread penetration of battery electric commercial vehicles in South Africa lies at the lower end of the vehicle scale in the local distribution and last mile delivery arena.

This view is endorsed by the news that Takealot has embarked on a green journey by transitioning to battery-electric trucks to cut emissions and operating expenses. At an event in Cape Town, the company welcomed its inaugural fleet of four JAC N75 EV 4-tonne battery-electric trucks in a deal facilitated through Aeverssa, a JAC Motors EV dealer, and AVIS, overseeing Takealot transport operations. This follows the handover in early November of six JAC N75 EV 4-tonne battery-electric trucks at Takealot's distribution centre in Kempton Park.

"We're excited to debut Cape Town's inaugural battery-electric trucks and were delighted to deliver an additional six JAC N75 EV trucks in Gauteng," says Reando Potgieter, COO of Aeverssa. "After two years of trials and fine-tuning Takealot's integration strategy, including modelling different JAC EV trucks, we have established the necessary infrastructure and back-end support to manage their new emission-free EV fleet."

In June 2021, JAC Motors introduced its first battery-electric

truck in South Africa, closely following the global launch of the JAC N55 EV 3-tonne truck. Aeverssa acquired the first JAC N55 EV in South Africa, deploying it for comprehensive testing in diverse transport fleets. This initiative collected valuable data which was instrumental in crafting efficient charging and EV fleet management ecosystems.

In 2022, the company introduced its new JAC N75 EV 4-tonne truck locally, featuring a 65 kW (130 kW peak power) synchronous electric motor with 415/1,200 Nm of torque. It is powered by a 106.95 kWh LFP battery pack that allows for a reach of 200 km per charge. When a DC Fast Charger with a standard European CCS2-Combo connection is used, the battery is fully recharged in approximately 80 minutes. The JAC N75 EV also features regenerative braking to maximise battery life and range.

"We use Ampcontrol software to address range anxiety, leveraging the JAC N75 EV's 200 km per charge range to achieve a daily range of over 400 km through opportunistic charging. This cutting-edge software maximises green energy utilisation and significantly reduces the total cost of ownership (TCO) of electric vehicle fleets," says Potgieter.

Commenting on this move, Adrian van Tonder, General Manager of Commercial Fleet and Coastal Sales at AVIS Southern Africa says that Takealot is setting a progressive benchmark in South African logistics, underlining their pivotal role in embracing eco-friendly deliveries. "This marks a pioneering step for



▲ Takealot has introduced 10 JAC N75 EV 4-tonne battery-electric trucks into its fleet. The vehicles will operate out of its Cape Town and Kempton Park premises

AVIS and we are both excited and confident in exploring alternative energy solutions to enhance our client's transport fleet operations in this dynamic landscape."

"Our battery-electric JAC truck range embodies our vision for a zero-emission future, emphasising efficient, cost-effective options for sustainable transport solutions in our pursuit of a greener tomorrow," says Karl-Heinz Göbel, CEO of JAC Motors South Africa.

"As the world of sustainability continues to evolve, we will continue to evolve with it. This exciting collaboration marks an important step for us as a consciously innovative business in South Africa. Backed by the Forest Stewardship Council, introducing electric trucks into our business reinforces our commitment to sustainability. We don't just deliver packages; we are delivering on our promise to reduce our carbon footprint and provide a sustainable shopping solution to our customers," says Frederik Zietsman, CEO of Takealot.

According to Göbel, the JAC N75 EV offers a 50 percent reduction in fuel/energy expenses and a 70 percent lower maintenance cost than conventional ICE trucks. □



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- **OHS Act for Managers:** Ensuring that management is well-versed in legal and regulatory requirements for occupational health and safety.

JC Auditors launches ‘free’ safety-related training programmes

▲ **Top photo:** JCA hosted an engaging safety seminar at the Kopanong Hotel and Conference Centre in Kempton Park

▲ **Inset photo:** JCA's Charles Mukela talking about implementing Integrated Management Systems (IMS) to delegates in a project funded jointly by National Business Initiative (NBI) and SAPPI Southern Africa. The course was held at the Umfolozi College in Mandeni, KZN North Coast.

IN LINE WITH its commitment to building a safer and more sustainable road transport sector, JC Auditors (JCA), a leader in international certification services, is now offering its clients a series of complimentary safety-related training programmes.

In announcing this free offering, Oliver Naidoo, JCA's Managing Director said: "Our passion for road safety improvements, demonstrated through our RTMS certification efforts, has led us to introduce these complimentary training courses. We hope to contribute to a future where safety is firmly embedded in the drive to business growth and sustainability."

