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# FOCUS

ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

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## COVER

Iveco believes the best way to sell a truck is from the driver's seat. So that's what it did at its Iveco in Action event. Details on page 9.

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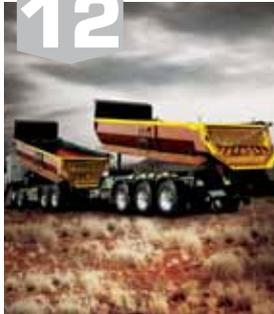
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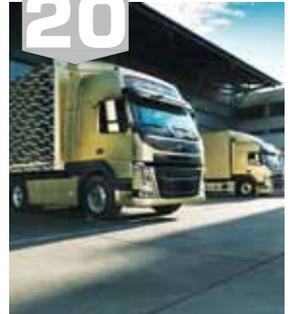
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## NUTS ABOUT

# NAMIBIA



I have just returned from a whirlwind trip to Namibia. I was so impressed with the country that I am thinking of packing my bags ...



*Charleen Clarke*

**W**hat a flipping lekker place. I have been to Namibia many times over the years, but my recent visit filled me with new-found wonder for our neighbour. There are many reasons why.

First and foremost is the sense of optimism and pride. While there, I visited two transport operators: A van der Walt Transport Namibia (read all about them on page 22 of this issue of **FOCUS**) and eXtreme Customs Clearing Services (XCCS).

It was such a pleasure to sit and chat to the owners ... because they don't weep, wail and gnash their teeth all the time! You know the obsessive air of doom and gloom here in South Africa? I experienced none of that in Namibia. Instead, people are positive. They are overwhelmingly patriotic and proud of their country ... gosh what a nice change.

Of course, to be fair, it is fairly easy to be

optimistic in Namibia. Vehicle sales are up and business is good. Sure, it's growing off a low base, but still, it's good. So much so that A van der Walt Transport Namibia has just concluded the biggest trucking deal in that country (ever!). Down the road at XCCS, things are going just as swimmingly.

That company is owned by a truly delightful chap by the name of Julius Laurensius, and I really enjoyed meeting him, because he is just so humble. He started the company in 2009, operating within the field of break bulk. In 2012, he diversified into bulk fuel – and that's when he went into lift-off mode.

"I bought my first truck from Scania Finance; now I have 51 fuel tankers; all Scania's," he says proudly. The company is so successful today that he is giving Unitrans, a long-established player in that field, a serious run for its money.

It is obvious that he is the reason for the company's success. "We are successful for

# ONE MAN kann

## ONE MAN ONE TRUCK ONE EPIC JOURNEY

Riaan Manser and his co-driver, Nduna Chari are taking on everything Africa can throw at them in MAN's TGX Euro 5 truck. From the military borders of Mozambique and the dangerous cliff descents in Malawi to the wildlife of Zambia and the deserts of Namibia as well as routine roadblocks and nightmarish border crossings thrown in for good measure, they're seeing it all. It doesn't stop there. Riaan and Nduna have also picked up a load of mosquito nets in Maputo, which they'll be dropping off at prolific malaria areas along the route. This is Africa and anything can happen. So, buckle up – the adventure is far from over.

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The Namibian bulk fuel transport market is growing by ten percent each month.



various reasons. We only run new trucks (our clients like that; it means good safety). We react quickly (if my clients want an answer, they get it in ten minutes); my competitors need to have meetings and strategise.

"Plus, we invest in the company. People often associate a one-man business with someone who spends a lot of money on himself. We don't do that. We are reinvesting in the business and investing in the employees," he tells **FOCUS**.

Incredibly though, Laurensius doesn't take credit for the company's success. "I had a partner, and that was Scania. I have never regretted my partnership with Scania. In fact, I am very grateful for it. The trucks are economical and reliable and the company's service is excellent."

Laurensius says he hopes to grow the fuel transportation side of his business. "There are

about 300 bulk fuel transporters operating in Namibia, so there is still considerable potential. Plus, there is about ten-percent growth in the market per month!"

While the company is operating in Botswana as well, he has no aspirations to trade in South Africa. "I am too small to go into South Africa; we don't have the backing of a parent company, but that's fine; we want to remain a Namibian company.

"There is more than enough room for growth here. In a decade we want to be running 200 trucks, if not more. By 2020, we want to be the only preferred transporter of bulk fuel in Namibia," he tells **FOCUS**.

While his enthusiasm is delightful so, too, is his sense of loyalty. Mention another truck supplier and he gasps. "Oh no. That is not me. I am a very loyal person, so I only work with one truck and trailer supplier, namely Scania

and GRW respectively."

His humble nature is also a delight. It is almost as though the success of the business has taken him by surprise. "The growth has been nice. First the plan was ten trucks. It became 20. Then 30. Then 40. Then 50 ..."

And, it certainly hasn't gone to his head. "You could say that I am a Scania employee. After all, Scania is a 100-percent shareholder in this business, because our trucks all come from Scania (barring one old truck that runs exclusively on a really bad road).

"Without Scania I don't think we would be where we are today. Scania was there from the beginning; they trusted me. That is why we are growing. We are really thankful. There are no words to express what Scania has done for me," he concludes.

As I said, what a nice guy. Operating in a very nice country. **| FOCUS**

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

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# MORE FROM THE N3

Last month I promised to give you the juicy details of my trip down the N3 with the N3TC. As you might imagine, poor road behaviour was not difficult to come by



Gavin Myers

To be honest, so, too, was good driving behaviour. In fact, as you'll read on page 28, I made another trip down the N3 exactly a week later in a Volvo FH. On both occasions I was generally impressed with the level of driver behaviour, but the few "bad apples" were impossible to ignore and, unfortunately, most of these stemmed from our beloved truckers ...

Let's start on a positive note, though. Most motorists adhere to the "keep left, pass

right" rule; I only witnessed two incidents of excessive speed (one from a car, one from a truck) and, despite numerous road works, both were largely pleasant trips.

Road works ... I recall studying a short story in Afrikaans *letterkunde* (literature), during high school, entitled *Die Padmaker*. It was a story written in old South Africa, about a worker who spent long days in the sun building roads. Unfortunately, I cannot find the story, or remember the character's name, but I do recall he undertook his work with great pride, despite it being a largely thankless job ...

The story ran through my head as, at about lunch time on day one of the N3TC trip, we received news of a motorist who had ploughed into some active road works on the route. Sadly, one of the road workers was killed. It is a thankless job, road works; but now I say thanks to all those brave enough to do it daily, with motorists whizzing by and ignoring temporary speed restrictions.

On day two of the trip we were hoping for no similar bad news. Heading down Van Reenen's Pass we encountered a train of trucks unlike anything I've seen before. You may recall I mentioned it last month, but, to recap, we eventually discovered that the brakes on a cross-border truck had begun to overheat, and it had stopped at the side of the road; causing everyone to slowly pass.

[A week later, when I was with Volvo, this good behaviour was nowhere to be seen, as trucks overtook other trucks both up and down the pass.]

Nonetheless, onward the day went, and we passed the Mooi River toll plaza heading

for our final destination, Pietermaritzburg. Ahead of us was a rather large truck pulling some red bins packed full with branches and leaves. Sure enough, as another industry colleague and I were discussing the unsecured load, one of the top branches caught some air and flew into the road right in front of our minibus.

Slamming on the brakes, our driver swerved and narrowly avoided the piece of tree. Our chaperone for the tour, the N3TC's Con Roux, made a few calls (as you'll read on page 24, the N3TC has a very good relationship with the KwaZulu-Natal traffic police) and the vehicle was pulled over just outside Pietermaritzburg.

This nearly ended in disaster; the truck driver tailgating the red-binned rogue clearly wasn't expecting it to stop for the traffic officer. He slammed on brakes and swerved into the emergency lane, narrowly avoiding a nasty incident and visibly shaken.

More road works were up ahead outside 'Maritzburg (now on the Sanral section of the road), which we avoided. A week later, however, I sat at these for about an hour with the Volvos.

Nothing untoward to report here, save for the plethora of the town's soccer moms in their MPVs loaded with kids bouncing around and hanging out of the windows. We might have only been moving at 10 km/h, but I couldn't believe what I was seeing!

Imagine the carnage if one of these had ploughed into the road works ... A shocking thought, yes; but I'm starting to think that's the type of imagery some unfazed road users need. **IFOCUS**



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# PROTECTING A WIN-WIN SITUATION

Well-planned and -managed truck owner-driver schemes create a win-win situation for the company and the owner-driver. However, current unhappiness – as recently reported in the media – between the owner-drivers and the companies regarding the safety of vehicles, could jeopardise the concept

**T**ruck owner-drivers are concerned about being forced to deliver goods in unsafe areas where there is a risk that their vehicle could be set alight or damaged. In my opinion, companies that operate owner-driver schemes need to be more sympathetic and understanding of the concerns of these drivers. They need to work together with the owner-driver to find solutions to address the problem.

Truck owner-driver schemes have been operating in South Africa for several years. Many have been highly beneficial to both the company and the driver.

Well-managed and properly planned schemes have enabled some drivers to improve their income and living standards and even buy their own truck. Drivers are given the opportunity to earn an above average salary.

They also have the opportunity to become successful and respected business people with their own fleet of vehicles. Companies also benefit from increased vehicle productivity and utilisation.

Many of the original owner-driver schemes have allowed the owner-driver to employ his own staff to assist with the loading and unloading of the vehicle. This, in turn, has resulted in eliminating the problem of absenteeism.

Owner-drivers are generally more motivated and they work longer hours, which lowers transport costs. In some operations, companies using owner-drivers have found less product shrinkage, which helps to provide a better service to their valued customers.

For the scheme to work, however, it needs to be well-planned and -managed.

