

FleetWatch

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South Africa's Leading Online Trucking Magazine



Special Report

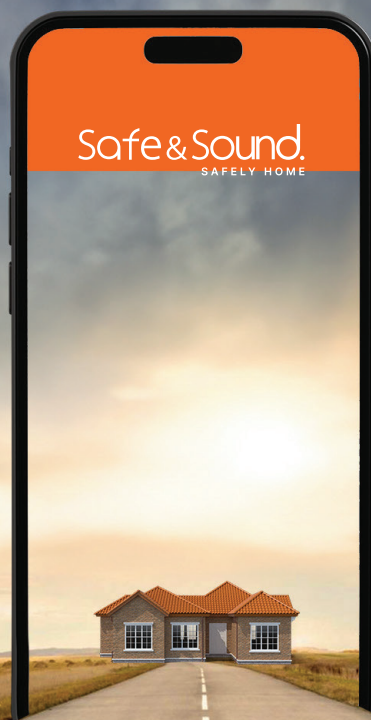
**Trucking
Wellness**

turns

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**Alpine Truck
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the big time
with Sitrak**

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One life
saved is
HUGE

Special Report

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Alpine Truck and Bus been accredited as "a preferred supplier to DPWorld for providing heavy commercial vehicles for their fleet in South Africa over the next three years."



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▲ On the surface, this rig looks OK. However, we urge Traffic Officials not to judge a book by its cover but to take a closer look. When they did, what they found was shocking.

The arrogance of a truck operator who gambles with lives

By
Patrick O'Leary
Managing
Editor,
FleetWatch

Just when we thought it couldn't get any worse, it did. Over the many years of us running - with our partners - the FleetWatch Brake & Tyre Watch training projects for traffic officials, we have come across many unroadworthy trucks. These have obviously made us angry but one truck inspected at last week's event in Bloemfontein, lifted my personal anger to another level.

It was a side-tipper that, when brought in from the road, looked -

well, OK. But, as we always say to the Traffic Officials we are training, do not judge a book by its cover and when we looked below the cover of this 'book', what we saw was shocking. Here was a rig with a full load driving on public roads with absolutely no brakes on the trailers to talk of.

When tested on the brake roller tester, the truck tractor's brakes passed. They were working fine but when it came to the trailer's brakes

- nothing. Not a murmur. This meant that the driver was relying on the truck tractor's brakes to brake the entire combination. And it wasn't as if the reason for the faults were hard to find. They were obvious - and numerous - as the accompanying pictures show and the operator was aware of them as evidenced by the air pipes being cut and tied.

It is absolutely infuriating that some transport operators blatantly disregard road safety, treating ▶ 2

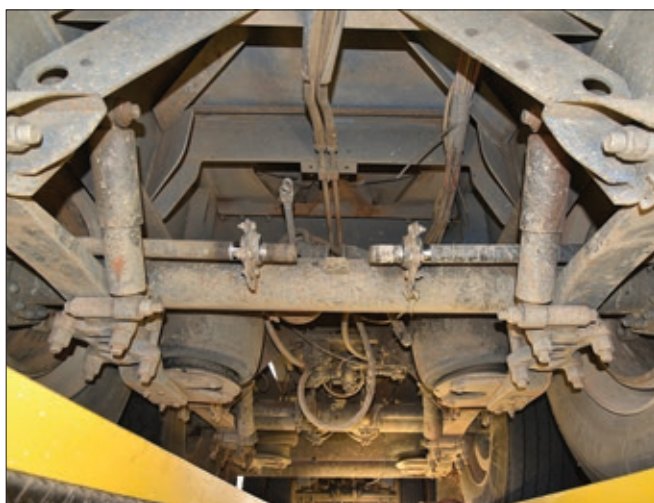
Gemors!



▲ **Slack adjusters** totally incorrectly set meaning brakes settings are all wrong leading to no brakes on this axle.



▲ On the brake roller tester, the truck tractor passed. It had brakes. But there **were no brakes** on the trailers.



▲ **A total gemors!** Cam shafts hanging on both sides with slack adjusters missing thus no connections to the brake boosters – one of which was missing anyway. Note the brake drums on the left and right. They are empty – no brake shoes.



▲ **Missing brake booster** on the left and a pointless one on the right as it is not connected to the slack adjuster which is missing. The slack adjuster is a mechanical link that connects the brake chamber push rod to the brake camshaft. Nothing is connected here as the components are missing. And don't tell us the operator wasn't aware of this.



▲ To cap it all, the **trailer licenses** had **expired**.

◀ And then there was this tyre. Totally **illegal** and **dangerous**.

▼ Note the **gap between the drum** and the brake linings. You can float the Queen Mary through that gap. No brakes.





EDITOR'S COMMENT



► 2 the lives of innocent road users as collateral damage in their ruthless pursuit of profit. What gives them the right to endanger the lives of innocent road users while selfishly prioritizing profits over public safety? Their greed and negligence are unforgivable.

When a truck with faulty – in this case NO brakes - barrels down the highway, is it not a deliberate act of recklessness? Such operators are not just cutting corners - they are wilfully endangering lives for they know their truck is a death trap. What excuse can they possibly offer for such gross negligence? Is saving a few bucks worth the price of shattered families, lifelong injuries, or lives lost in preventable tragedies? Every time such a vehicle takes to the road, it becomes a ticking time bomb, jeopardizing lives and livelihoods.

To these operators, I ask: Do you sleep peacefully knowing your greed leaves carnage in its wake? The blood on your hands is real, even if you choose to ignore it. Such behaviour is not only immoral; it's criminal and deserves the full weight of the law for the cost of a life lost or a family torn apart far outweighs any short-term savings

such operators achieve by cutting corners.

I am so angry – so gatvol at the fact that this operator so blatantly disregards road safety and fails to maintain his vehicles in compliance with legal and safety standards. The anger is amplified by the fact that he is not the only one. What level of arrogance do such operators possess that allows them to gamble with lives – including their drivers' lives - as if the rules don't apply to them? We all share the roads, and no one should have to fear for their life because of an operator's refusal to meet even the most basic standards of safety.

The time for leniency is over. Our roads must not be death traps because of unscrupulous individuals who put profit over human life. Stricter enforcement, harsher penalties and societal outrage are non-negotiable. The law must hold these operators accountable and society must demand better. A zero-tolerance approach to this gross negligence must be instigated. Enough is enough!

Of course, this rig was served with a Discontinuation of Service notice and was taken off the road. May it never return.

Footnote: With 61 Traffic Officials trained in Bloemfontein on the 13th and 14th of November 2024, this Brake & Tyre Watch session made a significant impact! The goal of this campaign is clear: to translate legislation into actionable insights on rig safety. Ensuring roadworthiness for trucks and trailers is more than just compliance; it's about protecting lives. When trucks are safe, drivers, cargo, and other road users benefit, creating safer journeys for everyone. Because one life saved means everything. □

When trucks are safe, drivers, cargo and other road users benefit

Patrick O'Leary
Managing Editor
FleetWatch

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ONE LOOSE BOLT can lead to tragedy

It's only one loose bolt. Why worry about it? Well, the answer is simple but well worth noting. Just one particular loose bolt on a trailer can have catastrophic consequences which could lead to a major road crash writes Patrick O'Leary. Read on....

An example of this was found on a triaxle refrigerated unit which was examined at the FleetWatch Brake & Tyre Watch project held in Bloemfontein recently. It was Reece Drewett who spotted it. Drewett is one of our expert partner trainers from BPW Axles who is in charge of Business Development for BPW for KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Eswatini and Lesotho.

▲ This reefer rig inspected during the FleetWatch Brake & Tyre Watch project in Bloemfontein was 100% OK - except for one bolt that caused it to be parked off.

Initially it was noted that the pivot bolt on the front right axle of the trailer was loose, as shown in the picture number 1. The correct configuration is shown in picture 2 (opposite).

On further investigation, it was noted that not only was the pivot bolt assembly loose, but also the incorrect pivot bolt assembly had been used to repair the unit. Due to the incorrect fitment of the pivot bolt assembly, the bracing plate could not be attached to the head of the pivot bolt assembly.

So what are the possible consequences of this? Drewett explains: "In this case, the incorrect



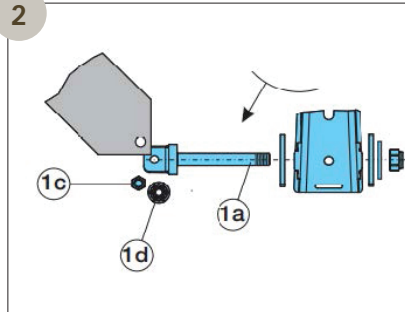
pivot bolt assembly could allow the hanger to tear off the chassis, cause further damage to associated parts and even lead to an accident on the road. In a worst case scenario, the spring pack could come loose and dig into the road causing the trailer to flip – sort of like a pole-vaulter; or the springs could disintegrate when they hit the road and parts could fly into following vehicles,” he says.

South Africa is plagued by rapidly deteriorating road conditions which lead to increased wear on vehicle components. This increases the need for rigorous vehicle maintenance and inspections as lack of maintenance and inspections can result in serious consequences. Correct parts as well as fitment are imperative to maintain the safety and operational value of the product.

And here’s the crunch. Because of the potential dangers that this ‘small on the surface’ fault held for the driver and other road users, the decision was taken by the traffic officials to park it in the holding yard and allow it to continue once a service crew had come to repair it. The rest of the rig was great but it was just this one seemingly ‘small’ issue

“Can I not borrow a spanner and tighten it,” the driver asked irritably. “I have a sensitive load and have to be in Cape Town later tonight. I’m on the clock.”

“We understand that but no,” said Drewett, “It has to be properly



Loose pivot bolt

◀ The pivot bolt on the front right axle of the trailer was loose, as shown in **picture 1**. The correct configuration is shown in **picture 2**.

Bracing plate not allowed

▶ The bracing plate is not attached to the head of the pivot bolt. (Picture number 3). Picture number 4 shows how it should be. The hanger bracket is reinforced by a bracing plate directly by means of an attachment point on the head of a pivot bolt. The bracing plate gives security to the bolt-on hanger allowing it not to tear off the chassis.

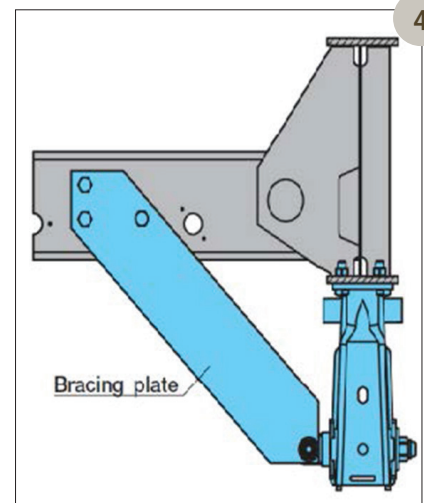
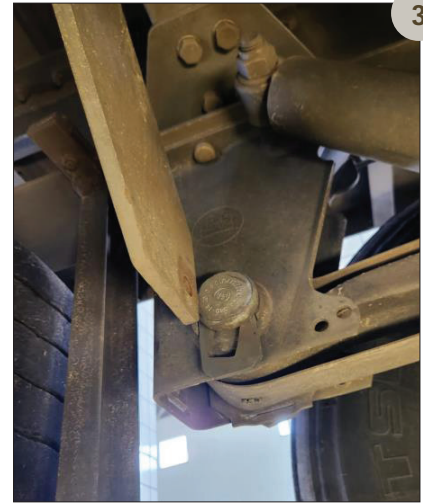
attended to and tightened to the correct torque to avoid it coming loose.”

I then joined the conversation and explained to the driver that it was his and his wife’s life - who was travelling with him – and the lives of other road users that we were concerned about. We explained to him the ramifications of what could happen if the bolt fell off.

“We all have to die sometime,” he replied, looking at me with disdain. Yep – that did it. “Well”, I replied, “you’re not dying on our watch, and neither is anyone else. Go park and contact your company to get a service crew here.”

After he had parked his rig, he came back and was a bit friendlier, understanding where we were coming from.

However, it wasn’t long before one of our team members came to me and said: “That lady in the truck is posting horrible things about all of this on Facebook.” She showed ▶ 8



The spring pack could come loose and dig into the road causing the trailer to flip

Reece Drewett



► me and according to the lady's post, along with a video, we were basically being totally unreasonable and holding up their journey and some other nonsense like that. It got to me, especially since the driver – the husband – had calmed down and was now on side.

I went and spoke to her. She was in the cab. "Did your husband explain why you are parked here? Did he explain to you that you are driving in a truck that could have a fatal crash? Did he explain to you that we actually care about you and that's why we doing what we're doing? Did he explain to you that we don't want you to die in some horrible crash on your way to Cape Town?"

You are not dying on our watch and neither is anyone else

Patrick O'Leary

"Well yes, he did," she answered. "So why are you posting rubbish on Facebook about how unreasonable we all are?"

"I'm sorry. Must I take it off?"

"Please do. We're on your side. We're not your enemy." She deleted the post. We smiled at each other and departed friends – I think!

It never ceases to amaze me that so many people are always moaning about the cops not doing their jobs. And then, when they do their job properly, they are the bad guys. Eieesh!

Will all operators and workshop staff please take note of this lesson. It's the attention to detail than often distinguishes between success and failure – and when you're operating on the road, that can translate to the difference between life and death. □

A *FleetWatch* Publication

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QUALITY OF LIFE

- Road safety
- Competition
- Cost of logistics
- Road condition

HEAVY VEHICLE TRANSPORT

- Transport efficiency
- Cost of logistics
- Competition
- Crude oil price
- Optimum road maintenance

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

- Road condition
- Congestion
- Energy consumption
- Emissions

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

- Transport efficiency
- Cost of logistics
- Competition
- Crude oil price
- Optimum road maintenance

Quality of Life

It is a well-known reality that our national roads present a considerable risk to road users. South Africa's poor road network with regard to road safety means that countries like our own, which are not even the most developed, are at a disadvantage when it comes to the quality of life of its citizens. We are not alone in this regard. Heavy vehicle crashes or incidents resulting in fatalities, injuries and loss of productivity which drive up the cost of logistics. These incidents also have a negative impact on the quality of life of its citizens.

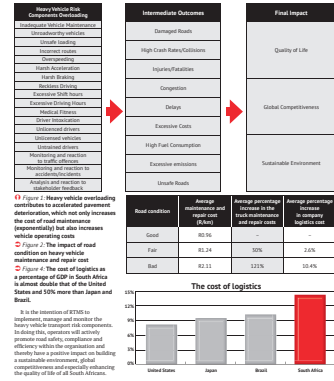
National Competitiveness

Being logistics costs as a result of inefficient operations, cross-border South Africa compares to compete on the global stage. Business loss market due to global competitors and this affects economic growth with the consequent loss of potential employment and development activities.

Sustainable Environment

Poor road conditions not only impact negatively on vehicle operating costs but also increase wear and tear on the road itself. In addition, heavy vehicles that are not operated in a responsible manner (e.g. excessive speeds, harsh acceleration, excessive idling) can lead to an increase in energy consumption and fuel use, which in turn, affects a broader and healthy respect to the environment.

Let's now take a look at the various risk components of heavy vehicle transport that impact on various stakeholders and the measures required to improve the quality of life of all South Africans.



**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	Nothorn 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%
May 2024	eThekwin, KZN	4	3	75%
July 2024	Gqeberha, Eastern Cape	5	5	100%
Nov 2024	Bloemfontein	4	4	100%
TOTALS		811	563	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.**

MAIN PARTNERS**AD-HOC PARTNERS**



KZN Authorities set to crack down on all unroadworthy trucks

Section 49-NRTA

This places the **legal responsibility** on operators to ensure their vehicles are roadworthy and their operations **prioritise** public safety

Truck operators, take note: a crackdown is coming. Following an urgent high-level meeting in Pietermaritzburg, KZN Traffic Authorities, in collaboration with the Prosecuting Authority, have announced a Zero Tolerance approach toward unroadworthy trucks operating on critical sections of the N3.