JCA is at the forefront of the Road Transport Management System (RTMS) certification, conducting more than 10 000 audits over the last 15 years. It is widely accepted that RTMS has achieved remarkable safety and efficiency enhancements, benefitting transport businesses across the Southern African region.

The following Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Training Courses will be available at no cost to all JCA clients throughout 2024:



- **OHS Legal Liability:** Educating professionals about the legal responsibilities and liabilities associated with occupational health and safety.

The road transport sector has often grappled with inadequate safety measures and systems, resulting in incidents and unsafe practices that not only endanger lives but also burden transporters with avoidable costs. It is JCA's dedication to addressing these issues head-on that has led them to launch these complimentary virtual training courses, designed to empower and build the capacity of industry professionals.

FleetWatch compliments JCA on this initiative and stands by the company's aim in contributing to a future where "safety is firmly embedded in the drive to business growth and sustainability." Bring that future on please. □



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we think transport



Don't drink and drive

Driving under the influence is a criminal offence. Alcohol and truck driving do not go together - don't do it!

Negatives effects of alcohol

- ☐ Slows reaction time
- ☐ Distorts vision
- ☐ Reduces concentration
- ☐ Increases risk taking
- ☐ Reduced or poor judgement
- ☐ Increases fatigue – many hours after consumption

If caught, a professional driver can have his licence suspended for:

- ☐ 6 months - first offence
- ☐ 5 years - second offence
- ☐ 10 years - third offence

New legislation proposed recommends that Blood Alcohol content be reduced to 0,02g per 100ml for general drivers and 0,00g per 100ml for professional drivers.



| Sorghum beer | Spirit cooler | Beer | Cider | 75ml Red or 90 ml White Wine | Tot / 25 ml Vodka or Cane, whiskey, brandy | Cocktail Various % | Tot / 25ml Tequila | Quart Beer |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|-------|------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1.5 U | 1.2 - 1.9 U | 1.5 - 1.7 U | 2 U | 1 U | 1 U | 2 - 4 U | 1 U | 3.5 - 4 U |

★ 1 Unit comes to 0.02g in your blood or 0.10mg in your breath

| No. of Units | Blood Alcohol Content | Breath Alcohol Content |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 3 | 0.06g | 0.3mg |
| 4 | 0.08g | 0.4mg |
| 5 | 0.10g | 0.5mg |
| 6 | 0.12g | 0.6mg |
| 7 | 0.14g | 0.7mg |
| 8 | 0.16g | 0.8mg |
| 9 | 0.18g | 0.9mg |
| 10 | 0.20g | 1.0mg |
| 11 | 0.22g | 1.1mg |
| 12 | 0.24g | 1.2mg |

★ Calculations are based on adult male, 68kg. This is a rough guide as each individual is affected differently according to size and weight..

★ Alcohol has to pass through the bloodstream. It takes 1 hour (or more) to get rid of 1 unit.

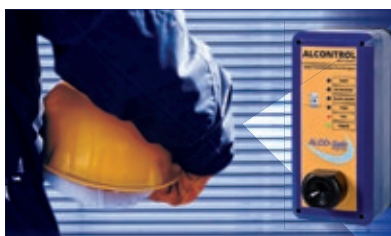
Limits for Professional Drivers

Blood
0,02g per 100ml

Breath
0,10mg per 1000ml

Combination consumption over a 3 hour period

| 50 kg | 70 kg | 100 kg | 50 kg | 70 kg | 100 kg |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| 1 Beer Per hour | 2 Beer Per hour | 3 Beer Per hour | 1 Beer 2 Wine 1 Double Tot | 2 Beer 2 Wine 3 Double Tot | 3 Beer 3 Wine 2 double Tot |
| = 0.05% | = 0.06% | = 0.07% | = 0.12% | = 0.13% | = 0.13% |



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Enhancing skills of drivers in Mozambique

Many of our readers will be unaware of a UK-based organisation called Transaid and the good work it does in the trucking arena in sub-Saharan African countries, the latest success story being a Transaid-supported project that has helped to successfully train more than 450 truck drivers in Mozambique over two years, with 100 per cent of those surveyed following the training saying the initiative has helped them to be better at their job.

Transaid's involvement was part of the initiative Employment and Skills for Development in Africa (E4D), implemented by GIZ – the

German Agency for International Cooperation - and funded by the German and Norwegian governments, with further support from Appload and EnergyWorks.