Experience has shown that an outside, experienced business manager, who understands the business and can control and manage the owner-drivers, must be in place. The outsourced business manager should control the entire administration and vehicle operating costs, including cash flow, vehicle maintenance, fuel and tyre costs, payment of VAT and tax.

Experience has also shown that the

new or used vehicle, with which the owner starts the scheme, must be sufficiently reliable and durable to operate for at least 12 months without any major unforeseen vehicle operating expenses.

The rates that are agreed upon between the company and the owner-driver must be realistic and market related. Drivers must be paid in proportion to the amount of work to be done.

Selection of the right person to enter the owner-driver scheme is also an essential element. They must possess the right attitude and willingness to work hard. They also need to have a good business sense and should understand that the rewards of being an owner-driver are not instant and will follow only in later years.

If this situation between owner-drivers and companies, regarding the safety of vehicles when operating in unsafe areas, is not addressed and no solutions are found to overcome the problem, we could see the collapse of many owner-driver schemes in the country. **| FOCUS**



*One of this country's most respected commercial vehicle industry authorities, VIC OLIVER has been in this industry for over 50 years. Before joining the FOCUS team, he spent 15 years with Nissan Diesel (now UD Trucks), 11 years with Busaf and seven years with International. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit [www.focusontransport.co.za](http://www.focusontransport.co.za) and have your say!*

# TRACK ACTION WITH IVECO



Iveco South Africa recently hosted African clients, prospective clients and dealers at the Iveco in Action event.

**FOCUS** also got the exclusive nod! GAVIN MYERS was there



**E**amonn Parker, MD of Iveco South Africa, will tell you that the best way to sell a vehicle is "to get bums in seats". That's exactly what the company did during September, when it invited around 300 people from the local and African market to the Gerotek testing facility, outside Pretoria.

"Our customers form a key part of why Iveco has grown significantly in Africa over the last few years – at the end of 2014 we saw a 56-percent increase in sales and the region now accounts for ten percent of sales worldwide," he notes.

Up to three-quarters of the guests at the Iveco in Action event were new to the brand. The Iveco team was keen to make a good impression, with three links and two rigid vehicles – spanning the Eurocargo, 682, Trakker and Stralis ranges – available for guests to experience. They were also treated to a tour of the company's world-class plant in Rosslyn, Pretoria.

Martin Liebenberg, head of sales at Iveco South Africa, details the various models. "Iveco has brought products and derivatives to the market to satisfy every need and desire," he begins.

In brief, the current Iveco range consists of the:

- Daily 3,5 to 7-t range in panel van, chassis cab and 4x4 versions. "The Daily uses a ladder-frame chassis that is normally found on our larger trucks, so, when it comes to bodybuilding and repair, they are really easy to work on," says Liebenberg. It is backed by a two-year/unlimited mileage warranty.

- Eurocargo 7 to 18-t range, with the possibility to configure over 11 000 different derivatives! "Eurocargo has won more awards in its segment than any other brand, and has, therefore, been the benchmark in Europe to the present day." The range has recently been bolstered with a 4x4 version, and a three-year/300 000 km warranty is offered.

- 682, which is Iveco's value offering. "The 682 has evolved since 1952 to suit the African market. It's very well placed in the market and is the 'king of Africa'," Liebenberg grins.

Parker adds: "A particular customer that has bought the 682 4x2 truck tractor is returning phenomenal performance on the Durban to Cape Town route. We have big plans for this model." A two-year/200 000 km warranty is offered.

- Stralis on-highway and Trakker off-highway 18 to 44-t range of truck tractors and rigids. "Iveco has managed to use the Cursor

engine and ZF gearbox very successfully, which can be seen in the very competitive repair and maintenance rates of these vehicles," says Liebenberg. Nonetheless, a three-year/400 000-km warranty backs the Trakker off-highway while the Stralis and Trakker on-highway versions boast a three-year/600 000-km warranty.

But, that's not all ... starring at the event was the all-new single reduction 328 kW (440 hp) Trakker. Designed to offer excellent fuel consumption and impressive reliability to the side-tipping/coal transport sector, this truck is essentially half Stralis, half Trakker.

"It has the comfort of the on-road range with the durability of the off-road range," Parker explains. "This new Trakker is perfectly suited to its application. Our dealers and customers called for single, rather than hub, reduction – and we spent two-and-a-half years developing it. We can't produce these as fast as we are selling them ..." he smiles.

Believe it or not, there's still more to come from Iveco! The launch of a new, improved bus is imminent and, in 2016, the all-new Daily (crowned 2015 International Van of the Year) will arrive, including a 22-seater taxi version.

Doubtlessly, that'll mean many more bums in many more seats! **IFOCUS**

# WAIT UNTIL YOU HEAR WHAT WE HAVE IN STORE!



Truck Test 2016 will be like none that have gone before. Simply put, we're taking the rule book and tossing it out ...



**"C**ome one, come all!" is the call for Truck Test 2016. That's right, for the fifth annual Truck Test we are opening the entries to anyone and everyone – provided the vehicles entered gross more than 3,5 t.

This means that, for the first time in Truck Test history, short-, medium- and long-haul vehicles will run in the same event and, crucially, the comparison aspect will fall away. Manufacturers will be left with scientific data that they can use for benchmarking the particular vehicles they decide to enter.

Hellberg Transport Management's Martin Dammann will, once again, coordinate the event, scheduled for April 20 and 21, 2016 (with a mandatory pre-test the week before, on April 13 and 14, 2016).

"There is great value in this format for vehicle manufacturers. From the discussions I've had, many of them have said they want performance data of their vehicles to show customers – to set a benchmark," he explains.

This vastly revised format will obviously require different routes for the different categories of vehicles. The organisers will prescribe short-, medium- and long-haul on-road routes to simulate the every-day running conditions of the various vehicles.

"This is more representative of real-life operations than running simulations at the Gerotek testing facility. Factors such as

traffic will have a far smaller influence on the results than in previous tests, because we've taken away the comparison aspect," Dammann says.

In opening up the segments, vehicle manufacturers will be free to innovate. They may simply choose to enter the most popular models within their range. They may choose what trailers they pull and what loads these carry.

The same vehicle can be entered in manual and automatic/automated-manual transmission guises, to illustrate the differences between these transmission options. Alternative-fuelled and hybrid vehicles are also welcome should any manufacturers want to show off the capability of these vehicles.

Comprehensive specifications will be published with each vehicle's results; so that operators know exactly what the results mean to them.

"Truck Test 2016 will definitely be of interest to South African transport operators and the manufacturers alike," says Dammann. "Specifications and results will be presented in an open and honest way and an operator running a particular vehicle with a particular load will be able to accurately compare the figures of his own fleet with those of the test vehicles."

With an expected field size twice that of any prior event, Truck Test 2016 will be the biggest, best and most relevant yet. The idea, as Dammann sums up, is to "bring what you want, and we will test it!" **| FOCUS**



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# ARE WE GOING BACK TO THE **FUTURE?**

With warnings of another recession looming for South Africa, THATO TINTE asks some local trailer manufacturers what impact this could have on the trailer market





**I**n Vic's View in the September issue of **FOCUS**, some changes taking place in the local trailer market were noted. Does this mean we should be expecting a makeover of some sort for the local trailer industry?

Three top manufacturers allowed us to pick their brains and gave us their predictions. These were: Warren Marques, MD of Paramount Trailers; Tjaart van der Walt, branch manager at AFRIT; and Clinton Holcroft, MD of Serco.

As the economy continues to contract, and other industries experience falls in activity, we asked how the trailer industry is being affected.

Van der Walt notes: "There are a number of difficulties facing the trailer market; from cash-strapped customers opting for second-hand trailers, to potential new-vehicle buyers reducing the amount they are willing to spend, which further reduces demand."

He adds: "China's declining demand for minerals, such as chrome and manganese, has a major impact on the demand for trailers. The drought affecting the agricultural industry is also adding to the decreasing need for bulk-moving trailers."

Holcroft and Marques share similar views on how sales and production levels have been impacted by the economic slowdown.

"Other industries such as mining, agriculture, trade and electricity are capital intensive, so the first cost-saving to be implemented in an economic downturn is capital expenditure. As suppliers of capital equipment, this negatively impacts on our sales and production levels," says Marques.

All three agree that a decline in new trailer orders will intensify the competition between manufacturers, as many compete for the same orders.

If it is true that past behaviour is a predictor of future behaviour, learning from how the 2008/9 financial crisis affected the trailer manufacturing industry can help identify what we may need to look out for, if, indeed, we are

heading in the same direction in which we found ourselves seven years ago.

Holcroft says: "Refrigerated trailer orders declined by nearly 60 percent as a result of fleet owners over-reacting to the last downturn". He does, however, note that other markets, such as truck bodies, were fairly stable with growth seen in repairs, rebuilds and pre-owned sales.

Van der Walt adds: "Production numbers declined by close to 50 percent. This left us with the challenge of having to manage the financial implications of high stock levels of new trailers."

The market was faced with supply outweighing demand, which, he says, forced companies to cut rates and halt operations. "The key here is to plan ahead when business is good, so that capital finance is available to keep staffing reductions to a minimum," he advises.

From the trends that emerged in response to the past financial crisis, the manufacturers point out a few things that companies should focus on this time around.