Following the meeting, *FleetWatch* was contacted by a spokesperson for the group and asked to spread the word in the industry that this intensified enforcement will focus on the Towns Hill to Ashburton stretch and the Cliffdale-Keyridge area during the Festive Season and beyond. The decision comes after a series of deadly truck crashes in N3 construction zones, including a recent incident involving a truck with non-functional trailer brakes. Tragically, the driver lost his life in this crash.

Authorities have warned that operators violating Section 49 of the National Road Traffic Act (RTA) will face severe consequences.



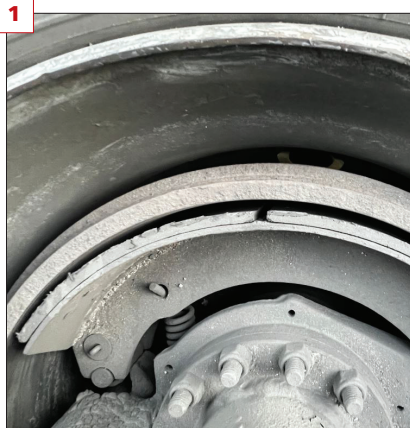
Section 49 places legal responsibility on operators to ensure their vehicles are roadworthy and their operations prioritize public safety. It also mandates proper oversight of drivers, including compliance with professional driving permit (PrDP) requirements.

Failure to comply could lead to the implementation of Section 50, under which an operator's license can be revoked by the MEC. "If necessary, we will use every tool at our disposal to get negligent operators off our roads. Losing an operator's license means being out of business. We are prepared to take that step for the sake of public safety," said a spokesperson.

Every truck involved in a crash, will be impounded for a comprehensive inspection by a certified vehicle examiner.

As part of this clampdown, every truck involved in a crash will be impounded for a comprehensive inspection by certified vehicle examiners. Where violations of Section 49 are confirmed, criminal charges will be laid against the truck owner. "The recent chaos on our roads, particularly in construction zones, is unacceptable. Enough is enough," the spokesperson added. "Truck owners who fail to comply with roadworthiness standards will face the consequences. Trucks that don't meet the required standards could remain off the road for an extended period."

Operators are urged to take immediate action to ensure their fleets meet all legal requirements. The safety of all road users is at stake, and authorities are resolute in their commitment to restoring order on KZN roads. □



The final straw

The accompanying pictures show a recent truck crash on the N3 - in which the driver was killed - which acted as the final straw leading to the decision to embark on a total crackdown on unroadworthy trucks on sections of N3. On inspection, the trailer was found to have totally defective brakes. Note the gaps in pictures 1 and 2 between the drum and the brake linings (no brakes) and the empty brake drums in pictures 3 and 4 showing no brake shoes fitted. There are no working brakes here. It is this type of maintenance neglect that has led to the KZN authorities implementing a Zero Tolerance campaign to rid the roads of unroadworthy trucks.



WARNING

Truck owners who fail to comply with road worthiness standards will face the consequences



Alpine Truck & Bus hits the big time with Sitrak

Alpine Truck and Bus, as a major distributor of the Chinese brand Sitrak, has made remarkable inroads into the South African market, establishing a firm foothold in an industry long dominated by European giants. The journey, which began with careful testing and deliberate planning, has resulted in a success story of sustainable growth and customer satisfaction.

For Bruce Dickson, managing director and shareholder of Alpine Truck and Bus and his partner Marcus Geyer, a former managing director of MAN Truck & Bus – as was Dickson – it's been a heady ride since 2022 when they first took on the Sitrak brand after having been appointed an official distributor by Chinese holding company Sinotruk.

BUILDING A FUTURE

“The first time I saw the truck was in July 2022 and I knew it held great promise for our market as it was based on European design and specification. It is really a European truck that is manufactured in China so I knew that mix would give us a combination of best quality at a competitive price, something South African transporters would find highly attractive,” says Dickson.

They decided to take the leap but then had to wait for stock to come in. While waiting, they decided to use the time by working with Sinotruk engineers in China to make sure the specification was correct for the South Africa market. “The co-operation we received from them was truly amazing. Every request was taken seriously and acted on,” says Dickson.

Partner first

“Since our first interaction, we have enjoyed an excellent relationship with our Sinotruk colleagues – both in China and locally. They see us as a partner, not just as a dealer and that is critical as we are able to work hand-in-hand with them,” he adds.

One example of a changed spec to suit local conditions was the incorporation of header tanks being fitted separately to the radiator. “Because it is mounted separately, it doesn’t vibrate and crack. This has also allowed for the radiator to be raised higher in the chassis thus eliminating the risk of damaging the bottom of the radiator on rough roads such as encountered in many countries up north. This is an important feature for cross border transporters where poor road conditions pose challenges,” says Dickson.

Leading the change

► Brandon Barth (left), head of sales at Alpine Truck and Bus with Bruce Dickson, Managing Director, both driving sales but with long term sustainability as the core motivation.

Once units were received from China, they didn’t immediately put them up for sale. “We weren’t interested in selling the truck until we had tested it. Yes, we could have just discounted the units, put them in the market and gone for volume sales. The favourable price would have enabled us to do that with some measure of success. ► 14

We are not just selling trucks. It's about building a sustainable future.

Bruce Dickson



BUILDING A FUTURE

► 13 Instead, we decided to take it slowly and make sure we had all our ducks in a row, not only in terms of up-front sales but, more importantly, after sales service and building a strong team to look after our customers. We decided from the outset that we were in for the long term rather than a quick ride based on price."

Bold move

They thus embarked on a meticulous nine-month testing phase with DP World, a global logistics leader, as well as other transporters. It was a bold - and costly - move as Alpine Truck and Bus supplied Sitrak trucks to DP World's diverse operations, ranging from city logistics to long-haul routes. But it paid off for, according

We decided from the outset that we were in for the long term rather than a quick ride based on price.

Bruce Dickson

to Dickson, the results exceeded expectations.

"The vehicle performed exceptionally well wherever we put it and shone in terms of fuel consumption, productivity and reliability," he says.

From the rugged terrain of the Eastern Cape to the highways

connecting Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, the Sitrak truck delivered consistent good results and this led to the first significant batch of orders, marking the truck's debut in South Africa.

This measured approach, according to Dickson, was rooted in a long-term vision. "We aren't just selling trucks; we're ensuring that every unit we place in the market is suitable for its task and is backed by robust after-sales service and technical support. It's about building a sustainable future."

In line with this vision, Alpine Truck and Bus prioritized after-sales service, a critical factor in winning customer trust by partnering with RNR, a call center that provides nationwide support for Sitrak customers.



BUILDING A FUTURE

Peace of mind

"We've given customers a list of accredited service dealers across South Africa and if they need assistance, they simply call a single number and the issue is resolved. This proactive approach ensures peace of mind and builds long-term customer loyalty," says Dickson, adding that every sale made is supported by robust planning, training, and resources.

"And this applies to every customer - whether it's a big corporate who orders 100 trucks or a customer who buys just one truck. We treat them all the same and have the same respect and desire to keep them all happy."

This philosophy has paid off. By next year March 2025, Alpine Truck and Bus expects to have sold close to 300 units to large corporates and an additional 120 units to retail customers - a remarkable achievement given the short time frame. "We've sold at least 60 units into retail operations just since June this year," said Dickson, adding that the company has also penetrated new markets with customers like Banana World and Kempston.

But here's a real accolade. In October this year, Alpine Truck and Bus was notified that they had been accredited as "a preferred supplier to DPWorld for providing heavy commercial vehicles for their fleet in South Africa over the next three years." This news came as an absolute endorsement to Alpine Truck and Bus' philosophy.

Of course, while a competitive price has certainly helped, the features on Sitrak trucks also come into play with standard features including safety cameras, high cabs, fridges and auxiliary air conditioning systems. These features, especially the auxiliary aircon, offer a distinct advantage in Africa's hot climate, ensuring comfort for drivers.

On the safety front, the top-of-the-range Sitrak C9 model comes equipped with advanced safety features, including blind spot detection, adaptive cruise control,



and can be supplied to Euro 5 or Euro 6 emissions standards.

By deliberately avoiding chasing high sales volumes in the short term and instead focussing on quality, reliability, and long-term sustainability, Alpine Truck and Bus has laid the foundation for further growth.

While the current focus remains on solidifying the brand's presence in South Africa, long-term plans include entering other Sub-Saharan African markets. However, this expansion will be pursued cautiously to ensure that the brand's high standards of service and support are maintained.

The Alpine Truck and Bus/Sitrak story is one of strategic execution, high-quality products and unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction. In the words of Alpine Truck and Bus's managing director:

"In my 40 years in the industry, I've never been so excited about a truck. This product just keeps impressing me. It's the future of trucking in South Africa. Dare I say, it's a game changer for the local trucking industry - and we're solidly in the game?" □

In the beginning

▲ This could go down one day as a bit of an historical photograph as it was on September 13, 2023 that Bruce Dickson (right), managing director of Alpine Truck and Bus and his partner, Marcus Geyer (centre), both former MDs of MAN Truck & Bus, met with *FleetWatch* to go public with the news of them having taken on the Sitrak distributorship. Head of sales, Brandon Barth (left) was also there. Their plans and aspirations outlined at that breakfast meeting have been far surpassed by the success achieved in the market since we shared some bacon and eggs together on that fine morning.

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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AND
INNOVATION**



DAIMLER TRUCK
Southern Africa



DAIMLER TRUCK

Southern Africa



CONGRATULATIONS ON REACHING THIS INCREDIBLE MILESTONE OF 25 YEARS!

Wishing you continued success and prosperity in the years to come.



Driving the well-being of the industry.

DRIVING THE WELL-BEING OF THE INDUSTRY



Musa Ndlovu
National Secretary
National Bargaining
Council for the
Road Freight and
Logistics Industry

FOREWORD

IT IS with immense pride and gratitude that I pen this foreword to mark the 25th anniversary of Trucking Wellness, an organization that has become synonymous with excellence in promoting the health and wellness of South Africa's road freight and logistics industry.

When Trucking Wellness was originally established, it was in response to a critical need: to address the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on the trucking industry. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by truck drivers, whose long hours and mobility often put them at heightened risk, we set out to provide targeted education, testing, and treatment. What began as a bold vision to tackle one of the most pressing health crises of our time has grown into a comprehensive network of wellness clinics offering a wide range of health services.

Today, our work extends far beyond the trucking industry. Our clinics, strategically located along major transport routes, now serve not only truck drivers but also surrounding communities, ensuring access to primary healthcare, chronic disease management and wellness programs.

This milestone would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our sponsors. Their belief in our mission and their generous contributions have been the lifeblood of our work. To our sponsors, past and present: thank you for sharing our vision and enabling us to turn it into reality. Your partnership has made it possible to transform lives, strengthen communities, and support the economic backbone of South Africa – the trucking industry.

As we celebrate 25 years of Trucking Wellness, we do so with gratitude for the journey thus far and excitement for the road ahead. Here's to another 25 years of world-class service and leadership in health and wellness.

Musa Ndlovu

Learn more about Trucking Wellness



**WATCH
THE VIDEO**



**Trucking Wellness is more than a
healthcare service**
<https://youtu.be/Oag8fNTToPBA>



**WATCH
THE VIDEO**



**Trucking Wellness services are
available via mobile clinics**
<https://youtu.be/k8MkIQYOIxM>



**WATCH
THE VIDEO**



**Trucking Wellness – no person is
left without care and support**
<https://youtu.be/1bDVcGeQ6So>

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS • PARTNERS



DAIMLER TRUCK
Southern Africa



Maretha Gerber,
CEO and President,
Daimler Truck
Southern Africa

KEY FOCUSES ARE ON DRIVER SAFETY AND WELLNESS

DAIMLER TRUCK Southern Africa proudly congratulates Trucking Wellness on their 25th anniversary. Driver safety and wellness are key strategic focuses for DTSA, and through the Trucking Wellness Programme, we have created immense value not only for our customers but also for the entire trucking community and all road users over the decades. Healthy truck drivers are safer truck drivers, making South African roads safer for everyone. We deeply appreciate your contributions and tireless efforts in this regard and wish you continued success for the next 25 years." Maretha Gerber, President & Group CEO, DTSA

Maretha Gerber



Thania Dhoogra
Chief Operating Officer
N3TC

CLINICS ON N3 ENSURE HEALTHCARE FOR DRIVERS

THE PARTNERSHIP between Trucking Wellness and N3TC ensures that access to effective primary healthcare services is within reach of our vital trucking sector and some of the most vulnerable communities along the N3 Toll Route. The N3 Wellness Clinics have been instrumental in positively impacting on the lives of thousands of drivers and vulnerable community members in a safe and convenient manner, on a daily basis. The success of the road freight industry relies heavily on effective healthcare to ensure the well-being of truck drivers, enabling them to consistently meet the demands and tight deadlines of the freight and logistics industry.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Trucking Wellness who have invested in the well-being of truck drivers and their aligned communities over the past 25 years. Your efforts have made a tangible difference and have helped to educate and save many lives. We are proud to be celebrating this milestone with you.

Thania Dhoogra

DRIVING THE WELL-BEING OF THE INDUSTRY



DRIVEN BY PASSION

IN TODAY'S fast paced and competitive work environment, the health and well-being of employees can often take a back seat. It is with great pride that we, at Reef Tankers, present this foreword, reflecting our ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of our community and the Truck Drivers who form the backbone of our industry.

Since 2011, we have been honoured to serve as the proud sponsor of the Roodekop Trucking Wellness Clinic. More than just a facility, the Roodekop Trucking Wellness Clinic embodies our unwavering dedication to fostering wellness, providing invaluable access to vital healthcare services, wellness advice, and raising essential awareness about health matters. It is a testament to our belief that every individual - regardless of their profession or background - deserves access to quality healthcare and support.

Investing in employee's health and well-being is essential for creating productive and a successful working environment. By addressing challenges, and implementing effective strategies, transport organizations can reap numerous benefits, including improved productivity, decreased absenteeism, and enhanced job satisfaction.

As we look ahead, our commitment to Trucking Wellness remains steadfast. We are determined to continue making a meaningful impact in the lives of those who visit the Wellness Clinic, ensuring that they receive the care and assistance they need to thrive on the road and beyond.

Vic Ferreira
Managing Director
Reef Tankers (Pty) Ltd



▲ The Wellness Centre at Reef Tankers was opened in 2011 and operates 5 days a week with a full-time nurse.



REEF TANKERS LAUNCHES

FIRST DEDICATED CNG PRIME MOVER-EXPANDING PARTNERSHIP WITH CNG HOLDINGS



REEF TANKERS (PTY) LTD

A renowned transport service provider specialising in the transportation of dangerous goods, fuels, petro-chemicals and gas. With over two decades of experience, Reef Tankers is recognised for its commitment to excellence, safety, and reliability in delivering critical cargo across various industries. Aiming to continue to be a leader in the field, continuously portraying and believing in its commitment to its slogan: **DRIVEN BY PASSION.**

CNG HOLDINGS (PTY) LTD

A privately owned energy company operating in Southern Africa. Directly aimed and suited for all industrial applications, power generation and fleet owners wishing to switch and save by using Compressed Natural Gas to lower the carbon impact on the environment and utilising CNG as the **FUEL OF THE FUTURE.**

SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT

In an exciting new development in sustainable logistics, CNG Holdings (PTY) LTD, a leader in Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) solutions, and Reef Tankers (PTY) LTD are excited to announce the deployment of Reef Tankers' first dedicated CNG-powered delivery truck, named Tswelopele. Originally a demonstration model G410 Scania, this truck—whose Setswana name means “progress” or “development”—marks a significant milestone in their three-year partnership and underlines both companies' commitment to greener energy solutions and sustainable transport.