Founded by Save the Children, The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) and its Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, Transaid works with communities, partners and governments to solve transport challenges throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In essence, it is a unique, passionate organisation that works with partners and governments to solve transport challenges in sub-Saharan Africa and enjoys strong backing in the UK from the transport and logistics industry and

◀ Driver trainers in Mozambique receiving training from Transaid volunteers. A total of 31 driver trainers - including two women - were trained and collectively this group went on to deliver training to 452 HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle) drivers over the initial two-year period.

the active involvement of its patron, HRH The Princess Royal.

The Mozambique project focused on several key areas to ensure it met the immediate priorities and was sustainable in the long term. Three specially tailored training courses were offered to drivers, including one focused around transporting cargo safely and another focussed specifically on defensive driving – with a mix of classroom and practical on-road instruction. The National Authority for Professional Education is currently working to combine the three courses as one registered course; plus, the training institutions and driving schools are actively marketing the new training to drivers and businesses.

The courses were well reviewed by employers, with a spokesman for one of the companies to benefit, saying: “The material was well cultivated to match feedback from local technical committee members to ensure that the instruction matched what was most needed.”

A representative for Usalama, a local driving school, said: “We have been able to better establish ourselves in the market with our clients, especially large suppliers for whom road safety is paramount.”

The drivers also had positive responses about the course, with one saying: “I am now more cautious on the public road. I fully comply with the traffic rules, and I really feel like a professional, capable of seeing and analysing what is happening around me better than before.”

It's quite amazing that people so far away can care so much. *FleetWatch* salutes Transaid. □



▲ The SATMC is actively engaged in lobbying efforts concerning second-hand or part-worn tyres, an area currently lacking regulation in the country.

Industry pledge is proposed for an ethical and sustainable tyre industry

The South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC) plans to build on the gains achieved over the past year and reinforce its commitment to the local tyre manufacturing industry in 2024. Its multifaceted approach for 2024 encompasses key initiatives to combat illicit trade, foster local manufacturing, prepare for the future of the industry, address skills development, and enhance environmental sustainability in the local tyre sector.

In 2023, the SATMC successfully advocated for the imposition of anti-dumping duties on unfairly traded imports of passenger, truck and bus tyres from China. This year, says the SATMC, will see a focus

on monitoring the impact of this intervention.

SATMC Managing Executive, Ndu Chala, says a key initiative is the Illicit Trade Tyre Forum, established in partnership with the Tyres, Equipment, Parts Association (TEPA), the Tyre Importers Association of South Africa (TIAASA), and the South African Freight Forwarders Association (SAAFF).

The forum convenes monthly and according to the SATMC, has intensified efforts to combat misdeclaration of tyre consignments and the rerouting of imports through neighbouring countries to evade tyre duties, environmental levies and permits. The tyre forum is taking a hard stance against

smuggling, under-invoicing and the use of illegitimate freight forwarders bringing illicitly traded tyres into the country.

“We want to make it clear that only trade with ethical companies can protect the future of this sector,” says Chala. “We’re proposing an industry pledge, starting with our four local tyre manufacturers – Bridgestone Southern Africa, Continental Tyre South Africa, Goodyear South Africa and Sumitomo Rubber South Africa – and extending to dealers, to ensure ethical practices from sourcing to distribution. Illicit trade of tyres has severe repercussions on jobs, plant capacity planning, and the integrity of our industry, as well as consumer safety.”

1 Collaboration and Engagement

The SATMC will continue its active engagement with government and industry stakeholders to combat unethical practices and maintain the integrity of the industry.

Quarterly meetings with the SARS Tyre Forum facilitate reporting of suspected illicit activity for investigation by SARS. Recognising the significance of porous ports and harbours as entry points for illicitly traded tyres, the SATMC also intends exploring a partnership with Transnet to address these vulnerabilities.

The SATMC's Homegrown #DrivingLocal initiative launched in 2023 underscores the importance of supporting locally manufactured tyres. This campaign aims to create awareness among consumers about the benefits of choosing South African-made tyres, emphasising quality, job creation, and economic contribution.

2 Skills Development for the Future

Within the evolving automotive landscape, the SATMC is prioritising skills development, particularly for New Energy Vehicles (NEVs). This includes addressing the changing requirements of original equipment manufacturers related to tyres, and ensuring that the local workforce remains at the forefront of industry advancements.