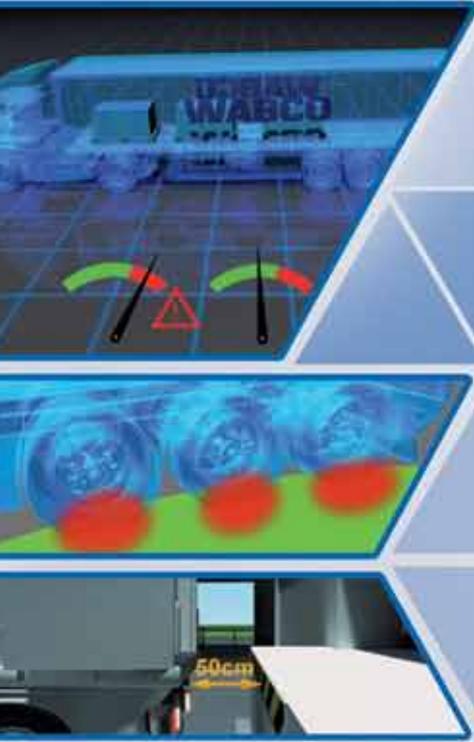
"We need to relook at the manufacturing process in order to reduce overhead and fixed costs. We also need to build trailers in a more cost-effective way," Marques advises. He also notes that reduction in staff levels will, unfortunately, be inevitable.

In a similar vein, Holcroft notes that Serco has invested heavily in new technology to improve production and control costs.

Van der Walt says: "Strict cost controls, along with improved management of cash flow, are essential." He adds that overhead costs need to be cut and new business opportunities should be sought.

"Although the last recession was followed by a period of slow growth, with buyers having to regain confidence in the industry, we are thankful that the demand for trailers has increased tremendously, and good momentum has been gained over the last six years," Van

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## TANKERS AND TRAILERS

der Walt adds.

We asked the three companies how they believe trailer manufacturers need to adapt in order to survive another possible economic slowdown.

Marques recommends going back to basics and focusing on producing core products. "Tough times like these provide an opportunity to clean house. In addition, reducing fixed costs it is critical to surviving in this environment, I also believe there will be fewer players in the market by the end of the cycle."

Van der Walt is of the opinion that flexibility in product offering will help differentiate one company from another in times of low demand. "Being able to supply different products to a variety of market segments will help ensure companies stay productive," he explains.

He adds that it is important to find ways of "doing things better"; from customer service and product innovation to understanding customers' needs and wants.

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***This potential second makeover of the trailer manufacturing industry may help to make players more resilient, which can only mean improved offerings to their customers.***

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"Other important business elements, such as an established name in the market and a wide product offering with complementary value-added services, will put a company in good standing over the competition," Van der Walt notes.

"Ethical business principles and maintaining good relationships are key to sustainability," he stresses.

From Holcroft's perspective, it is important to continue helping customers "get the edge" despite pressures on the company to run a tight ship.

He explains: "Since the last recession, Serco has focused on reducing costs and improving efficiencies, but with global manufacturers looking to expand into new markets, it's important for local manufacturers to become competitive, while offering world-class products in order to hold their own."

All three manufacturers note the need for the industry to remain focused and motivated while weathering the storm. They also agree that there is an urgent need for the industry to find innovative ways of working while improving the products on offer.

This potential second makeover of the trailer manufacturing industry may help to make players more resilient, which can only mean improved offerings to their customers. **IFOCUS**



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# MAINTENANCE, FROM A MAINTENANCE PERSPECTIVE

It is becoming increasingly clear that vehicle maintenance is falling by the wayside, with many operators using inferior parts, taking shortcuts, or neglecting this necessity altogether ... GAVIN MYERS finds out more from the perspectives of an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and a private workshop

**S**peaking with Mark Diab, senior manager retail support, UD Trucks SA and Dino Pillay, of Cordoba Motors, located in Phoenix Industrial, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), one gets the sense that the topic of vehicle maintenance currently sits on a knife edge.

On the one side, there are professional facilities that make use of top-quality parts

and practices, as well as a plethora of solutions designed to ease the "burden" that maintenance has become.

On the other side, though, are the many issues that have contributed to this necessity being seen by some as a burden, or a grudge purchase.

Trying to unpack the current state of play and find the best way forward brings many issues to light.

## **WHAT ARE THE CURRENT TRENDS?**

At the centre of this topic are the vehicle operators, who decide when, where and how their vehicles are maintained. They are also most affected by current economic conditions which, says Diab, could make it very difficult to strictly comply with the service requirements stipulated by the OEMs. "In some cases operators will only do the basic oil changes to comply



with the OEM's warranty," he says.

There are those who try to comply with OEM requirements – generally large fleet operators. "They often take out maintenance contracts or service agreements to ensure that their trucks are well maintained and constitute a lower risk of "downtime"; which, at the end of the day, results in a higher loss of income to the company," Diab notes.

On the aftermarket side, Pillay has noticed

the spin-offs of these trends. "There has been a major dip in new truck sales; most owners are holding onto their trucks for longer. While this is good for the independent aftermarket workshops, operators are trying to reduce maintenance costs. The use of inferior-quality parts causes undue problems, as it means downtime for the operator," he says.

#### **HOW BAD IS THE PROBLEM?**

This is a multifaceted question, but the straightforward answer is: it's getting worse. "This can be noticed with the vast increase of truck accidents on our roads. The main issues found to be the cause of accidents are a result of the lack of maintenance," Diab illustrates.

From UD's perspective, Diab says the most neglected areas are routine maintenance of the truck as per the OEM's requirements including safety-critical items, such as servicing of brakes. "There are two reasons for this: affordability and cost pressures, due to highly competitive transport rates. In some of these accidents, brake linings have been completely worn and in others trucks have been found to have no brake linings at all.

"Then we have a substantial number of trucks that are not roadworthy at all. Overloading of trucks is also a major problem, placing increasing demands on their braking systems.

"To compound this issue, the majority of trucks on the roads are towing trailers that, in some cases, have very poor or non-functional brakes. That's a huge problem, which places increased pressure on the truck tractor and the question of affordability to maintain these trailers comes up."

Pillay couldn't agree more. "We have found that the larger operators are more stringent in their maintenance regime compared to the smaller operators, who would rather wait a little longer. Preventative maintenance and basic servicing are the most often neglected areas and many operators also want to save costs by lengthening service intervals. This compromises safety-critical issues that could be attended to by servicing at the correct time.

"The media has played a significant role in highlighting the state of some trucks travelling on the country's roads. Repairers that conduct poor-quality work need to be taken to task. Compromised repairs, besides

posing safety risks to other road users, also give the broader repair industry a bad name.

"The skills shortage also contributes to poor maintenance, as, without the proper skills, the vehicle is not maintained properly. Cordoba Motors is a proud member of the Motor Industry Workshop Association (MIWA) and accordingly complies with a high level of trading ethics," he continues.

#### **HOW CAN OPERATORS BETTER MANAGE OR LOWER THESE COSTS?**

The exchange rate, the cost of transporting parts (whether these are manufactured locally or imported) and the cost of labour, all contribute to the cost of maintenance. There are two main ways of lowering the overall cost of maintenance, while still using a reputable workshop and high-quality parts.

The first is to not neglect maintenance to begin with, and to undertake preventative maintenance and servicing at the recommended intervals. "Among the normal benefits of servicing also lies the opportunity to detect other repairs that, if not undertaken, may lead to breakdowns." Pillay explains.

"In most cases, early detection and rectification costs less in the long run. Just changing an oil filter and oil does not mean that the vehicle has been serviced – the rest of the vehicle remains unchecked.

"If you suspect that your vehicle may be in need of attention, call on your nearest repairer for an opinion and a report. Operators should also have fleet staff that are technically trained and mechanically minded to ensure optimum use of their fleet. If possible, specific people should be responsible for specific tasks," he advises.

The second way to lower the cost of maintenance is to have maintenance or service contracts in place – and here operators are advised to know what they are buying. "As a general rule, there is no real difference in the terminology. Nonetheless, it is vitally important that customers read and familiarise themselves with the cover stated in the agreement they are purchasing," Diab says.

OEMs, like UD, offer various packages that are designed to meet the demands and requirements of operators. Having these in place returns more benefits further down the life of the vehicle as well, such as a good resale value.



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## WHERE TO IN THE FUTURE?

"The general trend within the industry is to move away from general financing in order to own the vehicle, to either Full Maintenance Leasing (FML) or an Operating Rental," says Diab.

"FML provides the cover for all maintenance and service requirements over

the MIWA. Cordoba Motors was recently the first truck workshop in KZN to be awarded a five-star grading by the MIWA.

Pillay continues: "Vehicle technology is changing all the time, so technicians need to be up to date and follow manufacturers' service schedules meticulously, as they



the financed period, where the operator would only pay one premium to the financier each month. At the end of the term, the truck can be returned to the finance house and, should the operator so wish, a new agreement with a new truck can be started. In other words, the truck has now become a means of earning income."

From a workshop perspective, Pillay advises being accredited and graded by

have done their research with regard to the vehicles they produce.

"Even though there is a major skills shortage in our field, there are opportunities for us, as commercial workshops, to train school leavers and the unemployed. We are proud to say that many past employees now work at OEM dealers and are utilising the knowledge gained at our establishment." **IFOCUS**



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# DOUBLE-TROUBLE

Most South Africans are spoilt for choice when it comes to the wide array of products and different brands that can be found in supermarkets countrywide – but certain fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) don't get where they need to go in time ... We discover how supply chain management can resolve many FMCG problems

**T**he business glossary *BusinessDictionary.com* defines FMCG as frequently purchased, essential or non-essential goods – such as food, toiletries, soft drinks or disposable diapers. Naturally, some are more perishable than others ...

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa sees one in eight children die before the age of five. "This is despite having the food to feed them," says Hermann Haupt, GM for the sub-Saharan Africa business of CHEP – a logistics solutions provider. Haupt alerted supply chain professionals, at the 37th annual SAPICS conference, to the severity of the food crisis.