The CNG Prime Mover, recently acquired by Reef Tankers,

supports their on-going shift toward sustainable energy, with plans already in place to expand their fleet with more dedicated CNG vehicles. “Launching this Prime Mover into our delivery fleet symbolises our dedication to pushing sustainable energy boundaries,” comments Josua le Roux, CEO of CNG Holdings.

“Our partnership with Reef Tankers now not only improves gas accessibility but also demonstrates our active role in reducing environmental impact through innovative, eco-friendly logistics. This will assist to reduce our carbon footprint dramatically in the hard to abate industries like logistics and road transport as a proven alternative and technology in the logistics sector.”

The dedicated CNG Prime Mover complements CNG Holdings' state-of-the-art tube trailers, ensuring that each delivery is both environmentally conscious and reliably safe. Through this initiative, both companies are partnering in paving the way for broader adoption of alternative fuel solutions within the industrial logistics sector.

Vic Ferreira, Managing Director of Reef Tankers, adds, “With CNG fuelling one of our prime movers, we are proud to set a new benchmark in sustainable transport. This CNG Asset aligns perfectly with our core values and vision for safer, cleaner, and more responsible delivery practices.”

Both companies anticipate that this eco-friendly innovation will inspire more sustainable transport initiatives across the logistics industry, demonstrating the viability of CNG as an efficient and eco-friendly fuel source with proven commercial infrastructure and application across the Gauteng province.

Trucking Wellness marks 25 Years of driving Health and Safety for truck drivers

With 2024 marking the 25th anniversary of Trucking Wellness, *FleetWatch* correspondent Paul Collings examines how vision, collaboration, innovation and dedication continue to transform the lifeblood of trucking in South Africa.



Imagine this scenario. The year is 1997 and a mysterious contaminant has infected the diesel supply chain, causing the engines of thousands of freight-carrying trucks in South Africa to seize irreparably. A 'Logistics Crisis' ensues and our nation's fledgling democratic economy, out of sheer necessity and political expediency, receives immediate and significant financial support from public and private entities, both local and offshore, to rescue its 'Logistics Sector'.

Now, picture a second scenario, where the dire threat to the logistics industry is a mysterious and fatal infection affecting thousands of long-haul truck drivers!

While the first scenario never actually occurred, the second one did! South Africa's

trucking industry during the 1990s was facing a severe existential threat as HIV/AIDS decimated the ranks of its professional driver pool.

Did swift and substantial financial aid come to the rescue back then? Not by a long shot!

Elevating Activism to Pro-Activism

Despite the South African government's establishment and funding of the National AIDS Plan (NAP) in the mid-1990s to create mass awareness of the disease amongst South Africa's diverse communities, there was no targeted intervention for truck drivers where HIV-positive status was estimated to be a staggering 56%.

FleetWatch publisher and editor,

1999 - 2010

- Trucking Wellness registers an estimated 15-25% improvement in overall health outcomes for truck drivers by 2010.
- Awareness education programmes reach almost 450 000 individuals.
- Approximately 155 000 patients registered with nearly 52 000 treated for STIs
- More than 11 million condoms distributed.
- Over 700 people sign on for the Wellness Fund Treatment Programme.

In 1999, the HIV infection rate amongst long-haul truck drivers and sex workers was well above 50%. In 2024, the figure stands at 1,88%

Tertius Wessels,
Managing Director,
Corridor Empowerment
Project

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

As NBCRFLI, we pride ourselves on the contributions Trucking Wellness has and continues to make safeguarding the health and well-being of employees which, in turn, keeps the wheels of the trucking industry turning. Our commitment to the welfare of industry employees is demonstrated by the introduction of the Wellness Fund Health Plan which offers affordable quality private healthcare and comprehensive chronic disease and HIV management programmes for NBCRFLI members who are diagnosed at Trucking Wellness clinics.

Musa Ndlovu,
NBCRFLI National Secretary.

Patrick O'Leary (who was part of the industry lobby that sounded the alarm about the 'silent killer' inside South Africa's road freight sector), reflects on those stressful years: "The trucking industry realised in the 1990s that it would have to mobilise its own resources behind some initiative that would target truck drivers - and the industry at large - in a concentrated effort outside of the NAP and outside any other initiatives."

With their collective voice finally being heard in parliament as the Millennium approached, South African road freight companies, trade unions and the South African Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS (Sabcoha) joined forces with the transport industry-funded National Bargaining Council for the Road Freight and Logistics Industry (NBCRFLI) to form a proactive intervention called Trucking Against AIDS, launched late 1999.

The primary objective of Trucking Against AIDS was to create HIV/AIDS awareness among long-distance truck drivers and sex workers. The goal was to reduce the number of new HIV infections and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on road freight industry employees, their spouses and the broader community.

Today, in 2024, at the milestone of the 25th anniversary of Trucking Wellness (which became the official brand name of Trucking Against AIDS in 2008), NBCRFLI National Secretary, Musa Ndlovu, describes the perennial challenges facing South Africa long-haul truck drivers:

"Each day in the life of a long-distance truck driver involves incredibly demanding hours, travelling long distances with prolonged time away from home and loved ones. Loneliness encourages many drivers, married or single, to find comfort on the side of the road - generally in the arms of a sex worker. The consequences are devastating, with STI's and HIV/AIDS being rapidly spread from one truck stop to another."

Implementing a Vital Vision

The team behind Trucking Against AIDS/Trucking Wellness had a clear and challenging vision to take HIV/AIDS education and treatment to the workplace,

▼ Wellness Clinics provide diagnosis, treatment, care & support of primary health problems, STI diagnosing & treatment and HIV counselling and testing.



DRIVING THE WELL-BEING OF THE INDUSTRY

which for long-haul truckers is the network of national logistics corridors and highways.

Within the scope of the vision was the establishment of static clinics at reputable truck stops, staffed with professional healthcare practitioners, equipped with the materials and tools necessary to counsel, test and treat clients affected by HIV/AIDS.

The first Trucking Wellness Roadside Wellness Centre was established in 2000 in Beaufort West in the Western Cape. An old shipping container was converted into a state-of-the-art clinic allowing for an innovative and proactive approach in the testing, counselling and prevention of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

Tertius Wessels, Managing Director of Corridor Empowerment Project, which project manages Trucking Wellness (under the auspices of the NBCRFLI), has been at the coalface of the programme since its inception, helping to steer funds, equipment and skills to where they are most needed.

"It wasn't easy getting truck drivers to use our first clinic. The stigma around being HIV-positive was so strong back then that drivers would rather go untreated than face the humiliation of being recognised as HIV-positive. When we invited sex workers and community members in the area to make use of our free and confidential voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) services, the atmosphere of fear and distrust evaporated and truck drivers, sex workers and community members began to undergo counselling and treatment at the clinic," Wessels recalls.

With the Beaufort West clinic providing the necessary 'proof-of-concept', Trucking Wellness was fast drawing positive attention from not only the national long-haul truck driver community but from the transport and logistics industry itself, including leading truck fleets, the Road Freight Association (RFA) and truck OEMs.

"We realised very early on that the services we provided to stop HIV/AIDS from spreading, which included the distribution of free condoms, needed to be expanded to include chronic medical conditions that prevail in the long-distance truck driver community – conditions like

diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels," says Wessels.

"The need to address these health issues was as important as HIV treatment. A driver suffering from a chronic illness is hardly safe behind the wheel of a heavy-duty rig, nor is he doing himself and his family any favours by not seeking treatment for his ailments."

It was obvious back in the early 2000s that in order to expand Trucking Wellness's spectrum of services, "a large capital injection" from the trucking industry via the NBCRFLI (and potentially from Government) would be needed.

With industry and governmental eyes closely watching the progress of Trucking Wellness at the Beaufort West clinic, the financial assistance required to grow Trucking Wellness into a world-class healthcare network arrived relatively swiftly.

Expanding the Footprint and Spectrum of Services

In 2003, the RFA boosted the coffers of the NBCRFLI with a donation to help finance two new Roadside Wellness Centres – on the N4 at the Komatipoort border post and on the N1 at Hanover. ► 10



► Villiers 2022: Nutri-go porridge was handed out to drivers as an incentive to get tested.

2011 - 2018

- **2011** - Trucking Wellness purchases 10 new Sprinter vans
- **2012** - Participated in International World AIDS conference in Washington DC
- **2013** - Trucking Wellness nurses attend Human trafficking workshop
- **2014** - Implementation of the Fleet Owner Workplace Wellness Programme
- **2015** - Trucking Wellness buys five new LCVs
- **2016** - Seven Wellness Clinics fully revamped
- **2017** - Cloud-based reporting system introduced to Wellness Mobiles
- **2018** - Partnership formed with FleetWatch's "Your Truck Your Gym"

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

The Trucking Wellness Programme is an advocate of change... encouraging people to change mind-sets and values in making healthier lifestyle changes.

That same year, Daimler Chrysler (as it was known then) donated a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van to enable Trucking Wellness practitioners to visit truck fleet depots, exhibitions and various events related to transport and HIV/AIDS awareness.

A sizeable contribution to both the NBCRFLI and Trucking Wellness came from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) amounting to R65-million from 2004 to 2010.

“The financial support Trucking Wellness received from SIDA helped immensely to expand our spectrum of healthcare services beyond HIV/AIDS,” Wessels explains. “Trucking Wellness could now provide testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), tuberculosis (TB), diabetes, and hypertension.

SIDA's backing also helped establish additional wellness centres, enabling more truck drivers and logistics workers to access healthcare along the country's major trucking routes.

Mercedes-Benz SA, (now Daimler Truck Southern Africa), had contributed four vans and a caravan to the Mobile Wellness fleet, and pledged its ongoing financial support for the programme.

In 2008, toll Concessionaire, N3TC also began supporting Trucking Wellness and in 2024, continues to do so. Thania Dhoogra, Chief Operating Officer of N3TC states:

“N3TC's partnership with Trucking Wellness has been instrumental in unlocking access to quality primary healthcare by communities along the N3 Toll Route for more than two decades. The N3 Wellness Centres have continued to positively impact thousands of drivers and some of the most vulnerable communities in a safe and convenient way on a daily basis.”

In 2003, Government promulgated the Wellness Fund (which drew monthly contributions from truck fleet employers and employees), handing the management of the road freight industry's contributions to the NBCRFLI. The Department of Health (DoH), Department of Transport



▲ 2020 – Mask handout during the Covid-2019 epidemic



▲ Mooi River World Aids Day event - 2022.



▲ Supergroup vaccination roll-out to truck drivers - 2021



▲ Truck drivers practicing social distancing in 2020.

DRIVING THE WELL-BEING OF THE INDUSTRY



(DoT) and Department of Labour (DoL) were getting behind Trucking Wellness in meaningful ways too, while state-owned enterprises also put their resources behind Trucking Wellness in its formative years, including the national roads agency, SANRAL and the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC).

Other government departments also put their weight behind Trucking Wellness, helping it evolve into an holistic transport industry healthcare programme. The DoT supported Trucking Wellness by highlighting the importance of driver health in maintaining road safety and partnering with Trucking Wellness on campaigns that linked wellness to safe driving practices.

The DoT worked with the trucking industry to establish regulations that encouraged employers to ensure that drivers had access to wellness services, with a view to promoting a safer, healthier workforce in the road freight sector.

The DoL and the NBCRFLI worked together to develop health and safety standards that aligned with Trucking Wellness's goals, effectively ensuring compliance with labour laws and workplace health standards within the road freight industry, most notably, those regarding driver access to healthcare services."

The impressive and sustainable momentum Trucking Wellness had achieved in just 10 years (including a

▲ Ventersburg Wellness Clinic relocated to Shell Ultra City, Kroonstad, N1 North Eastm Bypass, Kroonstad – 26 August 2024.

growing international reputation for its pioneering work in primary healthcare delivery) was based on the efficacy of the Trucking Wellness concept of taking primary healthcare directly to the highway, a business model essentially, substantiated by year-on-year statistical evidence of a decline in HIV/AIDS infections and chronic illnesses amongst Trucking Wellness clients, be they truck drivers, sex workers or community members.

Forging Long-term Partnerships with Industry Leaders

During its first decade of operations, Trucking Wellness attracted significant industry support from companies like Mercedes-Benz South Africa (now Daimler Truck Southern Africa), N3TC, Imperial Logistics (now DP World), Engen, UTI and TNT International. While their financial contributions helped grow the programme's footprint and capacity, it was in the period from 2010 to 2019 that formal, long-term partnerships with trucking industry leaders were forged, further solidifying the Trucking Wellness operational base. ► 12

2019 - 2024

- **2019** - 22 Mobile staff participated in HIV Counselling & Testing quality assurance training facilitated by the FRD.
- **2020/21/22** - Dispense 10 000 COVID-19 vaccinations in Gauteng.
- **2023** - Annual Trucking Wellness workshop covers gender-specific cancers, male sexual health, epilepsy, binge drinking and depression.
- **2024** - Development of a Client Engagement Survey aimed at gathering feedback from clients regarding their experience at Wellness Centres.

▼ FleetWatch Golf Day Activation 2024



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Four of our key account customers successfully implemented the Fleet Owners Workplace Wellness Programme in 2023 where 31 436 people received healthcare information and education, 20 096 truck drivers received primary healthcare treatment, 22 920 HIV tests with counselling were conducted and 458 workplaces were visited, providing 15 451 employees access to onsite health screenings. These are impressive figures!

Maretha Gerber, President
and CEO of Daimler Truck
Southern Africa

During 2010, Mercedes-Benz SA (MBSA) cemented its partnership with Trucking Wellness with a signed partnership agreement and a donation of R3.5-million. In 2011, Trucking Wellness purchased 10 new Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans for its mobile fleet and in 2015, procured two Mercedes-Benz Vito vans and five Ford Ranger bakkies.

A key component of the partnership between Trucking Wellness and Daimler Truck Southern Africa was the launch of the Fleet Owner Workplace Wellness Programme in 2014, which saw the Mobile Centre fleet visiting key MBSA customer sites, offering the full spectrum of primary healthcare services and working with customer fleets and MBSA driver trainers to include the Trucking Wellness educational material into existing driver training programmes.

In 2011, Reef Tankers joined the Trucking Wellness family by funding a Roadside Wellness Centre at Reef Truck

Stop at Roodekop on the N1, south of Johannesburg.

The partnership is going strong to this day; testimony to the mission-critical role Trucking Wellness plays in South Africa's trucking industry.

"Reef Tankers is passionate about Trucking Wellness. The clinic at Reef Truck Stop continues to make a difference in the lives of community members of Leondale, as well as the thousands of drivers who visit our facility," says Vic Ferreira, Executive Managing Director of Reef Tankers.

Using Data to Drive the Future of Trucking Wellness

In 2015, Corridor Empowerment Project formed a Public-Private Partnership with clothing and textile workers' union SACTWU's Worker Health Program to enhance Trucking Wellness' infrastructure via new Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data

▼ Pool Transport implemented the Fleet Owners Workplace Wellness Programme – Tertius Wessels of Trucking Wellness (second left) congratulates the Pool Transport team.



By 2010, Trucking Wellness had 21 fixed wellness clinics strategically located on all the major logistics corridors in South Africa, with a permanent staff contingent of 42 at the Wellness Centres, six drivers for the Mobile Centres and 10 head-office staff members in Gauteng.

DRIVING THE WELL-BEING OF THE INDUSTRY

collection tools installed at all Roadside Wellness Centres.

As more advanced data collection and monitoring tools have entered the Wellness Centres and Mobile units over the years, Trucking Wellness has been able to deliver accurate statistics that underscore the effectiveness of the programme.