3 Second-hand Tyre Regulation

Pending the finalisation of the Waste Tyre Management Plan, the SATMC is actively collaborating with the Waste Management Bureau and SAPS Law Enforcement. The SANS 1633 Standard is expected to be issued by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) in Q2 (March to June) to address tyre mutilation and dealer responsibility. The SATMC emphasises the importance of responsible dealer practices, and non-compliance may result in fines issued by the Bureau.

"As the SATMC we have been advocating strongly around having

a clear roadmap in place to drive improvements and sustainability in both collection and processing of tyre waste. This initiative involves collaborative efforts with tyre dealers to promote proper storage practices for waste tyres. Simultaneously, the SATMC is actively exploring commercial opportunities for waste tyres, aiming to foster enterprise development and job creation within a circular economy," says Chala.

Highlighting a longstanding concern within the industry, Chala emphasised the need for a systematic process to address the processing of end-of-life tyres. The SATMC is actively engaged in lobbying efforts concerning second-hand or part-worn tyres, an area currently lacking regulation in the country. This regulatory gap poses a significant safety risk for road commuters, prompting the SATMC's on-going efforts to address this critical issue.

"Through each of these strategic priorities set out for 2024, we aim to deliver on our commitment to build a sustainable and ethical tyre industry in South Africa. We want to protect local jobs, ensure consumer safety, and contribute to a thriving automotive sector," said Chala. □



The men at the top

▲ The men at the top, from left: Renai Moothilal, Executive Director of the National Association of Automotive Component and Allied Manufacturers (NAACAM); Matthew Livigni, Continental Tyre South Africa MD; Ndu Chala, Managing Executive of the South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC); Jacques Rikhotso, Bridgestone South Africa MD; and Lubin Ozoux, SATMC Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa.



▲ Mathe Group rubber crumb processing plant.



▲ Rubber crumb from truck tyres.



▲ Rubber bitumen being applied for a spray seal application.

▲ Rubber bitumen in a typical asphalt overlay application on the N2 near Gamtoos River.

Tyres driving on tyres

Did you know that the tyres on the trucks you're driving can, at their end of their operational life, be used in the construction of the roads you're driving on? Well, that's happening and the use of large amounts of recycled rubber crumb for the manufacture of road surfaces and related products is propelling South Africa towards a circular economy where waste products are usefully used to address key infrastructure needs.

Dr Mehran Zarrebini, CEO of Hammarisdale-based radial truck tyre recycler, Mathe Group, says that much of the production from the Mathe Group factory, which

recycles approximately 1 000 radial truck tyres per day to produce 45 tons of rubber crumb, goes to bitumen product manufacturer, Tosas.

Tosas then uses the rubber crumb for the manufacture of rubber modified bitumen, a product that is being used by the South Africa National Road Agency (SANRAL) for massive upgrades to the N1 in Gauteng and the N2/N3 leading from the port of Durban.

It goes back to 2016 when Tosas approached Mathe Group for the supply of rubber crumb. This was shortly after Mathe Group moved from a small facility in New Germany to its present location

in Hammarsdale. Since then, it has increased crumb production significantly.

Deon Pagel, managing director of Tosas, explains that Tosas has been operating for more than five decades and was originally jointly owned by Total and Sasol. The company became part of the JSE-listed Raubex Group and operates from seven locations - Wadeville, Bloemfontein, Worcester, East London, Durban, Gaborone and Tsumeb in Namibia.

He says Tosas became a leading bitumen-supplying company by always keeping abreast of the latest technological developments. The company has one of the best bitumen testing laboratories in Southern Africa and is a world leader in the development of new bitumen products.

According to Pagel, although people still refer to so-called black top roads as "tarred" roads, the use of tar which is extracted from coal and is carcinogenic has been discontinued and replaced with bitumen, which is extracted from crude oil.

Bitumen, which for chipseal applications, is sprayed onto the road surface at up to double the temperature of boiling water, seals the top road layerworks, protecting the foundation layers beneath, acting as a waterproofing layer. Alternatively, it can be mixed in with the asphalt and acts as a glue, strengthening the road itself.

This bitumen that exits a refinery – known as penetration grade bitumen – is modified with the addition of a variety of different modifiers. Rubber modified bitumen is created by mixing 20% rubber crumb with 80% bitumen and extender oils.

"This is one of the most superior road bitumen products in the world and, on top of that, you have the benefit of recycling. You take old tyres and convert them into a usable product. It is a win-win," he says.

This win-win has extended to the point where bitumen rubber has now been generically specified by government and other road authorities and owners for use

in the construction of roads throughout the country.