"At five percent, compared to the western world's 60 percent, food waste in Africa (by the consumer) isn't the main problem," stresses Haupt. "It is food loss. We lose about 220-million tonnes of food annually through incidents during the early stages of the supply chain, from post-harvest and production to retail, but the food deficit needed to feed the hungry is only 45 million

tonnes. We need to resolve only 20 percent of the losses to fix this crippling problem."

CHEP is a division of supply chain logistics giant Brambles, which is actively looking at ways to remedy the situation. Haupt continues: "Forty percent of the continent's children are stunted – physically and mentally underdeveloped as a result of malnourishment.

"This makes them more susceptible to disease and less able to learn, ultimately influencing their ability to work and develop themselves both from a personal and professional standpoint."

He emphasises that Africa has five times fewer roads than the developed world. "On top of that, congestion at seaports and delays at border posts makes for a challenging cold chain environment."

Haupt adds that there are five stages of food loss and crucial supply chain management details often overlooked. These include:

- **Production:** "Yield in Africa is just 1,1 t per hectare, but 3,2 t in the rest of the world!" he says. "Even a small increase in yield can make a massive difference to the

malnutrition problem. We need to find a way to transfer skills to African farmers."

- **Harvest processing:** Problems include timing, storage and refrigeration methods.
- **Industry processing:** Taking consumer-ready product and getting it to market. "Packaging is a major issue here," Haupt explains. "When products are packaged in bulk or in containers that aren't suitable, the packaging is easily crushed and the food wasted."
- **Distribution and sales:** Forecasting is not accurate; resulting in oversupply and waste. "Retailers focus only on displaying perfect-looking food, rather than concentrating on whether the food is still nutritionally perfect."
- **Waste:** Consumers buy too much and do not monitor sell-by dates.

Haupt maintains that while some are long-term solutions – such as closer collaboration of African governments, building road/railways and processing facilities; in the short term, the most sufficient supply chain is obviously one where the production facility is as close as possible to users.

“Ultimately, we need a coordinated and collaborative effort if we are to make a difference,” he points out, citing that the supply chain management industry is the place to start. “Correctly managing food supply chains can have an immediate result by overcoming obstacles in the distribution of goods to those in desperate need.”

Fast-moving consumer goods also face other challenges as transport owners and operators, even at their most efficient, are at the mercy of escalating road tariffs, upped driver fees, rising maintenance costs, and, of course, erratic fuel prices.

“We are running out of options,” cautioned Zane Simpson in his presentation of the Logistics Barometer, launched in June 2015 by Stellenbosch University, at the recent SAPICS conference.

The talk highlighted various solutions that could curb rising costs throughout the supply chain ...

Unlike Europe, where most agricultural goods are produced within a small kilometre radius of the point of sale, South Africa’s transport distances are extensive,

compounded further by inland mineral reserves that must be transported to seaports. Inland Gauteng, especially, has a high demand for goods requiring long-distance carriage.

Based on the current rate of demand growth, freight is likely to triple over the next three decades from the current 781 million tonnes moved annually. “Imagine three times the number of trucks on our road network and the impact this would have on road infrastructure, traffic and delivery times. If we don’t change, a system shock is inevitable,” explains Simpson.

“What we can still change is behaviour on the demand side. Consumers are spoiled for choice,” says Simpson. “By demanding less variety, consumers will inevitably reduce the amount of transport needed. This will save money, result in less road congestion and, ultimately, benefit our environment. The logistics industry, too, must be transparent about these benefits.”

He adds that there has to be a change in the way goods flow between points; whether driven by technology or by this

reduction in the variety of brands and options on offer to consumers.

“In cases where no alternative exists other than to convey goods over long distances, intermodal transport (moving containers using multiple transport modes) could have a dramatic impact, but requires significant investment in rail systems.”

Simpson and his team propose that all other conveyance options and alternative technologies, even the unconventional, need to be considered.

“For example, 3D printing items close to source, rather than having to transport from afar, would help to reduce transport demand and subsequent costs. Seemingly ridiculous ideas, such as building a canal between KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, long-distance conveyor belts, or drones, need to become part of mainstream conversations if we are to reduce logistics costs,” he says.

“Overall, instead of trying to reduce transport costs in isolation, we need to work hard at economic growth, which will solve more problems than just increasing logistics costs.” **IFOCUS**

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**THE ROAD AHEAD**

# MAKING HISTORY!



In what has been mooted the biggest truck deal in the history of Namibian trucking, A van der Walt Transport Namibia has acquired 30 Scania. CHARLEEN CLARKE travelled to Swakopmund to witness history being made!

**T**he excitement in the air is palpable. Cars are stopping and motorists are staring. The pavement is being cleaned ... even one speck of dirt is a speck too many. Banners are being erected, and, slowly but surely, a fleet of pristine Scania trucks is being parked in front of one of the most unusual buildings in the global trucking world.

That's because the building, itself, is shaped like a truck! However, today the building is taking a back seat to the collection of Scania trucks on the pavement ...

Andre van der Walt, owner of the transport company, is understandably upbeat. "This is a big day in the history of our company," he tells **FOCUS**. "It is a big day for our family too."

Incredibly, his company remains a family-owned undertaking – with a decidedly

homely feel to it. His son, Jakkie, is in charge of operations and information technology. His daughter, Jolett, runs finance and administration. His son-in-law, Charl, heads up the parts division.

This is not to say that it is a "mom and pop" show though ... *Au contraire*, A van der Walt Transport is one of the largest and most respected transport operators within Namibia. Of course, this wasn't always the case ...

According to Andre van der Walt, he started his life many years ago in South Africa. "I was one of the first transporters to import long-nosed trucks from the United States. My most famous truck was probably the Lady In Red, a bonneted Peterbilt. Sadly it was destroyed in an accident in 2000."

In 1999, he decided to start the Namibian company (he's a Namibian citizen

now). "We used left-hand drive American trucks in those days. We could still import them then; they were very cheap," he recalls. When the laws changed, he started buying new Freightliners.

Today, he has a fleet of 120 trucks – and (yes we all know that this sounds cheesy) the business is growing in leaps and bounds. The fleet traverses all corners of sub-Saharan Africa.

"We specialise in long-haul transportation in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique – moving refrigerated, containerised and break-bulk cargo throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region," he tells **FOCUS**.

In view of the company's exponential growth, it needed to replace existing trucks



stand for long periods at times [at border crossings for instance; we also don't drive between 22:00 and 05:00], but this is still a substantial saving," explains Van der Walt.

The management system of the Scania trucks is also perceived to be a big advantage. "It is very professional; Scania offers a complete package. Furthermore, the servicing programme is the best in the industry at the moment."

Van der Walt says it is a case of looking at the complete package. "In the transport industry we have to be more professional. There are a lot of good trucks out there, but they don't offer the whole package and the fuel advantage."

The maintenance programme was another reason for going the Scania route. "It's a big advantage. We have built a new workshop and it will be manned by a dedicated Scania mechanic. The workshop is 40-m long, so three or four trucks can be serviced simultaneously."

This is a highly advanced facility. "We have invested many millions to ensure that it is of the same standard as the very latest Scania dealership," Van der Walt tells

**FOCUS.**

The 30-truck order is made up of the R500, which is hooked to interlinks, and the

advantage [without any negative quality connotations]. Furthermore, Van der Walt Transport has imported left-hand drive Freightliner Coronados, which it has converted to right-hand drive units.

"These are not money-making trucks; they're all about advertising the business and making a statement," Van der Walt explains.

Today, half of the fleet is used for refrigerated transport, while break bulk cargo and containers account for the balance. "We are fortunate to be extremely busy; over the past couple of years we have never not had enough loads. Zambia, the DRC and Namibia are showing good growth and we're delighted by the growth in chemical tankers in Namibia," he reports.

Thanks to the fact that it is a very efficient facility, the port in Walvis Bay is showing good growth too. "Our business is expanding in line with the port, which is growing by ten to 20 percent each year. A substantial amount of cargo is moving from Dar-es-Salaam [Tanzania] and Durban to Walvis Bay," he reveals.

Cargo is moving because Walvis Bay is more efficient and cheaper. "Our port is better organised. Furthermore, our



*Scenes from the handover: pictured (from left) are Jolett and Andre van der Walt; Clifford Marchbank, managing director of Scania Truck Namibia; Jakkie van der Walt; and Jaco Zondagh, sales manager of Scania Namibia.*

and also add to the fleet. "As such, we took the decision to purchase 30 Scania's now," he reveals.

As an aside, two thirds of the trucks within the fleet are fully paid for; only one third of them are financed.

The low fuel consumption of the Scania trucks swayed the deal. "We ran a number of Scania demo trucks and found that we can lower our fuel consumption by ten percent versus our American trucks.

"Fuel only accounts for about 35 percent of our total costs, because our trucks

P410, which forms part of the tri-axle reefer fleet. Van der Walt says that he buys imported trailers. "We buy Afrit and Henred interlinks and GRW tankers and then we import Utility or Great Dane reefers from America.

"The payload afforded by these trailers is much better, as is the quality. The whole reefer is made out of aluminium; we have been running them for 25 years. I am not a fan of locally built refrigerated trailers; they aren't as robust as the American trailers."

The company also imports all its tyres from China, claiming a 50 percent price

port is promoted and supported by our government. The South African government doesn't see the urgency in developing its ports."

Naturally, his company is not without its challenges. "Like everyone else, we are facing the worldwide economic downturn."