The Trucking Wellness 2023 Annual Report reflects a steady drop in the rate of infections, and thus treatments, among its target groups: “The percentage of patients receiving STI treatment at the Trucking Wellness Roadside Wellness Centres has reflected a constant year-on-year decrease over the past two decades, starting at 44% in 2002 and reaching 6,73% in 2023.”

The period from 2020 to 2024 saw Trucking Wellness support the national COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Gauteng but the effect of the lockdowns did see numbers of visitors to the Wellness Centres decline. However, today Wessels and his team are back in full swing and ready for a challenging future.

“Over the 25 years of Trucking Wellness, we’ve treated close on one million clients and witnessed the critical risk to driver health shift from HIV to



▲ CEO and President Martha Gerber (3rd from left) and team members embarked on a Roadshow starting at Roodekop Trucking Wellness Clinic followed by stops at clinics at Villiers and Harrismith.

The promulgation of the Wellness Fund was a pivotal milestone for Trucking Wellness, giving us the financial security we needed to grow the programme with confidence.



▲ Visiting our Roadside Wellness or Mobile Clinics could change your life.

our services accordingly and the results have been encouraging. However, there are always new health risks facing society and of course, truck drivers who conduct cross-border duties are particularly vulnerable to new viral strains.

“All of us at Trucking Wellness are sincerely grateful for all the support we’ve received from our partners over the years and humbly partners other road freight industry stakeholders to join forces with us to help extend our reach into the Southern African region.

“Additional funding will enable us to establish an international footprint and implement an advanced wireless driver health monitoring system designed to identify diseases before they become difficult to manage,” Wessels concludes.

FleetWatch applauds Trucking Wellness for its groundbreaking efforts over 25 remarkable years. If tenacity means anything to us truckers, it is embodied in the efforts of Trucking Wellness which embraces the truism – “Your truck driver is your #1 asset!” □



▲ Driver Symposium 2024

Driving Health and Wellness on the N3 Toll Route



THE LIVES OF long-distance truck drivers are incredibly challenging, with demanding hours and extended periods away from home and loved ones. Added to this is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, high cholesterol and hypertension, which plague the trucking- and affiliated communities.

Since its inception in 1999, Trucking Wellness has provided first-line healthcare education and treatment to long-distance truck drivers and community members.

As a long-term beneficiary of N3TC's CSI programme, Touching Lives, Trucking Wellness ensures that high-risk individuals have access to quality primary healthcare. Five wellness clinics are strategically located along the N3 Toll Route. These clinics are supported by mobile clinics which provide basic health services to various outlying communities adjacent to the N3 Toll Route. Together, they help to promote community participation and the need for a non-gender-biased approach to healthcare within a broader socio-economic context.

Importantly, these clinics are open at times when government clinics are closed, and truck drivers and community members can receive treatment at no cost. HIV-positive clients are counselled and referred to the nearest healthcare facility, or an appointed HIV management programme to receive ongoing counselling and ARV treatment.

N3TC funding contributes to the significant costs of essential medical supplies, including primary health medication as well as HIV and wellness consumables. These expenses represent a substantial portion of the wellness clinics' operational costs.



During the same period, Trucking Wellness' Mobile Clinics participated in the N3TC Driver Wellness Days. They performed 182 wellness health screenings encompassing tests for blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol levels, and body mass index (BMI). Among the 182 clients attended to, 75 individuals underwent HIV testing to confirm their status.

"We are very proud of our partnership with Trucking Wellness to deliver health services to the trucking industry. They offer convenient and safe ways to truck drivers to manage their health and to limit the impact untreated health conditions may have on their careers and safe driving abilities," explains Thania Dhoogra, N3TC's chief operating officer. "Thousands of truckers use the N3 every day, and their health and safety should be of great concern to all of us."



Tested for HIV
(1666 from community and surrounding areas)



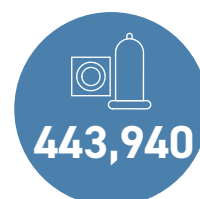
Primary healthcare provided to
(1614 were community members)



Health and Wellness Awareness Education provided



Treatment provided to individuals with STI infections



Male condoms dispensed

ROAD SAFETY IS OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

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- ❌ **STI** diagnosis, treatment & education
- ❌ **HIV** awareness, information, education, counselling & testing
- ❌ **Enrolment** onto **Wellness Fund treatment programme** (ARV's) for Industry members
- ❌ **Referrals** to appropriate service providers for ARV treatment for HIV/AIDS for Non-Industry Members
- ❌ **TB & Malaria** awareness, information, education, screening and referrals for treatment
- ❌ **Condom** use education and distribution
- ❌ **Screening tests** for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and body mass index (BMI)



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◀ Ronnies Commercial Vehicle East London Group hits the highway – [Left to right]: Percy Damana (sales executive Fuso), Garth Hlatwayo (Mobile Health screener) Andre Botha (dealer principal), Tracy Dass (service manager), Leroy Crossman (sales executive -Mercedes Benz Trucks), Darryl Voke (sales manager), and Andreas Nkosi (Mobile Health screener).

Daimler Truck Southern Africa & Dealer Partners

Teaming up to express appreciation to truck drivers

For many South African truck drivers, October Transport Month may well pass without fanfare or special appreciation from the transport industry. Invariably, Transport Month for the nation's truckers is simply 'business as usual'. There are exceptions however. During October 2024, Daimler Truck Southern Africa (DTSA) and several of its dealer partners teamed up with driver health organisation Trucking Wellness at key points on major highways to personally thank and gift dozens of truck drivers with free health checks and goodies.

"At Daimler Truck Southern Africa, our purpose is clear: For all who keep Africa moving. Truck drivers are the backbone of our logistics network, playing a crucial role in transporting goods and driving economic growth across the continent. During Transport

Month, it was especially fitting to recognise and appreciate these dedicated professionals," says Maretha Gerber, president and group CEO at Daimler Truck Southern Africa.

This year, the initiative reached key areas including Bloemfontein, together with dealer Garden City Commercials Bloemfontein; Harrismith, together with Garden City Commercials Pietermaritzburg; Middleburg, together with McCarthy Kunene Middleburg and East London, through Ronnies Commercial Vehicles East London.

"Trucking Wellness joined the initiative to give truck drivers free health and wellness checks at the same time. Uncontrolled high blood pressure, identified once again during this outreach, remains the highest health risk for truck drivers. Therefore, providing health



▲ Expressing gratitude - Judith Bester of Trucking Wellness handing over a gift to a truck driver.

This initiative has helped Trucking Wellness to gain insights to further adapt and improve our services.

**Judith Bester
Project Leader:
Trucking Wellness**



Our truck drivers' **commitment** ensures shops remain stocked and our **economy thrives**.

Maretha Gerber, DTSA

education and lifestyle guidance to help regulate blood pressure, especially for those spending long hours on the road, remains a key focus for the Trucking Wellness project," says Gerber.

For Judith Bester, project leader at Trucking Wellness: "This initiative not only enabled us to provide the drivers with the necessary health information and education to improve their health, but also to gain insights into how Trucking Wellness can further adapt and improve our services to them to ensure healthier drivers and safer roads.

"I would like to thank Daimler

Truck Southern Africa for their ongoing support of the Trucking Wellness Programme and for making us part of this initiative. This was a wonderful experience, enabling us to interact, appreciate and engage in open conversations with the drivers about the health issues they face on a daily basis, which is invaluable to Trucking Wellness."

Gerber concludes: "Truck drivers endure long hours on the road and extended periods away from their families, often under challenging conditions. Their commitment ensures that our shops remain stocked and our economy thrives.

◀ Garden City Commercial Vehicles Pietermaritzburg's Donovan Peckham (service manager) handing over a gift to a truck driver.

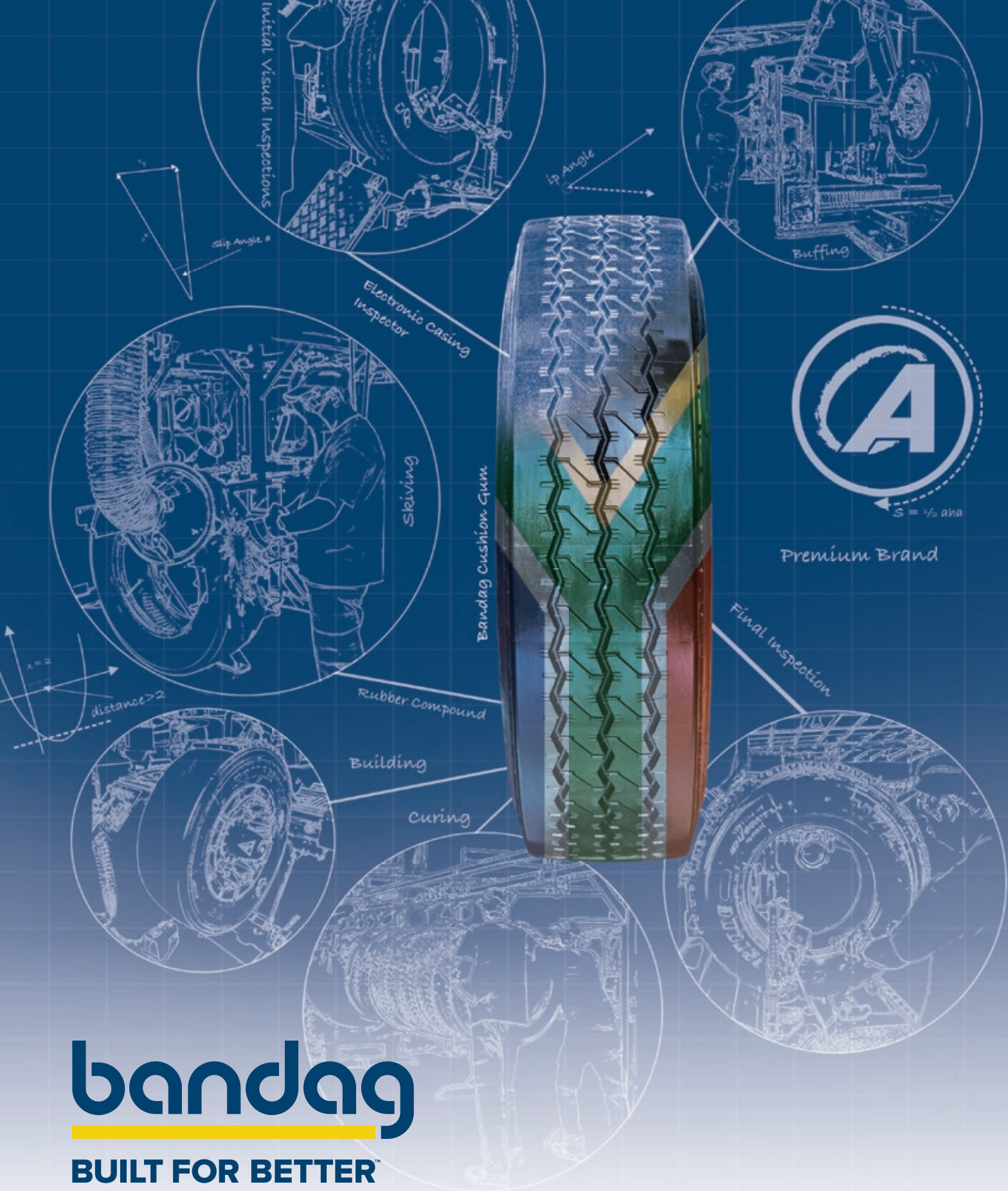
▼ Leroy Crossman (sales executive - Mercedes-Benz Trucks at Ronnies Motors Commercial Vehicles East London) extends a hand and a hamper of gratitude to a happy trucker.



This past Transport Month, DTSA proudly saluted all truck drivers and we extended our heartfelt gratitude for their unwavering dedication and the vital work they do. Their efforts do not go unnoticed and we thanked them for keeping our nation moving forward."

FleetWatch resonates deeply with the DTSA/Trucking Wellness Transport Month initiative in many ways. Our truck drivers need direct affirmation and ongoing support to help keep them well, both physically and mentally. Bravo folks, for your proactive approach to promoting holistic driver wellness! □

***FleetWatch* salutes Trucking Wellness on its 25th anniversary... truly a world-class service to the road freight and logistics industry.**



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Hollard honours bona fide driver heroes

In recent weeks, the alarming number of truck crashes on our roads has sparked widespread concern and frustration. For many, these incidents reinforce the perception among the public that all truck drivers are poorly trained and ill-equipped to handle the demands of their profession. However, this sweeping generalization overlooks the fact that many drivers are highly skilled professionals, committed to safety and excellence writes Patrick O'Leary.



**WATCH
THE VIDEO**



Grain Carriers tanker driver wins 2024 Hollard Highway Hero competition.
https://youtu.be/V_wWNSkVKVA

And the winner!

◀ And the 2024 Hollard Highway Heroes truck driver category winner is: Daniel Jansen from Mossel Bay who drives tankers for Grain Carriers. Equally thrilled at Jansen's win is Pieter Smuts, fleet manager for Grain Carriers who entered Jansen into the competition.

Take, for instance, Daniel Jansen from Mossel Bay, the truck driver winner of the 2024 Hollard Highway Heroes competition. Hansen, who drives for Grain Carriers, stands as a shining example of what dedicated and capable drivers can achieve. His remarkable skill, discipline and adherence to safety standards serve as a reminder that excellence is not only possible but is being demonstrated on our roads every day.

And we say "every day" because Jansen did not even know that his fleet manager, Pieter Smuts, had entered him into competition. So he wasn't upping his game during the course of the competition knowing that he could stand to win a whopping R225000. No, it was his normal daily driving skills that eventually got him onto the winner's podium. It was his everyday attitude

and behaviour towards doing his job in the most professional and safe manner possible.

How the competition worked was as follows: Truck drivers competed in five categories (tankers, tippers, tautliners, reefers and flat decks), while bus drivers competed in the short-haul and long-haul categories. Using telematics devices fitted to their vehicles, entrants were monitored for metrics such as speeding, taking regular breaks (an indicator of concentration versus fatigue), total distance travelled within certain time frames and other inputs. And, as mentioned, during all this time, Jansen did not know that he was being monitored for the Hollard Highway Heroes award.

At the end of a certain number of months, 50 truck drivers then progressed to the second round, where additional tracking of their driving behaviour was carried out. The data gleaned from this rigorous process led to the selection of two 2024 Hollard Highway Heroes, one for the truck category and one for the bus category.

Not a paper entry

The fact that the judging was based on performance and behaviour monitoring over a period rather than a paper entry of recommendation makes this competition so meaningful especially given that the two winners were competing against a record 9 629 entries which, according to Olivia Kumalo, Operations Manager at Hollard Trucking, was a whopping 4 200% increase compared with the 220 entries received in the competition's first iteration back in 2015.

This shows how the competition has grown in stature and prestige since its inception. And of course, the competition was open to all truck and bus driver operating in South Africa; not only to those insured by Hollard.

Commenting on the competition, Paul Dangerfield, Head of Hollard Trucking says: "As an insurer of trucks and buses, Hollard believes it's important to walk the talk when it comes to championing road safety. That's why we've gone beyond ► 40

Celebrating excellence



Category winners

◀ Truck drivers competed in five categories, namely tankers, tippers, tautliners, reefers and flat decks with each category winner receiving a cheque for R50 000. The overall winner was chosen from these five category winners.



Tanker winners

◀ It is this Grain Carriers tanker that Daniel Jansen, winner of the 2024 Hollard Highway Heroes truck driver category, drives every day - professionally and safely.



Bus driver winners

◀ Accolade goes to the winner in the bus category, Tholo Levy Manamela from Soshanguwe (centre), representing the Larimar Group. Well done Tholo!

The Hollard Highway Heroes Competition debunks the perception that all truck/bus drivers are ill-trained and unprofessional.