Mathe Group's role goes beyond simply producing rubber crumb through ambient grinding of radial truck tyres for Tosas. Together with Tosas, it designed and developed a second plant to produce what is known as New Crumb Rubber Technology (NCRT). This involves coating the rubber crumb with aromatic oil and specialised waxes to produce a pre-swollen rubber crumb that is bitumen rubber for asphalt mixes and spray seal applications that have greater longevity and much lower mixing temperatures.

Zarrebini, who is now looking to install a further line that will double output at Mathe Group's Hammarsdale factory, is confident that the company can accommodate the growing need for rubber crumb for roads as well as other applications.

"The recycling plant that we have designed is flexible and we can manufacture different particle sizes of rubber crumb for different end uses at the same time. The specific rubber crumb size that is used for rubber modified bitumen is of the finer quality. The courser grades are used as infill for artificial turf and as elastic layers for sports applications. The material that is finer than that used in rubber modified bitumen is used in non-slip paints, automotive brake pads and to manufacture new tyres," he explains.

He adds that there is room for growing the amount of rubber crumb used in the roads industry although this is largely dependent on SANRAL awarding tenders for infrastructure projects and having the available funding to follow through with these projects.

"From a production perspective, we have the flexibility of only manufacturing the grade of rubber crumb used in rubber-modified bitumen or, if the demand is lower, we can then switch to manufacturing a combination of grades of rubber crumb for other industrial uses. During 2023, we implemented machinery upgrades which enhanced output and this year, we will see further enhancements to the plant which will result in greater output," he concludes. □



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| | Driver Assessment | per driver | 1000 |
| Certification | Driver License | per driver | 1000 |
| | Driver Assessment | per driver | 1000 |
| Maintenance | Driver License | per driver | 1000 |
| | Driver Assessment | per driver | 1000 |

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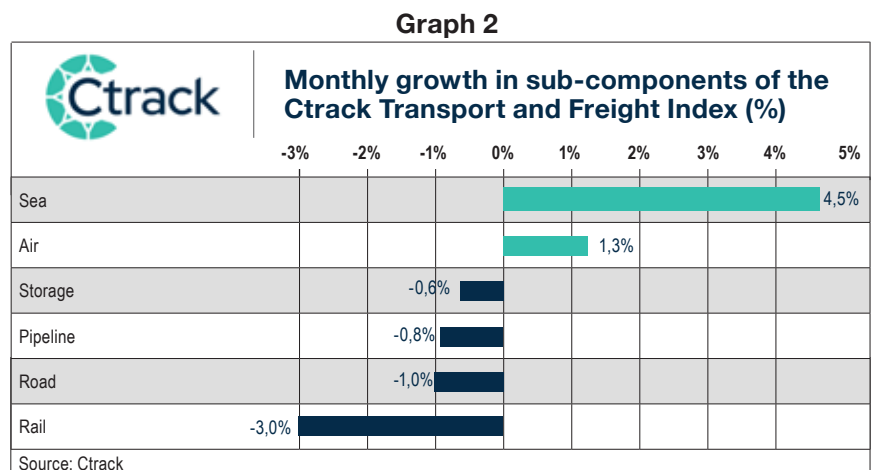
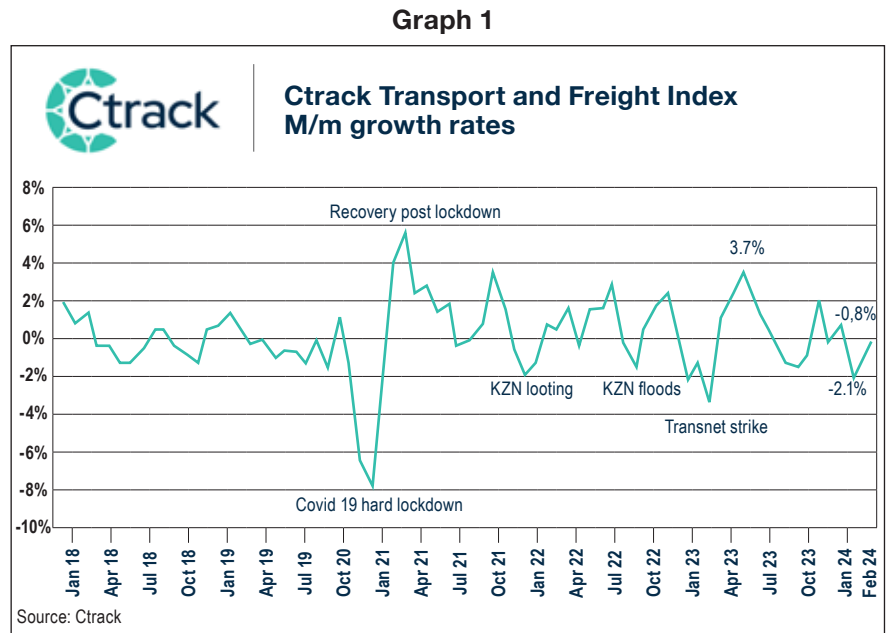
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Strain still evident in the logistics sector during February 2024