Still, he doesn't see any reason to complain. "We are busy! We are growing! I anticipate that we will have 200 trucks within the next two years ..." And, if things keep going right, they will all be Scania's ... **IFOCUS**

# AN EYE-OPENING TRIP DOWN THE N3

GAVIN MYERS recently embarked on an informative road trip with the N3 Toll Concession (N3TC) from Gauteng to Kwa-Zulu Natal. He came back with a new respect for what it takes to manage and maintain one of the country's busiest logistical arteries

**T**he N3 is a road of fascinating statistics. Traffic volumes on the road linking Gauteng and Durban range between 8 500 and 13 500 vehicles per day. During peak traffic periods this can spike to more than 3 000 vehicles per hour in certain sections!

Heavy vehicles constitute more than 30 percent of traffic on the route and an average of 58-million tonnes of freight is carried along this corridor per annum.

Without the N3 as a passageway for goods to move between the inland areas and the Port of Durban, the country would not be able to function. A national route of such importance requires dedicated management and support – just what the N3TC provides.

The N3TC manages the section of the route beginning at the Cedara interchange near Hilton, Pietermaritzburg, and ending at the Heidelberg South interchange in Gauteng – about 415 km in total. The sections of the N3 south of this to Durban and north to Johannesburg are operated by the South

African National Roads Agency (Sanral).

Con Roux, commercial manager at the N3TC, explains the requirements of the 30-year concession contract between Sanral and the N3TC: "Our mandate is to, design, construct, finance, operate and maintain the 415 km section of the N3. It is very comprehensive contract that is well managed by Sanral; we have a great public-private partnership that is in everybody's interest."

Currently half way through the contract (which expires in October 2029) the N3TC has more than its "trucks in a row" when it comes to meeting its obligations. A lot more, in fact ...

## **THE WEIGHT OF THE LAW**

Leaving Johannesburg, the first aspect of the N3TC one encounters is the Heidelberg Traffic Control Centre (HTCC); the "northern gateway", as Roux describes it.

"The HTCC is a wonderful opportunity to check whether the south-bound trucks are roadworthy before they get further down the route. This is a primary aspect of road safety

and we need more compulsory-stop facilities on the route. We have around 1 000 crashes a year on our section of the N3 and trucks are involved in over 50 percent of them," he explains.

Fred Kleynhans, CEO of Zimele Investment Enterprises, which runs the HTCC, explains that the purpose of the facility is to ensure safety on the route by removing the hazards of overloading and poorly maintained vehicles from the road.

Between 8 000 and 11 000 vehicles are weighed at the facility every month and the overloading factor is just three to five percent. However, there's more to the HTCC than simply weighing ...

The Vehicle Testing Station (VTS) facility was added in December 2014 at an investment of almost R25 million per side (north- and south-bound). The VTS is essential to the aim of removing unroadworthy trucks from the road before they get any further ... one particular previous VTS inspection resulted in a shocking 70 percent of vehicles



being taken off the road!

"Every vehicle found to be overloaded (or at an officer's discretion) is sent to the VTS; where its brakes, lights, tyres, ball joints, steering rack, chassis, and so on, are tested while it is still overloaded," explains Kleynhans.

Only then is a vehicle allowed to park at the holding facility to have the load – and any defects – rectified. It must then pass another VTS inspection before it can go back to the scale and carry on with its journey. The average "time in detention" is a costly five to six hours.

"Even the smallest overload causes a huge increase in strain on the vehicle's mechanicals that can lead to failures along the route, for example at Van Reenen's Pass," Kleynhans cautions.

**GRUDGE PAYMENT OF FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE?**

The first N3TC toll plaza vehicles have to pass through from Johannesburg is De Hoek, which caters for 2 500 vehicles per hour at

peak capacity. All toll plazas on the N3 route are managed by the Tolcon Group, and the responsibility of running them falls on its operations manager, Paul Iyer.

The collection of tolls from the N3TC's five mainline and five ramp plazas is the only revenue stream for the concession – which is used to finance the cost of operations, and maintain and upgrade infrastructure. (Toll tariffs for the four vehicle classes are set by the minister of transport in accordance with a formula based on the initial toll tariffs and linked to annual CPI adjustments. They are adjusted and published in the Gazette annually.)

It is estimated that using the N3 route between Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal is safer and will save light vehicles 20 percent in fuel, wear and tear, running costs, and time.

Interestingly, the plazas themselves aren't as simple as they seem. Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) is now in a testing phase as another option for convenient payment.

Each lane has load-shift sensors to alert

truck drivers and toll collectors to this and an Automatic Vehicle Classification System (AVCS) uses laser technology to scan incoming vehicles and determine the correct class for billing. At the back-end, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras and a Video Toll Audit System (VTAS) provide further physical evidence of each vehicle that passes through.

**THE HEART OF THE BEAST**

The N3TC Route Control Centre (RCC), managed by N3TC route control manager Annatjie van der Sandt, is the centre that ensures the N3 operates smoothly.

Centrally located at Harrismith, communication is the name of the game at the RCC ... up to four operators man the RCC, where calls from travellers are received, pertinent information is sent out and an incident coordination function is performed.

"We started the call centre 2008. Before that yellow SOS phone boxes were available every two kilometres along the route ..."

Van der Sandt smiles. The RCC fields calls from commuters reporting animals, debris, accidents, blown tyres, smoke, and so on, along the route, but it is so much more than a call centre.

In the case of an accident being called in, two of the operators are qualified ambulance assistants, who used to work in emergency call centres – meaning they are skilled to understand what’s happening on the other end of the line and can keep callers calm. The RCC will then send N3TC route patrollers to assess the scene and notify emergency services.

The RCC records all calls in an electronic occurrence book and an internal system captures all information about accidents. From this, statistics are generated and this information is used to implement engineering interventions to alleviate the probability of accidents.

The 17 variable message signboards, strategically located along the N3, are controlled from the RCC. Scheduled messages run daily, but if an incident occurs the messages are changed to alert drivers.

“Twitter is also extremely important to our function,” Van der Sandt explains. “We tweet accident notifications, weather warnings, information on how to report incidents and we engage with travellers.”

Currently the N3TC has around 50 000 followers. “Now that there’s widespread use of *Twitter* our incoming calls have decreased by around 2 000 a month, but at peak times this can be as high as 7 000,” she continues.

“To the best of our knowledge, our use of *Twitter* was the first initiative of its kind,” Roux adds.

### **EMERGENCY SITUATION**

Van Reenen’s Pass is easily the most notorious and dangerous section of the N3 route. The long, often steep descent is harsh on braking systems; wind howls along the pass with the change of season and snow often renders it impassable. Stationed at the top of the pass is the Van Reenen Emergency Centre.

Miles le Roux, transportation manager, N3TC, shows us the centrepiece of the operation: a MAN tanker that doubles as a brine dispenser and fire truck. The brine is sprayed on the road before it snows to stop the formation of black ice. “The snow zone is halfway down the pass, from the lower arrestor bed to Harrismith,” explains Le Roux.

“When it begins to snow we try to keep traffic moving. The heat from the vehicles passing prevents snow from gathering on the road,” he says, adding that the Free State roads department and even a local farmer have graders on standby to clear snow if needed.

“If a truck jackknives on Van Reenen’s Pass in snow, we have to close the road at Harrismith and Tugela. If snow is very heavy we will close the road anyway,” Le Roux continues. Since you can’t tell the road from the surrounding landscape in such weather, the team has some quad bikes at hand to travel up the road and tell truckers that it’s closed for business.

Out of snow season the vehicle is used as a fire truck for veld and vehicle fires. Its skilled operators are trained firemen, too. Foam is carried for petrol or diesel fires,

and Le Roux explains that the aim is to put out brake/tyre fires. “Vehicle fires often start here and we have to

get to it quickly to stop it from spreading.”

As the nearest fire station is in Ladysmith, the Van Reenen Emergency Centre also helps with community fires.

Wind is another danger that requires some strategic thinking from this team ... Wind can reach speeds of 141 km/h up the pass, and start blowing trucks over at 126 km/h. When wind reaches more than 80 km/h warnings are sent out by the RCC.

“Truckers know where the problem areas are and stop when they get there. We try to sort the vehicles and protect the light, unladen ones by placing them on the inside lane with the heavy, laden ones on the outside, and sending them along in convoy,” Le Roux explains.

### **WORLD-CLASS ROAD INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

The N3TC route is divided up into six sections. Each section has one Route Services patrol vehicles and a Specialist Incident Manager (SIM). Each vehicle is manned by two people and must cover its section twice in a 12-hour shift.

They are in direct contact with the RCC (that knows exactly where each vehicle is, thanks to their Ctrack tracking systems). Fully kitted out, each vehicle costs in the region of R750 000 and can perform a variety of operations.

“When sweeping they will stop at crash scenes, remove any objects on the road, help customers who have broken down, remove any stray animals from the road and report anything suspicious,” Le Roux explains, imploring motorists to also report these to the RCC, noting the route markers every 200 m along the route.

The average response time is required to be 45 minutes, but the team far outpaces this with the longest recorded time being 28 minutes. When the roads are busiest, patrollers do three sweeps per shift and an extra vehicle covers Van Reenen’s Pass.



The vehicles and their drivers are equipped and trained for minor assistance and first-on-scene first aid. At a crash scene, their primary role is to act as the scene coordinator, securing the scene and getting it open as soon as possible, so no subsequent crashes occur.

The route services and SIMs are trained in accordance with the Road Incident Management System (RIMS). Praveen Sunderlall, regional RIMS manager for KwaZulu-Natal, explains that RIMS is the third iteration of an approach that has evolved over 25 years. "It is to ensure that at every scene there is coordination, communication and cooperation with set procedures that must be followed. It is this component that saves lives."

The Route Services also embarks on a variety of special operations, often in conjunction with the South African Police Service (SAPS), to check dangerous goods compliance (about 93 percent are in compliance); target stopping on freeways at night and roadside vending; animal operations; and night-time visibility operations.

"During night operations we have found

car carriers with people and drums of diesel in the cars on the trailer," Sunderlall reveals to a group of stunned journalists ...