► 39 slogans and promises to actively make a difference through Hollard Highway Heroes, transforming unsafe roads into safer ones by incentivising good driver behaviour. This is critical because in life and on the road, uncares can happen.”

He adds that the competition is transformative in more ways than one. “It also changes the lives of the winning drivers through the cash prizes on offer, which can be used to better their lives, invest in their own transport businesses, and more.

“Most importantly,” he continues, “Hollard Highway Heroes has not only led to a major improvement in participating drivers’ road behaviour during the competition but our research shows that they have also adopted safer driving habits in the long term. This makes for a truly transformative competition with a tangible impact. We are thrilled to be honouring these bona fide heroes who are helping to mitigate the uncares that are so prevalent on our roads.”

Jansen and Manamela now proudly carry the distinction of being upstanding road safety role models in their communities and the country at large. They are helping to turn unsafe roads into safer ones and protecting all road users against life’s uncares, one journey at a time.

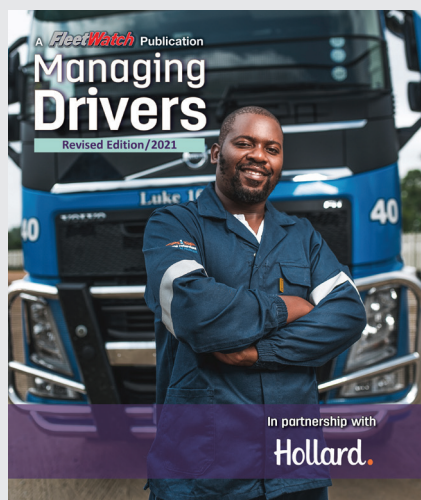


The challenge lies in addressing the divide between these exemplary drivers and those whose lack of training or negligence tarnishes the industry’s reputation. By spotlighting role models and fostering programs that encourage mentorship, skill development and accountability, we can help transform subpar drivers into professionals who uphold the highest standards of safety and conduct.

The Hollard Highway Heroes competition is not just about reducing crashes; it’s about restoring faith in the trucking industry and creating safer roads for everyone. □

Celebrating the best

▲ The grand finale for the ninth annual Hollard Highway Heroes competition was held at the Hollard campus in Parktown, Johannesburg. The event celebrated local fleet owners and their dedicated drivers who are shining examples of safe and responsible road behaviour in a country where road accidents caused by trucks and buses are a serious cause for concern.



Your drivers are your greatest asset

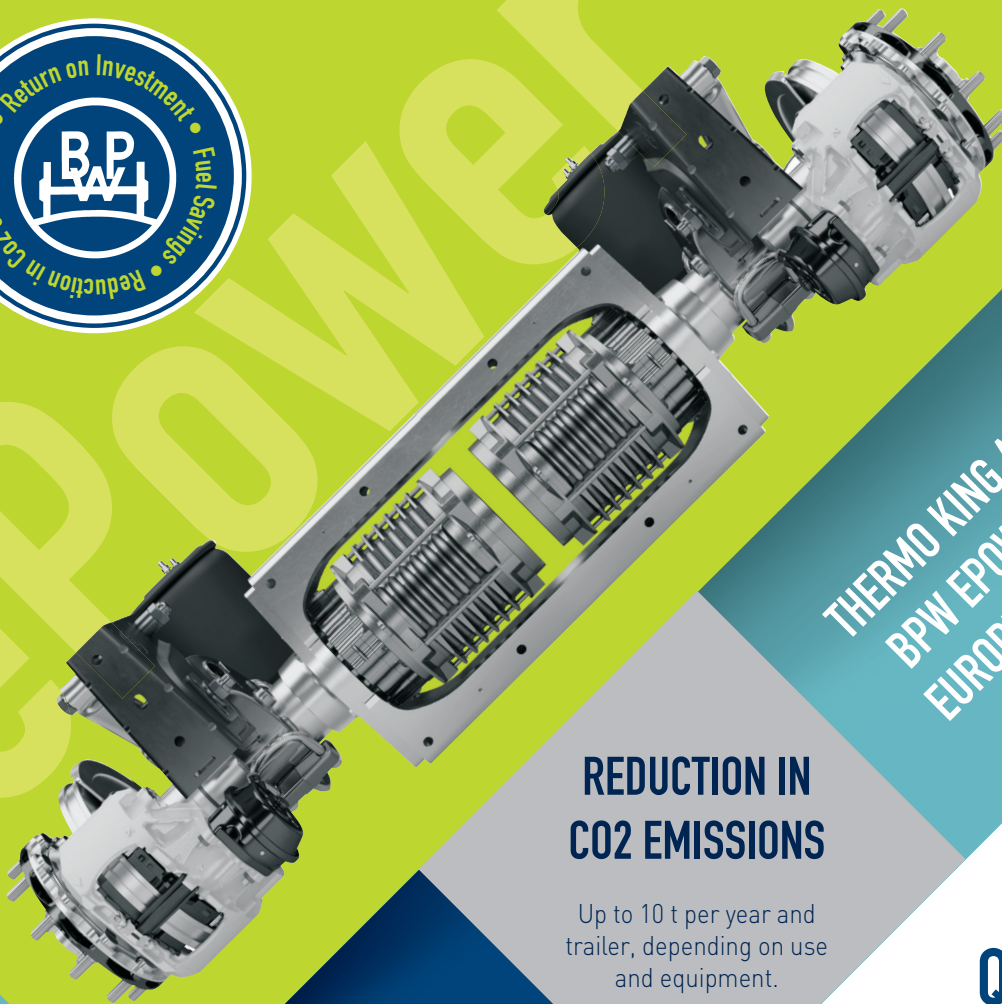
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- Two axle generators for doubled power and reliability
- Multiple operating modes for optimal adaptation to the respective driving situation
- Developed according to automotive safety standards
- Pays for itself in just a few years





Mercedes-Benz Trucks tackles market disruptions

In recent years, the South African truck market has experienced a notable disruption. The influx of low-priced truck brands has posed a significant challenge to traditional premium players like Mercedes-Benz Trucks. Ziyad Gaba, Vice President of Customer Service, Parts, and Downstream for Daimler Truck Southern Africa (DTSA), discusses the company's strategies to combat this trend, highlighting the brand's enduring value proposition and plans to remain a leader in the competitive landscape.

Legendary Actros

▲ The legendary Mercedes-Benz Actros. According to Ziyad Gaba, Vice President of Customer Service, Parts and Downstream for Daimler Truck Southern Africa, total cost of ownership will always be the cornerstone of its success.

THE RISE of new truck brands has been fuelled by aggressive pricing strategies and an expanding distribution network. These trucks have quickly gained traction in industries such as logistics, construction, and agriculture, where upfront costs are often a decisive factor.

"Price sensitivity in the South African market cannot be ignored," Gaba acknowledges. "We're seeing a shift where customers are looking for immediate cost savings, sometimes at the expense of total cost of ownership (TCO). This is where Mercedes-Benz Trucks continues to differentiate itself in that we offer superior durability, advanced technology and a robust support ecosystem that translates into greater efficiency and lower costs over the truck's lifecycle."

The Value Proposition of Mercedes-Benz Trucks

At the core of Mercedes-Benz Truck's response is a reaffirmation of the brand's credentials. Gaba emphasizes that the company's commitment to quality, innovation, and aftersales support remains unmatched.

"We are not just selling trucks; we are selling a complete mobility solution," he says. "Our focus is on delivering vehicles that meet the highest standards of safety, reliability, and performance. But beyond that, we offer a comprehensive aftersales ecosystem, including service plans, parts availability and technical support, ensuring minimal downtime for our customers."

One of the cornerstones of this strategy is the emphasis on total cost of ownership. While some opposition trucks may come with a lower initial price tag, Gaba says Mercedes-Benz Trucks are engineered to deliver significant savings over time through excellent fuel efficiency, fewer breakdowns, and higher resale value.

"Our customers need to look at the bigger picture," Gaba says. "It's not just about how much you save today but how much you save over the next five to ten years. That's where the difference between premium and budget truly becomes evident."

Leveraging Technology and Innovation

Another critical area of differentiation is technology. As low-cost brands improve their offerings, established players like Mercedes-Benz Trucks are doubling down on innovation to maintain a competitive edge.

"Mercedes-Benz Trucks lead the way in integrating advanced technologies," Gaba notes. "From our intelligent driver-assistance systems to cutting-edge telematics, we provide tools that enhance safety, optimize fleet management and reduce operating costs."

He points to the recently launched DTSA Dashboard as a game-changer for fleet management, offering customers complete fleet telematics information at the touch of a button. This enables customers to drive their operations more efficiently than ever before.

Other technologies such as predictive powertrain control, dynamic load monitoring, and real-time tracking are increasingly becoming essential for fleet operators looking to stay ahead in a data-driven world. For Mercedes-Benz Trucks, these innovations are

not just value-adding—they are necessities in an evolving market where efficiency and safety are paramount.

In today's digital era, customers also demand faster and more convenient service. "That's exactly what we deliver with the Daimler Truck Parts Portal. Customers can now order over 600 parts online, 24 hours a day, and choose to either collect them or have them delivered within 48 hours. We are continuously optimizing the portal, so customers can look forward to even more parts and offers in the future," says Gaba,



Aftersales Support: A Key Differentiator

The backbone of Mercedes-Benz Truck's strategy lies in its aftersales service network. Gaba is quick to point out that many fleet operators underestimate the importance of this aspect when choosing a truck brand.

"After purchasing a vehicle, the real journey begins," he says. "This is where we excel. Our extensive dealer network, availability of genuine parts and skilled technicians ensure that our customers are never left stranded."

Over the past two years, Mercedes-Benz Trucks has achieved record sales, leading to more products on the road and a greater demand for after-sales support. In response, the company has made substantial investments to increase the number of breakdown vehicles across Southern Africa, dealer workshop capacity, and training programs to up-skill local technicians ensuring they are equipped to handle the latest technologies in the trucks.

"Aftersales is not just about fixing problems when they occur—it's about preventing them altogether. Of course we would love to promise a customer no breakdowns or down-time but this would not be realistic. Regardless, we have proactive maintenance plans and telematics solutions that enable ▶ 44

"It's not just how much you pay today but how much you save over the next five to ten years. That's where the difference between premium and budget becomes evident."

Ziyad Gaba



The programmes are designed to help maximise the truck's performance, boost fleet efficiency and develop skilled drivers for safer roads.

**Naveen Sook,
TRUCKTraining**

► 43 us to identify potential issues before they lead to downtime" Gaba explains.

One notable example is Mercedes-Benz Trucks Uptime, an intelligent system that links customer, vehicle and a Mercedes-Benz Service Partner. This system proactively alerts users to any support, repair, or maintenance needs, ensuring issues are addressed before they lead to a breakdown.

Gaba continues "While technology greatly aids in diagnostics, we never shy away from an issue and rely on our customers' honest feedback to drive product improvements. For instance, our customers reported that fuel hoses on the Mercedes-Benz Actros OM460 were brittle and wore out faster than expected, leading to breakdowns. In response, we decided to replace all these hoses on the model. Similarly, numerous other product enhancements have been implemented, because of valuable customer feedback."

Fuel theft is another major concern for fleet operators. In 2022, DTSA began fitting TankSafe on selected Mercedes-Benz Actros models.

Today, all Mercedes-Benz Actros trucks come off the assembly line equipped with TankSafe, effectively addressing this issue at no cost to the customer.

"Over the past 24 months, our strategic interventions, both large and small, have led to a remarkable 20% reduction in breakdowns. But this is just the beginning. We are committed to relentless and continuous improvement, ensuring our customers stay on the road where they belong," says Gaba.

Addressing perceptions around affordability

While the perception persists that Mercedes-Benz trucks are out of reach for smaller operators, DTSA has introduced flexible financing options, service contracts and tailored packages to make Mercedes-Benz Trucks accessible to a wider range of customers.

"We understand that affordability is a concern, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises," Gaba says. "That's why we offer solutions that align with their cash flow while

still providing the benefits of a premium product."

In addition, DTSA is exploring partnerships with fleet management companies to provide comprehensive leasing solutions. This approach not only reduces the upfront cost but also gives customers access to the latest truck models without the burden of ownership.

Sustainability

As the trucking industry moves towards greener technologies, Daimler Truck sees sustainability as a critical area of differentiation. "Environmental regulations are becoming stricter and customers are increasingly aware of their carbon footprint," Gaba observes. "Mercedes-Benz Trucks are designed to meet the highest emission standards and while we've already introduced electric trucks, we're actively working on introducing other alternative fuel vehicles to the local market."

The company's sustainability initiatives are not just about



compliance; they are about future-proofing its offerings. Gaba notes that adopting cleaner technologies might be expensive today and in the near future but in the long run will lead to cost savings for customers, particularly as fuel prices continue to rise.

Looking ahead

Despite the challenges posed by the highly competitive commercial vehicle market, Gaba remains optimistic about Mercedes-Benz Trucks' position in the South African market.

"Competition is healthy - it forces us to innovate and continuously improve," he says. "But at the end of the day, our customers know the value of a trusted brand. Mercedes-Benz Trucks are not just vehicles; they are tools for success."

Looking ahead, DTSA is committed to reinforcing its presence in Southern Africa through strategic investments, customer education and unwavering focus on quality and service.

"Our purpose is clear," Gaba concludes. "We want to empower our customers to achieve their

goals and keep Africa moving, and we believe that with Mercedes-Benz Trucks, they can do so with confidence."

The influx of new entrants to the market has undoubtedly shaken up the South African market, challenging established players to rethink their strategies. For Mercedes-Benz Trucks, the response lies in reaffirming its core strengths - quality, innovation, and unmatched aftersales support - while addressing the evolving needs of cost-conscious customers.

As the trucking industry navigates this period of change, Mercedes-Benz Trucks is determined to lead the way, proving that the brand still has a vital role to play in delivering long-term value and sustainable solutions.

This balanced approach, combining immediate relevance with enduring reliability, sets the stage for Mercedes-Benz Trucks to maintain its dominance in a competitive landscape, where every kilometre - and every penny - counts. □

New Headquarters

▲ Daimler Truck Southern Africa further stamped its long-term commitment to the Southern African market with the opening in 2023 of its new headquarters and business campus in Centurion, Gauteng. The facility houses DTSA's head offices, training facilities, new and used retail facilities as well as a dedicated Daimler Truck Financial Services company.



Deep fakes hit local market

Use trusted suppliers

▲ Colour is no guarantee that you are getting the brand you want. Best advice is to source bushes only from trusted suppliers. Don't let a cheap price be the deciding factor.

A surge in counterfeit rocker, equaliser and radius or torque arm bushes in South Africa is posing a significant threat to truckers and road users as fake parts can lead to catastrophic suspension failures.

This is the warning from Rob Russell, managing director of local polyurethane processor Polyflex Urethanes, the originator of the Polyurethane suspension bushes, who has warned truckers saying the flood of fake components are often marketed as durable polyurethane products at a cost that is usually far below the market price.

"In recent times it seems the strong demand for polyurethane bushes has caught the attention of syndicates who have begun flooding the market with counterfeit or similar-looking inferior products. In the worst of these instances, what we are seeing is not polyurethane at all. It is plasticised PVC which looks similar to genuine polyurethane bushes but lacks the key properties required for dynamic applications required from truck suspensions," says Russell.

He adds that PVC is fine for gum boots or certain static applications such as plumbing or electrical components but it is not designed to withstand the stresses of mechanical suspension systems.

Failed bushes result in the following:

- Accelerated tyre wear due to the resultant misalignment that occurs.
- This misalignment contributes to increased rolling resistance that not only rapidly wears the tyres but also leads to increased fuel consumption.
- Damages to the suspension which can result in the need to replace the rocker pins, rocker boxes, springs and even repairs to the chassis.

"This can cripple a truck and lead to significant costs to salvage the cargo and repair the damage which could be anywhere along the road in South Africa or worse, across the borders where salvage may be near impossible," says Russell.