After declining abruptly in January, the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index (Ctrack TFI) subsided further in February to an index level of 118.6, a drop of 0.8% compared to January's level of 119.6 and the lowest since February 2023. Although the pace of decline has subsided compared to January, the heavy-weighted road and rail freight sectors were the main drivers of the further deterioration. However, despite a further drop on a monthly basis, the Ctrack TFI is still 2.5% above year-ago levels.

In February, four of the six sub-sectors declined on a monthly basis (see graph 2), with only the sea and air freight sectors expanding. However, compared to a year earlier, four of the subsectors still increased, with only road and air freight contracting. While the interdependence and intertwined nature of the logistics sector soften the overall impact of weakness in some sub-sectors, the sector remains overall on the backfoot and in urgent need of intervention and structural reform.

Recent developments are encouraging, including the approval of the Freight Logistics Roadmap, the appointment of a permanent board for Transnet National Ports Authority, the passing of the Economic Regulation of Transport Bill and the publication of a draft network statement detailing how private sector access will be governed. While industry reacted



negatively to the level of the proposed tariffs included in the statement, at least, the option for private sector participation is on the table and negotiations could be forthcoming.

In a report titled 'Decarbonising South Africa's Transport Sector' published in 2023, based on research done as part of the Climate Pathways and Just Transition Project run by the National Business Initiative (NBI), in partnership with Business Unity South Africa and Boston Consulting Group, the conclusion was reached that for South Africa to cut greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the transport sector to net-zero by 2050, among other

recommendations, between 15% to 20% of road traffic must move to rail. This shift, the report noted will also be key in addressing road congestion and improving the efficiency of the overall transport system.

While some progress has been made to stem the deterioration in rail freight, among others, the approval of the Freight Logistics Roadmap, that provides a clear reform path towards resolving immediate operational challenges driving the decline of rail and ports and outlining interventions required to fundamentally restructure the logistics sector through policy and legislative interventions, a long road is

CTrack FREIGHT TRANSPORT INDEX

ahead and any notable impact of interventions is only likely to be seen in the medium term.

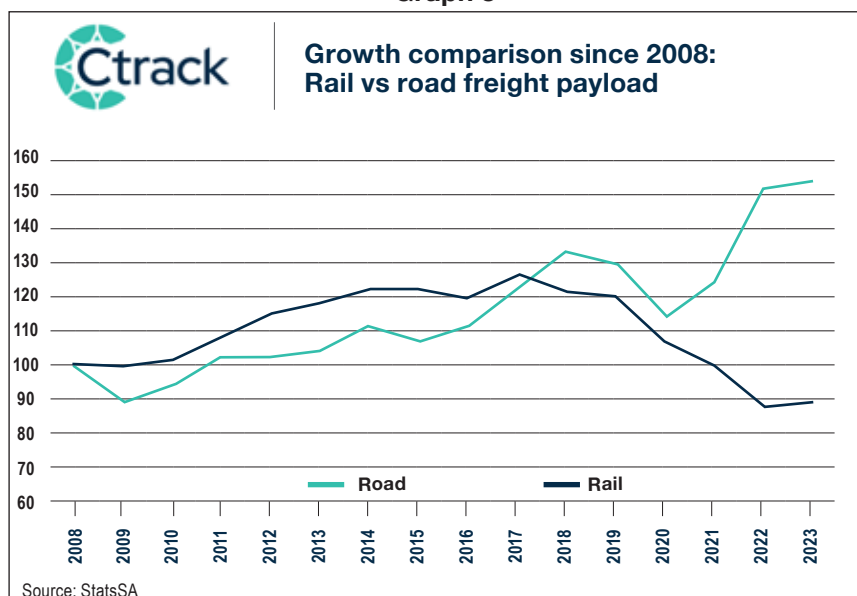
Following five years of annual declines (2018-2022), rail freight payload increased by 2.5% in 2023, off an extremely low base and clearly continuing to underperform given ongoing challenges plaguing the sector. Among others, large-scale theft of copper cables, insufficient maintenance, lack of locomotives, corruption, derailments and vandalism on freight trains are common and hampering the sector's performance.