**DOING IT FOR, AND WITH, THE PEOPLE**

Our final stop on the N3TC trip is the Mpofana PPP at the Mooi River plaza. This is an example of how a public-private partnership should work. Sunderlall talks us through the various aspects of the initiative.

"Our analysis shows that most accidents occur between 22:00 and 06:00, when there is little enforcement. We entered into a public-private partnership with the Mpofana municipality to employ traffic officers. We train and pay them. We also pay for two branded vehicles. It's a three-year pilot project (of which there are ten months left) that has yielded great dividends. The number of accidents has been reduced and stolen vehicles have been stopped."

This "elite" team of officers makes use of some pretty special intelligent enforcement equipment, the centre of which is the Black Box. Toll plaza gantries, speed-over-distance cameras and ANPRs are linked to the Black

Box. Every vehicle that passes one of these is scanned and if a vehicle is flagged, the system tells the officers that it's headed their way.

As an aside, ten strategically located CCTV cameras and two thermal cameras, monitored by the RCC, will be connected along the N3 Route before year end.

Sunderlall explains that the SAPS reported a reduction of crime in the Mpofana area as well. He continues: "Nobody wanted to take ownership of this community. There was also no primary healthcare centre or ambulance service; people were dying in silence. We decided to intervene and a provincial ambulance now services the area. This has built great relationships with the community."

As if to bring our journey full circle, Sunderlall explains that the N3TC is project-managing the upgrading of the weighbridge and VTS near the plaza. The first phase will be ready to operate in the first week of December and will be fully operational by April 2016.

"We want people to know that we're not just another toll company," Sunderlall says proudly.

After spending time behind the scenes with the N3TC, I couldn't agree more. **IFOCUS**



Join us on our  cyberstoep

**Earth** – A stoep, stoop, porch, veranda or portico (whatever tickles your colloquial fancy) is loosely defined as a roofed platform along the outside of a house, level with the ground floor. It is, however, more than that ...

It's a place where you can enjoy a sundowner after a hard day's work, a place where you kuier with friends and discuss whatever is on your mind, or where you cuddle up with a good book on a glorious day. It doesn't have to be a physical place, built out of bricks and mortar either ...

Charmont Media Global has launched its CyberStoep, where all these activities are happening digitally. This website aims to entertain as a flock of journos review, give their opinion and write about absolutely anything and everything under the sun.

"Charmont's two flagship magazines (FOCUS on Transport and Logistics and SHEQ MANAGEMENT) are performing exceptionally well, but they are very specialised publications," says Jaco de Klerk, CyberStoep's Stoep Manager. "CyberStoep, on the other hand, allows us to diversify our offering, which means more material for our readers and an array of topics for our journalists to write about – in short, fun all-round."

This "diversity" is exactly what sets the Stoep apart from other lifestyle websites, which mainly focus on a certain demographic, specific market segment or product offering. "There is no topic too controversial, place too far-flung or product too scarce that can escape our Stoep's chitchat," adds De Klerk.

Catch more at [www.cyberstoep.co.za](http://www.cyberstoep.co.za)



# THE PURSUIT OF PERFECT CONSUMPTION

GAVIN MYERS joins Volvo as it sends two popular FH models from Jet Park in Gauteng, to Pinetown in KwaZulu-Natal and back – on a quest for ultimate fuel consumption



It is a struggle to understand how the employees at the Volvo Pinetown dealership manage to get their work done every day, with the rather delectable aroma hanging in the air from the Bakers Biscuits factory just across the road ...

Having just arrived at the dealership, after about nine hours on the road with driver trainer Yaganshran "Alvin" Naiker in an FH480, I can think of little else but clawing at the gate and asking for handouts.

We are, however, here on a mission of a less tasty, but equally satisfying, kind: to extract the best real-world figures possible from the FH480 and its smaller FH440 brother - which has just pulled in behind us with driver trainer Mthokozisi "Mtho" Sangweni at the wheel.

The test was put together by Volvo Trucks South Africa demo fleet and training manager, Phillip Phasha. His aim was to demonstrate what is achievable with these popular FH "all-rounders", when driven by trained drivers and using Volvo's on-board Dynafleet system.

Both vehicles are hauling identical Afrit flat-deck interlink trailers. Phasha was unable to secure a full 56 t load for each rig, due to logistical constraints, so these are loaded with 32 t of bricks on loan for the test from Rosema Bricks.

"This is a benchmarking exercise for a long-haul roundtrip trip on the N3. Most operators claim an average fuel consumption of 1,8 km/l, we are aiming for around 2,2 km/l," Phasha explains.

Naiker and Sangweni have nearly 30 years of driving experience between them. Both have worked for some of South Africa's top transport operators and have been training Volvo customers for a number of years. They're both particular fans of the FH's fuel-saving features and the Dynafleet system.

Leaving the Volvo head office in Jet Park, on Gauteng's east rand, at 06:00, Naiker wastes no time explaining the virtues of the Eco-Roll system. "When the system identifies that the truck is on a flat or downhill section, it automatically puts the transmission in neutral and allows kinetic energy to carry the truck for up to three kilometres."

The system requires the truck's 12-speed I-Shift transmission and three-stage retarder to be in their automatic modes. "All you need do is set the over-speed control on the cruise control. As soon as the truck's momentum reaches this speed, the engine brake and retarder will engage to bring it back to the speed you've set for the section of road ahead," he explains.

If the truck encounters an uphill gradient and loses a certain amount of momentum, the transmission will engage the correct gear to allow it to keep climbing efficiently.

On the trip back I join Sangweni in the FH440 - I'm particularly interested to see how the less-powerful truck compares as we climb our way back up to the reef. "We need to observe how it does up Marian Hill and Van Reenen's Pass - the more gear changes made, the heavier the fuel consumption will be," Phasha explains.

Sangweni illustrates the virtues of the Dynafleet system as he uses it to coach himself on the trip. "There are various aspects to the system," he begins. "It monitors my driving and, using the Driver Coaching component, I can see where I'm doing well, or what I might need to improve. The Trip Log records details such as fuel used; idling time; over rewing and coasting - which the boss can also view online or on the Dynafleet app."

The system also goes a step further, incorporating a two-way messaging feature with a wireless keyboard in the cab (that can only be used when the vehicle is stationary).

"You see! Driving a truck is all about having patience!" Sangweni exclaims as he hits his target consumption near the end of our trip. "Using training, the truck's systems and the Dynafleet coaching, any driver will be able to repeat the figures we've obtained on this test."

Back at Volvo HQ, Phasha is pleased with the results returned by both vehicles. "We've been able to practically show the market what a Volvo can do, and the difference proper driver training can make," he smiles.

As for me, the test has brought a few things to my attention as well ... First, if transport operators and their drivers were all as passionate as the likes of Phasha, Naiker and Sangweni, South Africa would have a far safer trucking industry.

Second, real-world fuel consumption gains are easy to achieve if you have the will to do so. And, third, I'd still kill for some of those freshly baked biscuits ... **IFOCUS**

Test results	Fuel used (l)			Average consumption (km/l)		
	Jet Park to Pinetown	Pinetown to Jet Park	Total	Jet Park to Pinetown	Pinetown to Jet Park	Total
	FH 440	237,94	277,30	515,24	2,32	1,99
FH 480	244,02	288,78	532,80	2,31	1,95	2,12



# EURO 5 MAN TGX - EFFICIENCY MEETS SWAG

MAN unveils its new TGX Euro-5; a truck that is said to “check all the boxes” on the long-haul operator’s wish list. THATO TINTE was there



**G**athered at MAN’s Pinetown Assembly Plant on September 8, industry partners and the media waited in anticipation for the unveiling of MAN Truck & Bus SA’s One MAN Kann launch ceremony.

The mood was so electrifying that not even the damp weather could curb the excitement, as we waited for the all-new Euro-5 MAN TGX 26.540 6x4 BLS (XLX) EfficientLine truck tractor to make its groundbreaking South African debut.

The day’s proceedings included talks and presentations from the MAN team, who all gave insightful details of MAN processes, the TGX Euro-5 specifications and the blockbusting One MAN Kann adventure into Africa.

Geoff du Plessis, MD of MAN Truck & Bus SA, spoke passionately about MAN’s impressive first carbon-neutral factory in the world and described the organisation’s product offering and philosophies.

Dave van Graan, head of truck sales, gave a very engaging talk on MAN’s practices and robust efforts to reach and connect with various generational groups on social media. He also enjoyed hearing the crowd chanting “MAN Kann” in answer to his interactive questions.

The grand reveal was breathtaking as the TGX Euro 5 made its way to the marquee,

with traditional Zulu dancers paving the way and leading it to the cheering crowd — the scene was spectacular.

With its striking features, it is clear why the TGX is said to take long-haul trucking to the next level and set a new benchmark for the trucking sector.

Among its many notable offerings, the long-haul truck tractor is equipped with a MAN D26 common-rail diesel engine producing 2 500 Nm of torque, a 12-speed MAN TipMatic automated manual transmission and MAN BrakeMatic technology [that produces an extra 110 kW of braking power].

Additional standard safety features include a Lane Guard system, Adaptive Cruise Control, Electronic Stability Program to prevent roll-overs and an Emergency Stopping Signal.

“The TGX is equipped with the roomiest cab ever released in southern Africa. It also comes with the latest comfort features including air-conditioning and a hi-tech media system with Bluetooth functionality,” said Van Graan with excitement.

Just as we thought things could not get any more interesting, came the announcement of the 52-day Africa adventure being undertaken by celebrity explorer, Riaan Manser, in the TGX Euro 5.