Don't choose cheap

▲ Polyflex Urethanes managing director Rob Russell holds an example of a fake polyurethane rocker arm bush. With the cheap products looking so similar to the genuine items, it can be very deceiving especially to those untrained in the various material types and who let cheap pricing be their guide.



A small saving can result in huge costs

Sergio Moreira, managing director of Rig-A-Line, a leading truck align specialist, is regularly having to carry out unnecessary and costly repairs to trailers owing to operators falling victim to these inferior bushes.

With the cheap products looking so similar to the genuine items, it can be very deceiving especially to those untrained in the various material types and who let cheap pricing be their guide. But the materials used in the inferior items lack memory, load bearing capabilities, cut and tear and other properties essential for proper performance.

"By comparison, original Polyflex bushes were tested on the harshest of conditions by South Africa's largest trailer manufacturer and with many millions of bushes successfully supplied to the market over the past 30 years," says Russell.

Polyflex advises consumers and distributors to source bushes only from trusted suppliers to avoid counterfeit products.

Don't be fooled on Black Friday

According to Russel, information has come to the attention of Polyflex and its distributors that significant stock of counterfeit

Fake? Original?

▲ Damage to rocker and torque arms due to the installation of fake bushes requires costly welding repairs. In this picture it is impossible to tell which one is fake.

bushings are being prepared for sale. "With considerable amounts of money invested in stock of these counterfeits, it is suspected that unscrupulous suppliers are looking at dumping the stock before consumers wise up to the scam. Don't get caught out!" he warns. □



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BOOM, BANG, RESET.

The path walked by transporters in the 2024 commodities arena

 WATCH THE VIDEO



<https://youtu.be/FTpktftJ1kc>



It's been an up and down year for transporters serving the commodities arena with a bad hit being registered earlier this year when the global demand for coal dropped resulting in the price suddenly plummeting which led to many operators having to park off their trucks. On top of this, the former Minister of Transport issued a notification that no more permits would be issued for PBS rigs. This threw not only some operators but also trailer manufacturers into disarray with one operator in Middleburg telling *FleetWatch* that he had around 20 brand new PBS rigs just standing due to him being unable to get permits for them. Trailer manufacturers also saw orders being cancelled and their production schedules thrown out the window with potential earnings of millions of rands on hold. Luckily, this rather knee-jerk directive from the DoT was later retracted.

All this – plus more – has taken place in the arena where side-tippers flooded into the market to service the commodity boom in the absence of an efficient rail service. One man who has kept his eye on the moving

▲ Side tippers ruled the roads in 2024 but it was far from a smooth and easy drive with many unexpected 'potholes' along the way.





ball is Albrich van Niekerk, managing Director of Trailmax whose company – as a major manufacturer of trailers for the bulk carrier market – has been operating in the eye of the storm. *FleetWatch* editor, Patrick O'Leary, interviewed Albrich van Niekerk at the NAMPO show in May and then, later in September at the Professional Truckers Lunch to get an overall view of how this sector of the market has fared and if recovery is in sight. He gives an insightful view of the past year and what's to come. In this video – compiled by *FleetWatch* freelance correspondent Paul Collings, the story is told. □

EXCLUSIVE: *FleetWatch* Editor, Patrick O'Leary interviews Albrich van Niekerk of Trailmax about the bulk carrier market.

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New Hino mobile licencing centres are a win



▲ The Smart Driving Licencing Testing Centres are equipped with electric wheelchair hoists.

Despite a current driver's licence card-printing backlog of well over one million units, the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) has taken delivery of four Hino mobile offices to serve as 'Smart Driving Licencing Testing Centres' in remote underserved communities.

Procured by the Gauteng Roads and Transport Department for the RTMC, the mobile licencing centres will travel to remote areas of the country and also have the flexibility to service built-up areas where the current facilities are unable to cope with the large numbers of people waiting to obtain or renew driving and vehicle licences, says Gauteng MEC for Transport, Kedibone Diale-Tlabela.

"Two of the units will be used for driver and learner testing and the other two for eye-testing and driver's licence renewals," states the MEC.

According to Itumeleng Segage, Hino South Africa general manager: "Hino South Africa was involved previously in having 33 mobile offices built for a government department, with the final units delivered in February this year. These mobile offices are proving to be a valuable

asset in taking services to remote areas, ensuring that underserved communities have access to essential services without the need to travel long distances.”

The RTMC mobile offices were launched in mid-November 2024 at a Hino-sponsored function in Refilwe, Cullinan, in the City of Tshwane.

“The mobile offices are based on the Hino 300 816 SWB A/T chassis cab and were fitted with specially built bodies by SA Vans and Conversions/Bubhezi, in Pinetown KwaZulu-Natal,” Segage explains.

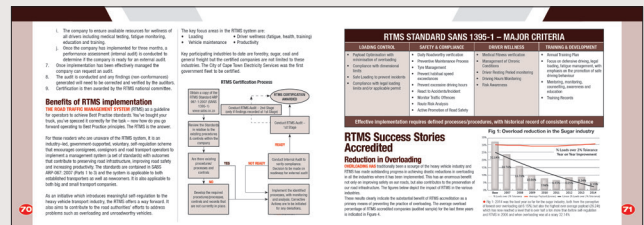
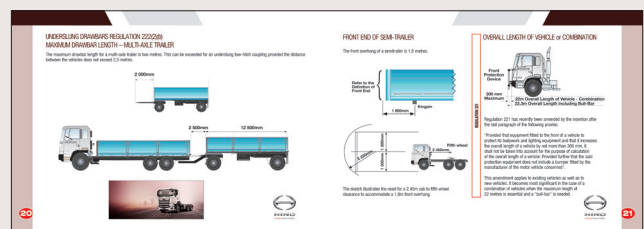
The Hino 300 model is powered by a turbocharged 4-litre diesel engine developing 110 kW @ 2 800 r/min and 420 N.m of torque at 1 400 r/min and driving the rear wheels through a six-speed automatic transmission.

“These mobile offices include wheelchair hoists and will be used initially in Gauteng. If the project proves successful for government, more units will be procured for other regions in South Africa,” Segage concludes. □



Editor's note: Any move by government to streamline and expand the driver testing and licencing process will undoubtedly serve in our economy's best interests. The new Hino mobile testing centres are a step in the right direction. Now, about that new card-printing machine?

▲ Gauteng MEC for Transport, Ms Kedibone Diale-Tlabela (centre) joins other VIPs at the Cullinan launch event.



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DAF Trucks helps expand SME fleet

A family affair

◀ A Smart DAF for a sharp family – Thembeke and Mfundo Gadallane with their son and daughter and TMG's latest DAF XF 480.

South Africa's road freight industry is often perceived to be dominated by large corporate fleets which, when coupled with the high cost of new rigs, may present a seemingly insurmountable barrier to entry for aspiring trucking entrepreneurs. However, although this perception exists, the reality is different for there are hundreds of smaller transporters plying our roads on a daily basis. Because of this, local truck OEMs have for many years tweaked their vehicle financing options to include SMEs, giving start-up operators favourable payback terms and hands-on operational support. Babcock, through its DAF Trucks division, exemplifies this nurturing approach to trucking empowerment in its relationship with Eastern Cape micro-fleet, TMG.

According to Mariette Joubert, sales manager at DAF Trucks, entrepreneur Mfundo Gadallane, owner of TMG, had a vision to establish a construction equipment hire business but a chance encounter with a high-school friend, who was working as a DAF Trucks sales representative at the time, prompted Mfundo to consider diversifying into the transport sector.

With Babcock's support and encouragement, Mfundo obtained financing for his first DAF 104-460 truck in 2018. The truck was used to transport timber from his home province of the Eastern Cape to Durban and before long, demand for his efficient services grew, necessitating a second truck.

"As a start-up business, I didn't have sufficient capital for a second truck but Babcock saw the potential in TMG and stepped in again to motivate the financing on favourable terms," says Mfundo.

Despite Covid-19 putting the brakes on many businesses, TMG

Babcock wanted me to succeed

Mfundo Gadallane

continued to provide essential transportation services and was in a position to purchase a third DAF truck in 2020.

From one Smart DAF XF to five in three years

By 2021, demand for TMG's services was growing and it was time to take things to the next level with the purchase of a brand-new DAF XF 480 Smart truck. Three more new DAF trucks followed over the ensuing years and in August 2024, Mfundo took delivery of his fifth DAF XF 480 Smart truck.

Reflecting on the performance of the new trucks, he says the improved fuel efficiency is excellent. "The Eastern Cape to Durban route is not forgiving but the drivers are doing good numbers. They also find the new DAF trucks very comfortable to drive."

Mfundo credits his success to his firm faith, support from his wife Thembeke (the 'T' in TMG), and Babcock's encouragement. "My career followed an unexpected path into the transport sector but I am grateful for all the guidance and help I have received along the way. Babcock wanted me to succeed," he says.

"One of our core principles is encouraging our people and our customers to set bold goals, and we find the right way to empower them to achieve these goals," says Joubert. "DAF Trucks recognises the vital role SMEs play in building a sustainable and resilient supply chain in South Africa and supports emerging companies that are determined to succeed. We support those who are brave, ambitious and determined, characteristics so clearly demonstrated by Mfundo. We wish him and TMG all the best and hope we can continue to be part of his progress."



FleetWatch applauds the Babcock DAF Trucks team for 'looking out for the little guy'. In this era of globalization, OEMs and other corporations supplying the trucking industry need to continue reaching out to and supporting entrepreneurs at a grassroots level to ensure a sustainable flow of talent into the industry. And "well done TMG!" for making your vision a success! □

DAF Trucks recognises the vital role SMEs play in building and supporting emerging companies

Mariette Joubert
Sales Manager, DAF Trucks



FEWER ACCIDENTS



ENSURING VEHICLES ARE COMPLIANT

Safety practices are key



DRIVER FATIGUE MANAGEMENT



PAYLOAD MANAGEMENT

A culture of fleet safety in daily operations is priority

Come October every year, the South African commercial transport industry gets a bit of 'shine' from the nation it serves. Transport Month aims to applaud fleet operators while also placing focus on areas of concern, most notably, road safety. Leading truck transport compliance consultancy, JC Auditors (JCA) advises an embedded, year-round approach to inculcating a culture of fleet safety.

According to Oliver Naidoo, managing director of JC Auditors: "Safety on our roads should be a priority every day of the year, not just during designated months. A consistent, proactive approach to fleet management is key to ensuring safety, minimising crashes and reducing business disruptions.

"The importance of safety cannot be overstated in the road freight

industry, where accidents and breakdowns not only endanger lives, but can also cause costly interruptions to business operations. A well-managed commercial fleet reduces these risks significantly."

Making fleet safety a daily priority

JC Auditors recommends focusing on key areas, including preventive maintenance, payload management, driver mentoring and fatigue management, with consistent monitoring of the related key performance indicators.

"Fleet owners can mitigate road safety risks and prevent business interruptions by embedding these practices into their operations. This approach ensures fewer accidents, reduced vehicle downtime and optimised fleet efficiency. Additionally, leveraging data from

telematics and safety systems provides insights that can drive continuous improvements in fleet safety,” says Naidoo.

JCA lead auditor, Gift Nhlabathi says: “I’ve seen first-hand the critical role that a structured and consistent approach to fleet safety plays in preventing accidents and ensuring operational efficiency. The road freight industry is fast-paced and safety can never be compromised. By focusing on key areas such as vehicle maintenance, driver training and the adoption of advanced technologies, fleet operators can not only reduce risks, but also enhance the long-term sustainability of their businesses.”

Unlocking RTMS Best Practice benefits

The Road Transport Management System (RTMS), which JC Auditors has championed over the last two decades, has been an exceptional success in promoting safer and more sustainable practices in the transport sector.

RTMS certification incorporates global best practices and is a voluntary initiative that ensures fleet operators meet stringent safety, maintenance and sustainability standards, with notable achievements in reducing crashes and improving overall operational efficiency, Nhlabathi states.

“The road freight sector faces increasing pressure to not only meet client delivery demands, but also demonstrate compliance with critical ISO standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 45001. To help transporters navigate these



A structured and consistent approach to fleet safety plays a critical role in preventing accidents and ensuring operational efficiency

Gift Nhlabathi
Lead Auditor, JC Auditors

growing challenges, JC Auditors has introduced a cost-effective integrated audit approach, allowing transport operations to be assessed against multiple standards in a single audit. This innovative method reduces both audit costs and the number of audit days required, offering significant savings and minimising operational disruption,” says Nhlabathi.

Recent audits conducted using JCA’s integrated approach have resulted in cost savings of up to 50% for clients, says Nhlabathi. “By consolidating the audit process, transporters benefit from more efficient compliance management, ensuring they meet both regulatory requirements and client expectations, while freeing up resources to focus on core business activities.”

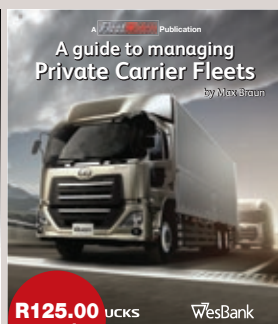
JC Auditors is continually looking at innovative ways to collaborate with the industry in the collective effort to make the sector safer and more sustainable, says Naidoo. “As part of this drive, JC Auditors has launched an online survey to gather insights from industry players on the key challenges they face. The feedback from this survey will be crucial in shaping future safety initiatives and programmes, allowing JC Auditors to address the sector’s most pressing concerns.”

The survey can be accessed on <https://bit.ly/JCASurvey>

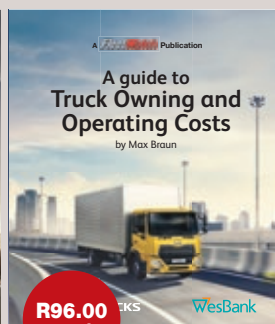
“By working together and sharing best practices, the road transport industry can collectively reduce accidents, prevent disruptions and build a more sustainable future,” concludes Nhlabathi. □



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Pothole eradication?

Mpumalanga launches benchmark project

Web application

◀ The Zutari system includes a pothole logging web application that can be accessed by the public, facilitating the reporting of road-related issues.

Monitoring and managing the condition of road paving across an entire province is a daunting task in anyone's book and the proliferation of potholes on trucking routes is a clear sign that more needs to be done as far as road maintenance is concerned. It therefore comes as good news that the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWR&T) has implemented an innovative road Maintenance Management System (MMS) that promises to improve road conditions in the truck-heavy province.

Developed in collaboration with leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory practice Zutari, the road MMS assists the department in managing maintenance activities by facilitating task planning, allocating tasks to teams, tracking work completion and generating reports.

"It is a comprehensive tool for managing road maintenance activities across the entire road network in the province," explains Dr Chris von Holdt, Zutari director: Asset Management.

Public assisted road issue reporting

In addition to having a web-based interface for the DPWR&T's operational staff, the system includes a pothole logging web application that can be accessed by the public, facilitating the reporting of road-related issues.

"This provides valuable information to the department, ▶ 56

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DAF

► 54 enabling it to schedule maintenance and effectively carry out the repair work required,” says von Holdt.

According to M. Rikhotso, Mpumalanga acting deputy director general: Public Infrastructure: “The road MMS sets a benchmark for the country as a whole. It is very forward-thinking for us to adopt this approach at a provincial level. Based on what we have seen, it could really be a game changer if implemented successfully, as we envision.”

The Zutari system captures road maintenance issues and includes comprehensive work order management, explains Bheki Walter Shabangu, senior project manager: Mpumalanga Transport Infrastructure Roads Planning: “Whether road maintenance issues are publicly reported or identified through departmental inspections, they are moved through the process of planning and executing the maintenance work.

“The new system also covers executing the work, recording it, and incorporates features such as job card inspections on work done for approval. In addition, we have developed a mobile app specifically for foremen working on-site to reduce paper usage by digitising the work process and capturing evidence, such as photos, of completed tasks.”