On the other hand, the road freight sector, which has grown notably in recent years and now accounts for 84.5% of all freight payload in South Africa, had experienced multiple headwinds during 2023, but still managed to increase by 1.5% in 2023, compared to growth of 21.7% and 8.9% in 2022 and 2021, respectively. The sub-sector remains the backbone of logistics in South Africa, although it comes at a cost to the economy, as transport via road remains notably more expensive than transport via rail.

Both the road and rail freight sub-sectors subsided in February, signalling that many challenges remain in the early months of 2024. The rail freight sub-sector declined by 3.0% m/m in February, following on a hefty drop in January, taking the index almost 10% lower compared to end-2023. Road freight declined by 1.0% on a monthly basis in February, the fourth consecutive monthly decline.

Sea Freight remains one of the main focus areas of South Africa's structural reform efforts and ▶ 62

Graph 3



Graph 4

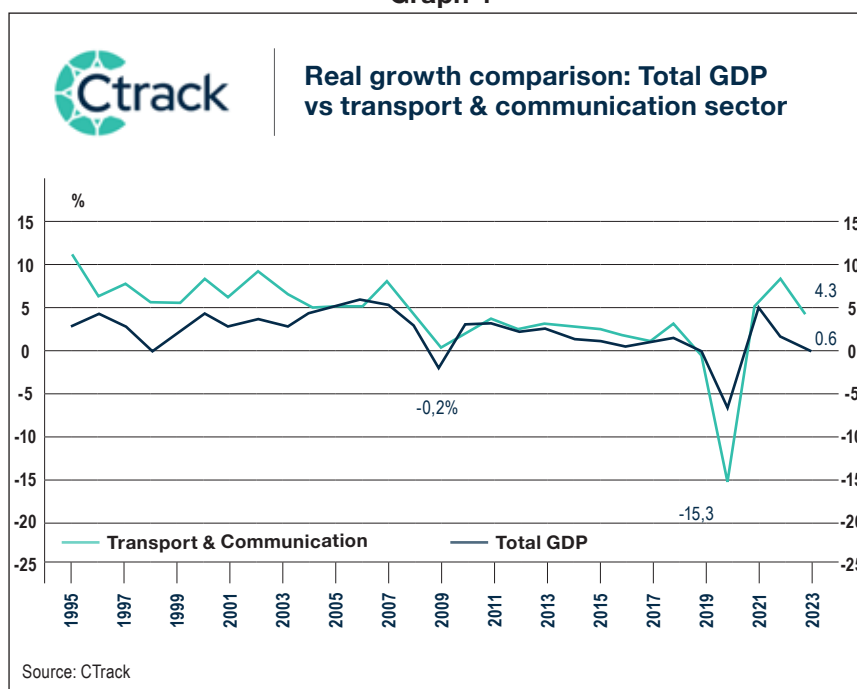


Table 1

Change in Ctrack Transport and Freight Index in February 2024

| February 2024 Percentage change between | Rail | Road | Pipeline | Sea | Air | Storage and handling | Ctrack TFI |
|---|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|-------------------------|---------------|
| February 2024 vs February 23 (y/y) | 16.7% | -3.5% | -4.5% | 9.0% | -2.5% | 20.0% | 2.5% |
| February 2024 vs January 2024 (m/m) | -3.0% | -1.0% | -0.8% | 4.5% | 1.3% | -0.6% | -0.8% |
| Quarter to February 2024 vs. Quarter to November 2023 (q/q) | -8.1% | -3.0% | -5.4% | 13.1% | 0.6% | 3.3% | -2.0% |

Note: the row highlighted in blue is the main Ctrack Transport and Freight Index values used.

CTRACK FREIGHT TRANSPORT INDEX



The Transport sector was the star performer in Q4, 2023 growing by 2,9% quarter on quarter.

► 61 some of the shorter-term interventions at ports are starting to bear fruit. After tumbling in October and November, reflecting the inability of ports to handle cargo due to a multiplicity of contributing factors, the sea freight sub-component started to recover in December and continued its recovery in the early months of 2024. Container handling (both landed and shipped) increased by 22.1% m/m in February, though off a low base, while other cargo – excluding cars – increased by a solid 8.1% compared to January. One of Durban port's pockets of excellence is the Durban Car Terminal (DCT), recently moved its 600 000th vehicle through the terminal in the current financial year, up from 531 755 fully built-up units over the preceding 12-month period ending 31 March 2023. The terminal said the 600 000th unit mark is an historical achievement, "attributed to improved terminal efficiencies through a committed workforce, consistency and eased Covid-19

lockdown restrictions globally".