To prove its confidence in the truck and demonstrate its long-haul capabilities, MAN has entrusted the trucking novice to travel 14 500 km across nine southern African countries on what MAN says will be “one hell of a ride”.

Manser and his co-driver, Nduna Chari, a professional long-haul truck driver with 12 years’ experience, will tackle the roads of sub-Saharan Africa to transport mosquito nets and other malaria prophylactics. MAN’s partner in this initiative is Roll Back Malaria.

Chari drives for Barloworld Manline and is hailed as one of the company’s best long-haul drivers. Manser, on the other hand, has been well equipped with MAN ProfiDrive training, making the two ready to hit the road.

The journey, which began in Pinetown on September 8, will see Manser and Chari journey through countries including Namibia, Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya.

A television production crew is travelling with the two men to film the journey and document the team’s on-road experiences and events.

The videos will be placed on *YouTube* with regular episodes shown every Tuesday until November 3. Regular updates of the trip will also be posted on the One MAN Kann social media pages. **| FOCUS**

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Bucketing rain could not dampen the spirits of the Isuzu Truck South Africa team, as GAVIN MYERS joined them for the “launch” of the KANU Commercial Body Construction/Advanced Chassis Technologies (ACT) bodybuilding operation, now under the company’s leadership



African people say it’s a good omen when something important happens and it rains.

This is our first week operating KANU/ACT and, after days of sunshine, all of a sudden it’s begun to rain,” Siphso Sandla, GM for KANU/ACT, says as we discuss Isuzu Trucks’s new venture during a momentary break in the bucketing rain.

The KANU/ACT facility is located a stone’s throw away from the Isuzu Trucks distribution facility in Port Elizabeth – a city where disorderly weather is nothing out of the ordinary ... However, what you’ll find at the KANU/ACT facility is, indeed, quite out of the ordinary.

KANU/ACT’s history stretches back to 1963, with its engineering section (KANU, then Southern Star Engineering) opening in 1982. The company has been involved with General Motors since the 1980s and today has a level-four BB-BEE scorecard and is ISO 9001 accredited.

“Following a four-month transition phase, Isuzu Truck South Africa now owns 100 percent of the company,” explains Sandla, who has 23 years of manufacturing behind him, eight of which have been spent with General Motors and as plant manager at the Isuzu Trucks Port Elizabeth assembly plant.

While the take-over should give Isuzu Trucks a competitive advantage in the marketplace, COO, Craig Uren, explains that this is not necessarily the case: “The bodybuilding sector is not in a good place at the moment. Margins are small and sustainability is a tough task.

“Trucking is a collaborative business – you can’t do it in isolation – and the response to our business decision has been the opposite of what we expected ... There have been lots of requests to collaborate, as well as requests for business that we don’t have the ability to fulfil. This has been passed on to other bodybuilders.”

The new facility will also not be exclusive to Isuzu. “KANU/ACT has the expertise to design and develop customised transport solutions for its customers, which other bodybuilders either can’t or don’t do. There is, therefore, a lot of diverse capability in the plant’s operations and any body for any vehicle can be made,” Uren says.

This product line-up includes designs for freight and logistics operations, construction and tippers, waste removal, vehicle recovery, water tankers, trailers, specialised units, firefighting units, farming units, truck tractor conversions, tag-axle conversions, cab conversions and special customer projects.

High-tech auto-CAD design systems and 3D modelling are employed to test stress tolerances and designs before manufacture.

This multi-talented operation also has the capacity to fit various accessories including: bull bars, air-conditioners, radios, auto-lube systems for construction machinery and safe stops. Pre-delivery inspection (PDI), weighbridge facilities, certificate of fitness assessments and fire certification can all be undertaken as well.

Currently KANU/ACT employs 70 people between the two operations and between 40 and 70 vehicles pass through the facility each month. Components are manufactured in the KANU workshop where the sheet metal is laser and plasma cut before being sent to the press to be “bent into shape”.

From there, assembly commences in the welding shop before finishing and painting take place. Five quality gates along the manufacturing process ensure each component is up to standard before it can proceed to the next phase.

Without ACT, KANU can’t really operate. The ACT division is essentially an extension of the Isuzu Trucks production line, specialising in prepping the vehicles before the bodies, manufactured by KANU, can be fitted.



**A GOOD  
OMEN**



**Above:** The N-Series transporter can carry any four N-Series trucks within all regulations.

**Left:** This FTR 850 has had its chassis modified to carry a Hyva crane for a customer.



the vehicles built, they are re-homologated and tested. "Isuzu Truck South Africa is the first original equipment manufacturer to physically homologate and test each vehicle it sells," Uren notes.

"This acquisition complements our growth strategy and we believe the acquisition of KANU/ACT will definitely enhance our current business structure. The move to acquire these entities will centralise the process of buying our trucks where everything will be processed from one central point of contact," says Uren.

For Sandla, the work now begins to streamline the operation by implementing the kaizen manufacturing principles he put to such good effect at the truck plant. The saying "it never rains, but it pours" has never before had such an optimistic meaning. **IFOCUS**

Among ACT's arsenal of engineering achievements are chassis extensions and reductions, modifications to crew cabs that allow them to tip (a requirement of certain municipalities), and Isuzu truck tractor up-fitment.

Once the modifications have been made and

## **TOUGH TRUCKS, TOUGH RACE**

The acquisition of KANU/ACT by Isuzu Trucks South Africa coincided this year with the annual PE to Plett mountain-bike race. This is the second year Isuzu Trucks has been title sponsor, and the race gave the company a chance to show off some of the engineering from the KANU/ACT operation.



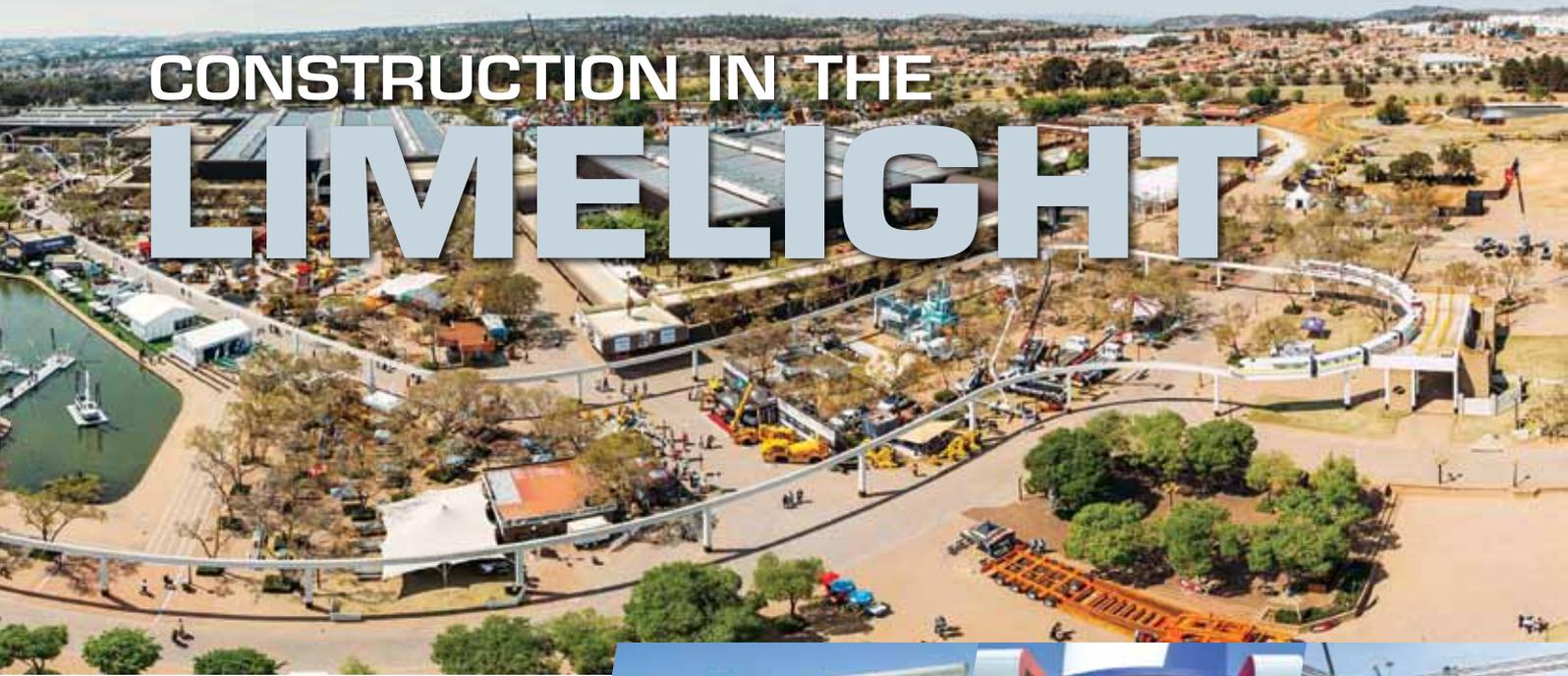
Showcasing the versatility of its trucks, Isuzu Trucks customised an FTR850 AMT truck into a bicycle carrier. The truck also doubled as a media and internet centre during the race.

"The Eastern Cape has been the home for Isuzu Trucks South Africa production plants since the early seventies. We are committed to investing in communities and having a lasting impact on them. Our involvement in the race affords us this opportunity," says Uren.

Known as "the Tough One", the 340 km race ran this year from Port Elizabeth to Plettenburg Bay, between September 3 and 6, and attracted more than 250 mountain-biking enthusiasts.