Another important feature is fuel and materials management, as the MMS tracks fuel and materials expenditure and provides a detailed view of maintenance costs, both in the short and long term. A dashboard offers full visibility of operations across the entire province, allowing managers at different levels to monitor maintenance activities.

“It is a robust and comprehensive system that significantly supports the department in managing its maintenance operations,” states Shabangu.

A ‘revolution’ in road maintenance and pothole eradication?

For acting chief director, Mpumalanga Transport Infrastructure, R. Masia, the Zutari system is a game-changer: “Imagine a central system where all maintenance information is visible from one location, allowing assessment across the entire province down to individual cost centres and work teams!

“It is revolutionising how we manage our road network. In terms of road network maintenance management, it is probably the most sophisticated digital solution being applied in South Africa at present.”



28 Call Centres

▲ The Zutari system includes a pothole logging web application that can be accessed by the public, facilitating the reporting of road-related issues.

Zutari’s von Holdt defines the need for a cutting-edge management system in the province: “The challenge is that Mpumalanga’s road network is highly trafficked with trucks running heavy loads. There is a lot of mining activity, so the road network takes a lot of punishment from haul trucks in particular. Keeping up with maintenance is a significant undertaking, requiring a systematic and well-informed approach to stay ahead of the demands of the network.

“It is a substantial and important task, involving 28 call centres and several hundred people working daily on maintenance. The goal is to ensure this effort is carried out in the most coordinated and structured way possible.”

The road MMS is currently operational and Zutari is assisting the department with comprehensive training to ensure smart working and the greatest impact possible, Holdt adds.

For M.C. Morolo, the DPWR&T’s head of department: “The introduction of the road MMS is a transformative step. The system empowers us with the necessary tools to effectively manage and maintain our extensive road

network, particularly in the face of the heavy demands placed upon it by mining activities and traffic.”

Morolo adds: “I am excited about how this system will streamline our maintenance operations and improve our responsiveness to public reporting of road issues. Together with Zutari, we are committed to ensuring that our roads remain safe and functional, thus fostering greater mobility and accessibility for all our communities.”

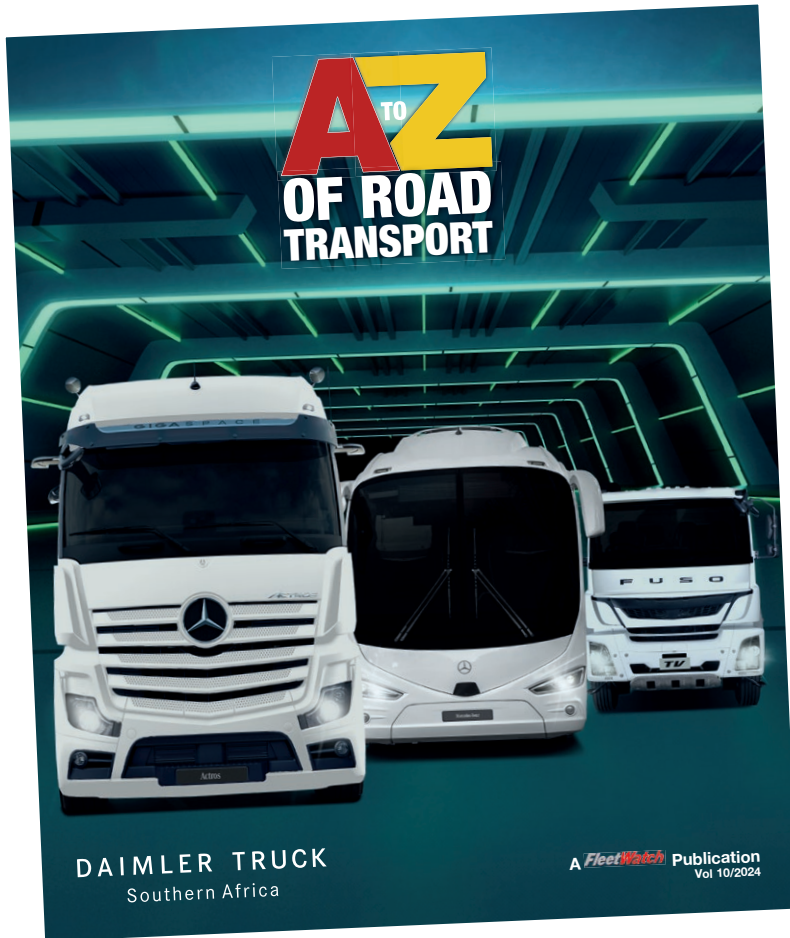
Mpumalanga DPWR&T MEC, Thulasizwe Thomo, says he is proud to support such an innovative initiative. “This advanced system represents a significant leap forward in how we manage our road infrastructure, enabling precise tracking, efficient task allocation and comprehensive reporting.

“Our collaborative efforts with Zutari epitomise our commitment to improving road maintenance, ensuring safety and reliability for all road users. I firmly believe that this initiative not only addresses current maintenance challenges but also sets a benchmark for similar projects across the nation, enhancing overall transport infrastructure in our province,” Thomo concludes. □

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Potholes are a double-whammy for the trucking community. Not only do these pavement pits ruin tyres and running gear, but it's trucks that get blamed for causing them. With the road freight industry running itself to the bone to keep South Africa's economy alive, it's relieving to hear of public/private initiatives that proactively combat our pothole scourge. One such entity is Discovery Pothole Patrol with a three-year track record in Johannesburg of 260 000 fixed potholes and a to-date pothole reduction of 67%.

According to Precious Nduli, Discovery Insure's chief commercial officer, the Discovery Pothole Patrol recently celebrated its three-year milestone, with over 260 000 potholes repaired, mainly within the Johannesburg metro, since its inception.

Launched in 2021, the initiative is a partnership between Discovery Insure and Avis Southern Africa, who have been working alongside

Discovery Patrol fixes 260 000 potholes

▲ The slogan says it all - a Discovery Pothole Patrol van and crew ridding a Joburg road of a hellish holes.

the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) and the City of Johannesburg (COJ)."

The significant repair milestone has been achieved thanks to the on-going partnership, as well as the public's reporting of potholes via the Discovery Pothole Patrol app, which uses geolocation to allow users to log and report potholes within JRA's jurisdiction. The Discovery Pothole Patrol deploys eight road repair vehicles daily to support the JRA's efforts to repair the potholes.

"As an insurer, our ambition is to help create safe driving experiences. To realise this, we want to make our roads safer to use – for insured and uninsured road users alike, one pothole repair at a time. A big part of Discovery's mandate is to add real value to people's lives; enabling safer and pothole-free roads is one way of doing that," Nduli explains.

Litha Nkombisa, chief sales officer at Avis Southern Africa states: “If you think about the country’s many potholes, this initiative is making a dent – in a good way. Avis Southern Africa is glad to be a part of this initiative because, like Discovery Insure, we also want safer, pothole-free roads for all Joburg’s road users.”

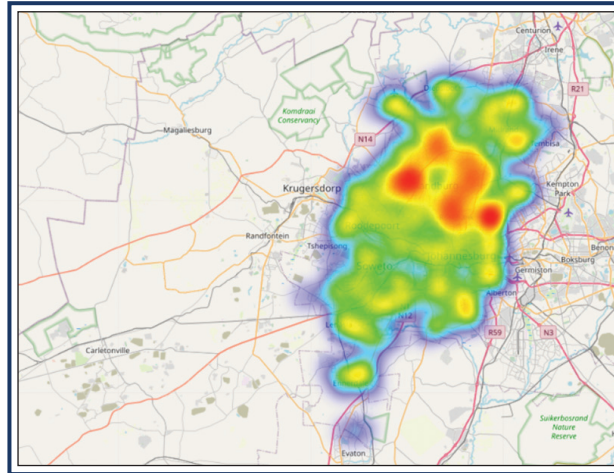
Pothole repairs that last

So far, says Nduli, the repairs’ longevity has stood the test of time. “The Discovery Pothole Patrol team runs on-going checks on potholes repaired since 2021, which are reported to have a repair success rate of over 99% in the last three years. Discovery Insure’s data also shows that, since inception, there has been a 67% decrease in potholes reported in the areas we operate in. This can be attributed to potholes being fixed proactively by the Pothole Patrol as well as a general reduction in the number of potholes in the areas that the pothole patrol operates.”

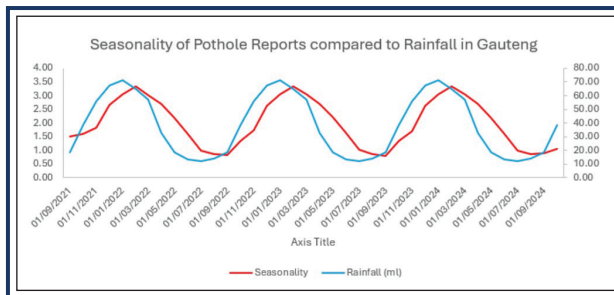
There are different repair methods with varying results, but after a user logs a pothole on the Discovery Pothole Patrol app, an inspector is sent to its location. Where there is more than one pothole on the same road, the Discovery Pothole Patrol team takes the opportunity to fix potholes in the surrounding area of the reported pothole.

Blame them on the rain and trucks

With the summer rainy season now on us, making Johannesburg’s roads safer to navigate is even more critical, adds Nduli. “According to Discovery Insure data, the number of potholes reported are seasonal as existing damage is exacerbated by rain, and an increase in rain causes the roads to deteriorate quicker.”



▲ A heat map showing the concentration of potholes repaired by the Pothole Patrol in Gauteng.



▲ A Discovery Insure graph showing the seasonality of pothole reports compared to rainfall in Gauteng.

Did you know?

The DoT defines a pothole as a **hole in the road** that's up to **one square metre** in size.

Anything bigger is not part of Discovery Pothole Patrol's mandate.

The Department of Transport defines a pothole as a hole in the road that's up to one square metre (anything bigger is not part of Discovery Pothole Patrol's mandate). A pothole is usually formed by the deterioration of the road's surface. Cracks appear, which allow water to get between them.

“Imagine you're on the beach and you pour water from a jug into the sand. It'll create a deep recess; water in the cracks does the same thing as it displaces the base and creates a rut,” explains Nduli.

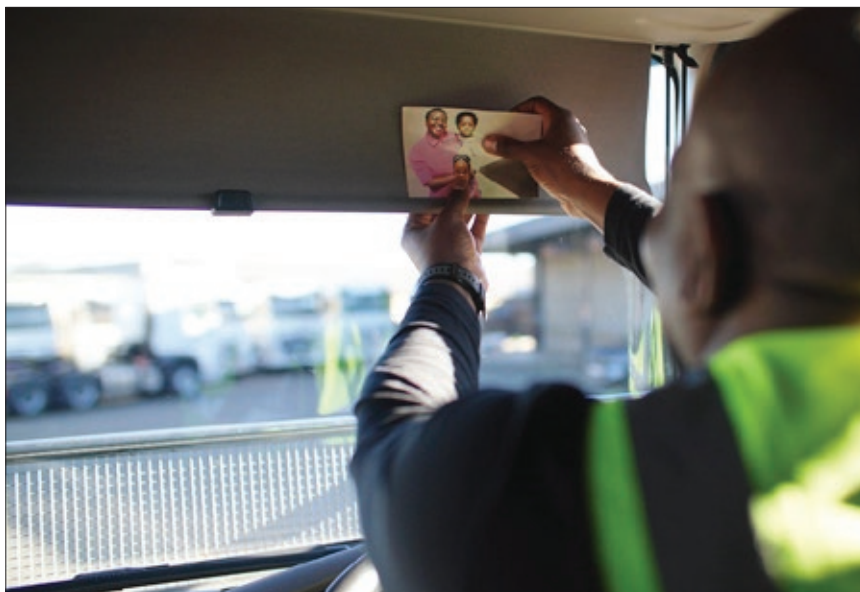
Nduli adds that the problem is worsened by heavy commercial vehicles driving over ruts, which often result in large holes forming on the road. “The asphalt surface doesn't have anything to press against, so it pushes down into the gap and breaks, resulting in the formation of potholes.”

Making a tangible difference

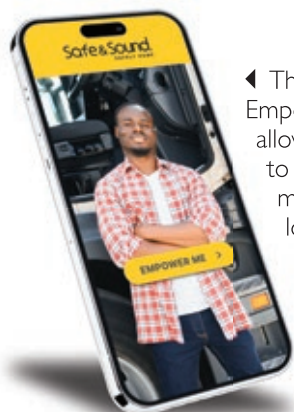
Nkombisa hopes that more businesses will be inspired by the Discovery Pothole Patrol's sustained successes so they will come on board to improve the City's infrastructure, roads, and other needs. “We believe an initiative like Discovery Pothole Patrol is making a tangible difference to the City of Johannesburg,” he adds.

For Nduli, Discovery Insure is proud to be part of a partnership with Avis Southern Africa that's actively contributing to repairing roads. “Potholes are one of the biggest bugbears for Johannesburg motorists. With Discovery Pothole Patrol, Avis Southern Africa, the COJ, and the JRA, we want to change that,” she concludes.

FleetWatch is equally bugged by the proliferation of potholes across the nation's road network and applauds the Discovery Pothole Patrol partnership for its socially conscious and innovative action in helping to make our roads safer. Well done! □



New AI apps set to curtail truck accidents



◀ The Safe&Sound Empower Me app allows the driver to self-coach and mediate incident logging.

The South African trucking industry knows all too well the spectrum of risks facing its drivers and vehicles while they're on the road. Consequently, fleet owners proactively implement strategic risk mitigation solutions to cover their on-road risk, from insurance to video telematics and predictive analytics systems. Safe&Sound, a new suite of AI-powered driver management apps from Optix promises to curtail truck accidents by enabling driver self-coaching and smarter driver recruitment.

According to Safe&Sound executive, Inge-Marie Hilligan: "Our mission with Safe&Sound is to create a safer driving culture in South Africa. By equipping companies with tools to monitor and improve driver behaviour, we believe we can drastically reduce the number of road accidents caused by human error."

In South Africa, human factors are responsible for the vast majority of road accidents, with estimates indicating that 80% of road fatalities result from human error, says Hilligan.

Improving road safety through behavioural shifts

"Deep-seated habits, high-stress environments and the complexity of real-time decision-making on the road make it difficult for drivers

◀ Bring it on home – Safe&Sound seeks to fast-track the nation's reduction in truck-related road accidents ensuring that truck drivers get home to their families safely

to adapt and improve their driving behaviour. This inevitably leads to unsafe roads. Traditional methods of driver training and management often fall short, failing to provide immediate, actionable feedback or address the root causes of unsafe behaviours," adds Hilligan.

In response to the challenges of transforming driver behaviour and to support global road safety initiatives, Optix has introduced Safe&Sound, which comprises nine integral solutions, designed to cultivate a culture of safety and responsibility among professional drivers, says Hilligan.

"Safe&Sound facilitates shared attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and practices related to road safety, fostering a collective commitment to preventing accidents and saving lives," she explains.

Safe&Sound's first two commercialised solutions are Recruit Me and Empower Me. "These advanced tools offer comprehensive monitoring and support for commercial use, integrating state-of-the-art technology to enhance driver behaviour and providing solutions to employers, giving them peace of mind when hiring professional drivers," Hilligan says.

"Unlike traditional monitoring systems, Safe&Sound's Empower Me puts the power of behaviour change directly into the drivers' hands allowing users to self-coach, self-train and self-correct their behaviour to become better drivers," explains Hilligan.

"Empower Me integrates seamlessly with Optix's DriveCam, an advanced in-cab camera system that provides a comprehensive view of driving actions, including distractions, fatigue and adherence to traffic rules. This solution has

Estimates indicate that 80% of road fatalities in SA result from human error

been instrumental in enhancing driving skills through personalised feedback and training modules, promoting safer driving practices and reducing accident risks.