The **Air Freight** sub-sector increased by 1.2% in February, following a decline by 3.0% in January. The underlying data for the sector were mixed in February with strong growth evident in cargo load on planes (+10.4% up compared to January) as well as in global cargo tonne-kilometres (CTK), while declines were noted in the number of unscheduled flights (that are typically chartered for cargo purposes) and in consolidated airport flight movements. The weaker indicators seem to be those that are locally focused as globally the air freight sector is still performing well. Global air cargo demand kicked off with an impressive 18.4% year-on-year growth in January, with the industry indicating the highest annual growth in cargo tonne-kilometres since the 2021 summer season. In January, the Africa–Asia and Middle East–Europe trade lanes experienced exceptional annual growth in international CTGs of 52.5% and 46.1%, respectively.

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) all other major trade lanes maintained their momentum from the past year, exhibiting positive growth across the board, with demand surging especially on Asian and Middle Eastern routes.

The **Storage and Handling** sub-sector of the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index declined by 0.6% on a monthly basis in February, but remains 20.0% above year ago levels. While inventory indicators were mixed in February, total transshipments, both landed and shipped containers, increased notably. Lastly, the transport of liquid fuels via Transnet Pipelines (TPL) declined by 0.8% in February compared to January, and by 5.4% on a quarterly basis, while this sub-component of the Ctrack Transport and Freight Index still tracks higher on an annual basis (+4.5%).

The Transport sector was the star performer in Q4 2023.

The release of South Africa's GDP growth statistics early March revealed that, in-line with the signals of the Ctrack TFI, the transport sector was indeed the star performer in Q4 2023, growing by 2.9% q/q and seasonally adjusted vs. overall GDP growth of a mere 0.1%. The full year real growth for the transport and communication sector realised at 4.3% in 2023, clearly outperforming the broader economy that managed to record real growth of only 0.6%.

"The transport & logistics sector is the backbone of the South African economy. The inability to effectively move products to and from markets come at a cost, which has a negative impact on the whole economy. Not only does it subtract from economic growth, given that products are not timeously available for trading, but the cost of products are typically higher given inefficiencies. An improvement in the efficiencies of the logistics sector could have a positive multiplier impact on the economy as a whole, much needed for South Africa," says Hein Jordt, CEO of Ctrack. □



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FACTS

Over **400** signalised traffic intersections were vandalised on Gauteng roads in 2023.



R30m damage caused by criminals to traffic lights

As if load shedding wasn't causing enough havoc to the smooth flow of traffic in Gauteng via congestion caused by out of order robots, the problem is added to via an alarming surge in vandalism and theft targeted at traffic signals within the province.

The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport is faced with an enormous battle of maintaining and protecting the province's road traffic signals from the rampant theft and vandalism that is occurring. According to the Department, the costs of this battle jumped to over R30-million in 2023 with over 400 signalised traffic intersections having been vandalised.

In certain areas, the Department has taken the interim measure of converting signalised intersections into four-way stops to enhance safety while actively seeking alternative and sustainable methods for maintaining traffic signals.

The criminal activities surrounding these incidents are inflicting economic losses on the province with replacement and repair costs reaching millions. Rebuilding an intersection, on average, can range between R900 000 and R1.5-million. High-profile intersections such as Hendrik Potgieter and Christiaan De Wet are repeatedly vandalised shortly after repairs, incurring costs exceeding R500 000 per repair.

These acts of vandalism and theft

▲ The combination of load-shedding and vandalism have caused havoc at traffic intersections around Gauteng due to robots being out of order. For truckers, it has become a nightmare of standing time and increased cost.

not only disrupt the functioning of essential traffic signal services but also pose a threat to public safety with numerous road crashes having been recorded.

As part of its strategy to combat this problem, the Department is actively engaging in partnerships to create awareness of the hazards associated with these persistent unlawful activities. In line with this, the Department has appealed to members of the public to assist by promptly reporting acts of vandalism as collaborative efforts with law enforcement agencies are underway to address these issues. □

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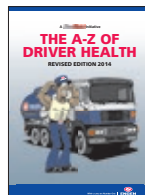
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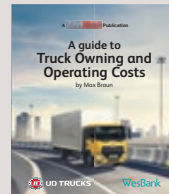
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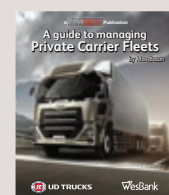
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