“For example, if a driver is not wearing their seatbelt or uses a cellphone while driving, the solution provides timely notifications and video evidence of the incident and further allows the driver to self-train around the identified behaviour to prevent future infractions.

“Over the last 12 months, reduction in risky driver behaviours of up to 43% and a reduction in the frequency of risky driver behaviours of 36% has been observed by users,” says Hilligan.

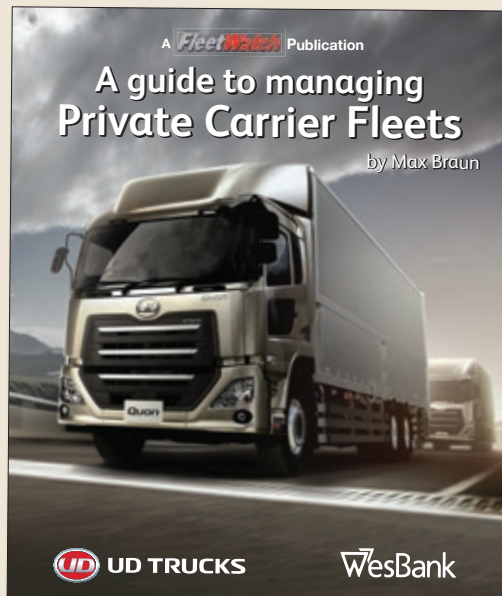
Safe&Sound’s Recruit Me solution aims to optimise the driver recruitment process for enhanced road safety and business efficiency.

“Recruit Me also helps candidates identify roles that align with their skills and strengths, ensuring they are placed in positions where they can thrive and succeed, avoiding the pitfalls of choosing a job that may not be the right fit for them. This ensures long-term job satisfaction and performance.”

The Safe&Sound offering includes the services of a social researcher who goes out into the field to interview drivers once they have used the Empower Me app for a period of time.

“This ensures our solutions remain relevant and that we constantly optimise their impact.” Hilligan concludes. □

A *FleetWatch* Publication A guide to managing Private Carrier Fleets by Max Braun



A step-by-step guide to managing trucks when carrying own goods

total owning & operating costs

► A typical 7-axis interlink curtain trailer. These travel long distances mostly on national roads and frequently have access to return loads.



An overview of owning and operating benchmarks

Our global competitiveness depends on cost effective and efficient transport services.

The table opposite shows the relationship of the various fixed and running costs for two typical vehicles in operation. The first is for a short-medium haul rig vehicle that typically transports perishable and temperature sensitive products. Vehicles like this frequently ply metropolitan roads making several drops, although some may have just a single drop.

of the payload ability of the vehicle extremely low. There is a large choice of vehicle types available to choose from. Keep in mind that the opposite current market-related benchmarks for this transport task.

The second set of benchmarks is for a seven-axis flat deck truck hauling pallet loads over long distances. These vehicles undertake long distance transport of freight logistics travelling mainly on national roads cover a large number of kilometres and frequently have access to loads on the return to home base.

the operation, they cover 10 kilometres in they little clock. These are the vehicles that the utilisation

Fixed Right Use Public Vehicle (approximate) 600 000 kapa	Percent of Total Operating Costs	7-Axis Flat Deck Interlink 32-36 pallets (approximate) 150-200 000 kapa	Percent of Fixed Costs
Depreciation	13%	Depreciation	38%
Cost of Capital	8%	Cost of Capital	13%
Vehicle Licences	1%	Vehicle Licences	4%
Insurance	4%	Insurance	14%
On-board Costs	1%	On-board Costs	35%
Total Fixed Costs % of total	26%	Total Fixed Costs % of total	10%
Variable Costs	Percent of Total	Variable Costs	Percent of Total
Fuel	55%	Fuel	45%
Trip-up Oil	2%	Trip-up Oil	2%
Maintenance	3%	Maintenance	15%
Tyres	2%	Tyres	4%
Unknown	2%	Unknown	2%
Percent of Total	62%	Percent of Total	67%
TOTAL COSTS	100%	TOTAL COSTS	100%

NOTES
When considering these examples, keep in mind that there is a considerable choice when acquiring vehicles, trailers and allied equipment. The transport operating environment will have an impact on all variable costs. These vehicles are paid for, maintained and directly driven will be reflected in the amount of fuel used, maintenance and repairs over the years of operation. The choice of tyre, replacement parts and components of maintenance technicians each individually

and collectively also play an important part. The annual cost of owning and operating a large articulated vehicle is as described in the example is currently more than R1.8 million a year when covering around 100 000 kilometres a year. If replaced after just four years, the original capital cost is a percentage of useful life cost is about 12% to 15%. This is a truly remarkable fact that the initial purchase price is not the issue when acquiring vehicles that are best suited to your specific needs. □



► A typical short-medium haul rig vehicle will travel on metropolitan roads making several or single drops and cover modest kilometres.

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Rhenus relocates to new R440-m facility

The Rhenus Group, a leading globally-operating logistics service provider, has strengthened its presence in Gauteng by relocating operations to a new facility in Meadowview, Johannesburg.

This R440-million investment spans 28 000 square-meters, including a 24 500 square-meter warehouse and 3 000 square-meters of office space, effectively doubling the company's operational footprint.

Cornell van Rooyen, CEO of Rhenus Warehousing Solutions MEA, says the move was driven by growth and the need for increased efficiencies. "Our former facility in Long Meadow had high warehouse utilisation and we operated across three separate buildings limiting future expansion. The decision to consolidate our operations in Johannesburg under one roof has already introduced greater operational efficiency, streamlining workflows and enhancing our ability to scale as we continue to grow in the region."

The new facility is close to the OR Tambo International Airport and City Deep Container Terminal while remaining within range of current

customers and not disrupting staff travel.

By consolidating operations under one roof, Rhenus expects to see efficiency improve significantly with optimized resource utilisation. Capacity has been increased by over 100%. The introduction of advanced technology and upgraded equipment will further streamline operations and reduce processing times.

Security is a top priority. More than 600 CCTV cameras, robust access control systems, a 2,4 meter clear-view electric fence, 5 meter perimeter walls and a dedicated security tower monitoring the facility around the clock make the warehouse one of the most secure in South Africa.

Sustainability is central in the facility's design. It features a 500kW PV system with 1 600 solar panels, an 800Watt lithium-ion battery plant and a 500kW diesel generator, ensuring energy efficiency and reliable backup for up to eight hours. LED lighting and motion sensors throughout the facility contribute to further energy savings.

Water management systems support sustainable operations and include a borehole, a 120 000 litre rain water harvesting setup and a

◀ By consolidating operations under one roof, Rhenus expects to see efficiency improve significantly with optimized resource utilisation. Security is a top priority. More than 600 CCTV cameras, robust access control systems, a 2,4 meter clear-view electric fence, five meter perimeter walls and a dedicated security tower monitoring the facility around the clock make the warehouse one of the most secure in South Africa.

40 000 litre fire sprinkler reservoir. An additional 1,1 million litre storm water tank adds to the facility's eco-friendly features.

Other key features in the warehouse include a 1 300 square meter refrigeration area with one section at -20 °C and 100 deep-freeze units situated within the ground-floor racking. This unique feature, not commonly found worldwide, is another first in the South African warehousing space.

The warehouse, with a total capacity of 25 000 industrial-standard pallets, is also the only one in the country fully compliant with storing lithium-ion batteries. It has 1600 battery-compatible pallet positions. In addition, the warehouse is designed to cater to high-value cargo and has a 250 square meter secure vault.

According to Van Rooyen, moving to the new premises will result in some immediate workforce expansion. Several new positions will be created, including a new warehouse manager. Training programmes are being implemented to up-skill employees with the latest technology and equipment introduced at the facility.

"This investment underscores our confidence in the local market and supports our 2030 growth targets. Over the past five years, we have consistently invested in South Africa and this new facility will be a relevant part of our expansion strategy going forward," concludes Dirk Goedhart, MD of Rhenus Air & Ocean South Africa. □

Your Truck • Your Gym



LEGS WORKOUT

1 WALKING LUNGES

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Description
15 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	20 sec Work / 20 sec Rest	45 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin at one end of the truck and step forward with one foot and bend the knee to 90° Extend the other leg straight out behind you and place the back heel to the floor Then straighten both legs and repeat movement with other leg stepping forward across the length of the truck <p>Important cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't allow the front knee to pass over the hip or collapse inward and ensure to maintain a tall spine

SCAN FOR VIDEO

LEGS WORKOUT

2 SIT-TO-STANDS

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Description
15 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	20 sec Work / 20 sec Rest	45 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin standing with feet back towards a step and feet hip width apart Move into a squat position by bending of the hips to that your buttocks makes contact with the step Push through the heels as you straighten both legs and move into an upright position <p>Important cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This movement should be performed with control Avoid using your arms to help lift from the step, but rather focus on using your leg strength Squeeze your buttock muscles as you lift

SCAN FOR VIDEO

CARDIO

1 FORWARD JOGGING

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Description
15 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	30 sec Work / 30 sec Rest	45 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin at one end of the truck and jog forward until you reach the other end of the truck length from one end to the other <p>Important cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the same pace for the entire duration Keep your body upright with head facing forward Use your arms as you move forward Focus on deep, rhythmic breathing

SCAN FOR VIDEO

CARDIO

2 MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Description
15 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	30 sec Work / 30 sec Rest	45 sec Work / 15 sec Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin in a plank position so that your body is in a straight line with hands placed under the shoulders and feet straight Lift one foot off the floor as you pull the knee up and in towards the same elbow Return the foot to the floor while pulling the other knee up and in to create a chopping motion Alternately repeat this movement <p>Important cues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This can be performed on an incline with hands placed on a box or step or the back (beginner) or on a flat surface (intermediate) Keep your stomach and buttock muscles tight Try to keep your body in a straight line

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Dirty diesel is not a cost-saving option

The South African Revenue Service (SARS) recently shut down a multibillion-rand diesel blending operation, once again exposing the on-going illegal commercial practice of mixing diesel with paraffin. Truck transporters seeking to optimise their operating expenses are vulnerable to black market diesel suppliers whose cheap adulterated fuel seriously compromises truck engine lifespan. Here, diesel supplier Masana Petroleum Solutions offers advice on how to avoid falling prey to dodgy

diesel dealers and why you should avoid adulterated diesel at all costs.

“The illegal practice of diesel being mixed with paraffin and often sold at lower prices may seem like an immediate cost-saving solution but the damage it can inflict on your fleet is far from inexpensive,” says Morena Sithole, managing director of Masana Petroleum Solutions.

“Adulterated diesel, commonly mixed with paraffin, presents several risks which can be dangerous. Paraffin has a lower viscosity and lubricity than diesel, that leads to increased wear on critical components of your engine’s fuel system, such as fuel injectors and pumps. This can cause a rise in maintenance costs, lead to engine failure, and increased downtime, directly affecting your operational efficiency,” he explains.

“Moreover, adulterated diesel fails to meet the SANS 342:2016 standard that governs diesel quality in South Africa. This standard ensures that diesel performs optimally in terms of viscosity, flashpoint and sulphur content.

“Over time, contaminated fuel can lead to corrosion in fuel systems, clogged injectors, increased particulate matter emissions and increased fuel consumption. This can result in more frequent servicing and ultimately transporters might find themselves replacing entire engines prematurely due to the continued use of poor-quality fuel,” says Sithole.

◀ So you think you saving money by mixing paraffin and diesel. Not so. Adulterated diesel will cause injector wear and internal sludging which results in injector failure. This is an example of what will happen when the injector fails. (Picture supplied by Patrick Swan, Aswan Consulting cc)

Steering clear of diesel contamination

In order to avoid the risks associated with adulterated diesel, it is crucial to implement a few best practices, says Sithole, including: sourcing from reputable, certified suppliers who can guarantee compliance with local fuel standards like SANS 342.

“Using a supplier with a transparent supply chain can eliminate the risk of receiving adulterated fuel,” Sithole advises. “Regularly testing the quality of the fuel delivered to your fleet is equally important. Using a laboratory accredited by SANAS 17025 or certified to SABS ISO 9001 standards will ensure the reliability of your fuel’s test results.”

Routine maintenance of diesel storage facilities helps maintain the integrity of the diesel dispensed to trucks, Sithole adds. “Ensure that your storage tanks are clean, dry and properly maintained to avoid fuel contamination. Even high-quality diesel can degrade if stored in poor conditions.”

“At Masana Energy Solutions, we understand the importance of providing quality fuel for your commercial road transport needs. Our strategic partnership with bp Southern Africa provides the additional assurances on the quality of our products and the integrity of our value chain, ensuring that you receive only the highest quality diesel,” concludes Sithole. □



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FESARTA CEO gets top African Union position

The cross border road transport sector has cheered the appointment of Mike Fitzmaurice, chief executive officer of the Federation of East and Southern African Road Transport Associations (FESARTA), as vice president for Southern Africa for the African Union of Transport and Logistics Organizations, (UAOTL) reporting to the president in Morocco.

In this position, Fitzmaurice has a sectorial committee comprising of Zambia and Zimbabwe reporting to him. There are five vice presidents reporting to the president, one for each of the following five regions in Africa: North Africa; West Africa; Central Africa; East Africa and Southern Africa.

The African Union of Transport and Logistics Organizations is an AU (African Union) organ that is recognised as an authority with a voice in Africa and this appointment is a feather in the cap, not only for Fitzmaurice, but more so for all cross border transporters.

"This appointment puts me in a powerful position to lobby for



▲ **Mike Fitzmaurice**, CEO of the Federation of East and Southern African Road Transport Associations (FESARTA) and now also vice president for Southern Africa for the African Union of Transport and Logistics Organizations. "It's now time to make a real difference for the cross-border transport industry," he says.

change in the regions that affect us, namely Southern and East Africa, as I have direct contact with my fellow vice presidents and the President of the organisation. As this is an African Union organisation, it will carry a lot of clout with the national governments," he says.

He adds that it also affords opportunities to drive home initiatives that will improve the efficiency of our ports, border posts and corridor performance across the continent of Africa.

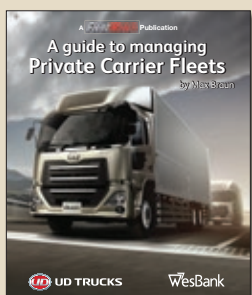
"Hopefully, with the onset of the AfCFTA, we will be able to align and harmonize transport regulations and policies across the regions and introduce universal systems that will enhance efficiency and productivity

at our ports, border posts and along our trade corridors. The collective knowledge and experience of our president and five vice presidents working together with a common goal and objective has never been achieved before in any organisation," says Fitzmaurice.

Since his appointment as CEO of Fesarta in 2015 – and subsequent formation of the Transit Assistance Bureau (Transist) in 2018 – this great man has been the 'go-to' for all cross border related problems. He is hugely respected, not only in South Africa but also on the African continent, for his hands-on approach.

FleetWatch has seen this man in action on many an occasion where not only does he throw his weight behind alleviating massive border congestion problems when they occur, but will get out of bed late at night to help a single cross border transporter who is experiencing a problem at some border post. And the problem is soon sorted out. Now his input is going far wider than just the FESARTA regions. "It's now time to make a real difference for the cross-border transport industry which always been my passion," he says.

FleetWatch has always described Mike Fitzmaurice as a "national asset to South Africa" and we wish him all the very best of success as he takes on this wider role. And may we add: "Mike, you say 'it's now time to make a difference'". No Sir, you have always made a difference and for this we – and all cross border transporters - salute you. □



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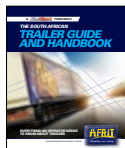
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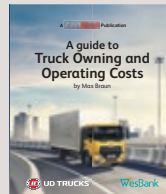
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