# CONSTRUCTION IN THE LIMELIGHT



Billed as “the must-attend trade fair for the mining and construction industry on the African continent”, Bauma Conexpo Africa 2015 took place at the Johannesburg Expo Centre Nasrec between September 15 and 18. **FOCUS** was there



**W**hile the organisers projected that more than 20 000 visitors would attend the show, it was quieter than expected – with 14 300 visitors from 75 countries. Nonetheless, 616 companies from 42 countries occupied the 68 000 m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space.

A few members of the commercial vehicle industry were in attendance, offering a variety of solutions for the construction and mining clientele. These included Fuchs Lubricants, Loadtech, MAN Truck & Bus South Africa, Martin Trailers and Scania South Africa.

The overall feeling was that, although the number of visitors seemed low, the people visiting the stands were “the right people”.

“We’ve been pleased with the show this year,” says Alexander Taftman, product and marketing director, Scania South Africa. “We have had a number of enquiries and deals off the stand.”

Of course, the “yellow metal” is always the star of a Bauma expo, and there was much activity in this sector too. Babcock International, known to our readers for

representing the DAF Trucks brand, also represents Volvo Construction Equipment, Winget, Tadano, Volvo Penta and, in South Africa, is the exclusive distributor of Shandong Lingong Construction Machinery (SDLG).

SDLG launched its B877 backhoe loader to Africa at the show. Already hugely popular in the Middle East, since its launch at the end of 2014, the SDLG B877 is an 8,4-t, side-shift backhoe loader designed for all-day operation. It is remarkably versatile, whether using the loader or the excavator, and has the power and manoeuvrability to handle most jobs in this weight class.

It is fitted with a turbocharged 70 kW Weichai engine that, together with the efficient SDLG hydraulic system, provides 60 kN breakout force. The B877 can be equipped with a variety of attachments and tools to handle an even more diverse range of tasks, including a multi-purpose front bucket as standard.

“This is a challenging market at the moment with a decline in the mining sector. With more focus being put on construction, however, the B877 backhoe loader is an ideal solution for small contractors and

other construction customers. We expect the model to be as popular here at Bauma Conexpo Africa as it has been in other regions,” says Stefan Bach, SDLG business manager for Africa.

Co-locating with Bauma Conexpo Africa was the first IFAT Environmental Technology Forum for water, sewerage, refuse and recycling solutions for the mining and construction industries. Big news at IFAT this year was the launch by Goscor Cleaning Equipment of its HPVR-1000 Recycler, Combi and Mobile Vacuum Trailer.

Locally engineered and produced by Vaal-based Highpoint Vacuum, the HPV-1000 is claimed to be a first for South Africa. The Recycler is a combined vacuum and suction truck with a water recycling system used for cleaning sewerage and storm drains.

The machine’s capability to recycle jetting water can save up to 20-million litres of water per annum. It holds 6 000 litres of clean water and has a 10 000-litre suction tank.

The mobile vacuum trailer can be easily towed behind a pick-up truck allowing easy access to any industrial or mining site. **IFOCUS**

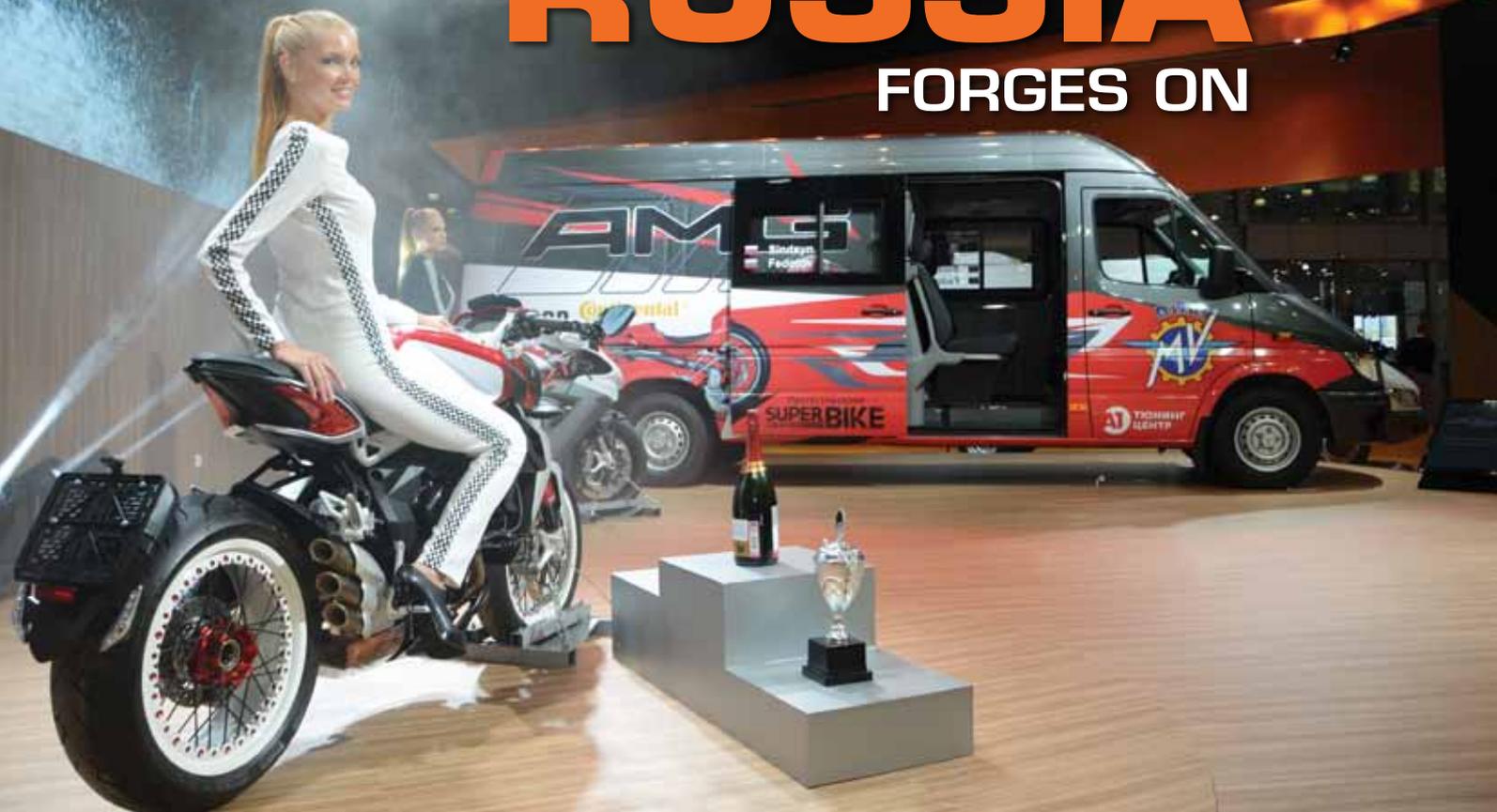
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# RUSSIA FORGES ON



Comtrans 2015 – the 13th international exhibition for commercial vehicles, held in Moscow, Russia – is claimed to be the largest exhibition in that country. Here are some highlights

**F**ollowing the economic crisis of 2008/9, the Russian heavy commercial vehicle market (six tonnes and over) grew rapidly – reaching its highest volume ever, of 134 000 units, in 2012.

However, since that time, the market has contracted markedly. In 2013, new registrations fell by 22 percent to 105 000, and, in 2014, sales lost another 23 percent, falling to 81 000. Demand this year is expected to further decrease by roughly one quarter, to around 61 000 new vehicles.

While a turnaround is not expected to happen soon, there was still much to get excited about at Comtrans 2015.

## **KAMAZ**

The “cab of tomorrow” was the centrepiece on the Kamaz stand. Italian design house Torino Design was commissioned to conceive a truck interior that functions as a means of transport, office and home. Kamaz 2020 is the result. It has the same dimensions as a conventional cab, but with flexibility and space management never seen before.

The cab is divided into “driver” and “day” zones: drivers can take a jog on the built-in

treadmill, have a shower, cook like a chef on the fold-away induction plate stove, make an espresso, and watch their home cinema before going to bed in total comfort.

There’s lots of tech, too. Four cameras are connected to four displays positioned inside the A pillars, substituting the wing mirrors. The dashboard is driver oriented and features hi-tech digital instrument panels, a 13-inch tablet, a navigation system, head-up display and weather station. The steering-wheel centre contains a cradle for your smart phone.

Fitted with electromagnetic suspension, the driver’s seat detects road bumps and reacts in real time, reducing vibration by more than 90 percent, and so decreasing fatigue.

## **GAZ**

The GAZ Group is the largest producer of commercial vehicles in Russia. The company presented seven new Generation NEXT vehicles; including van, truck and bus models.

“For the first time, the GAZ Group presents entirely new models in all the segments in which we participate – the result of dramatic improvements in manufacturing technologies

and the highest level of development in our design school,” says Vadim Sorokin, president of the GAZ Group.

The new debutants kick-off with the GAZelle NEXT range of vans and people movers. With the release of the van version, the company now enters a new segment of commercial vehicles, previously represented by foreign manufacturers.

New specialty versions of the Ural NEXT double cab, with space for seven passengers, debuted at the exhibition. This vehicle provides off-road capability with modern standards of comfort and reliability.

The new GAZon NEXT truck tractor was designed for minimum cost per kilogram of cargo, and can carry double the load of the GAZon NEXT rigid truck.

Two buses also premiered. The small-class Vector NEXT is based on a modular design to easily create coaches of differing dimensions. High levels of driver and passenger comfort were a key design consideration.

Finally, a new GAZ low-floor bus for urban transport was displayed. With capacity for 75 passengers, it is equipped with a new Euro-5 YaMS-530 engine and ZF running gear. The new bus features some high-tech



safety and convenience features, such as video surveillance and on-board navigation.

### **MERCEDES-BENZ**

The Comtrans exhibition comes just after Fuso had been integrated into the business scope of Mercedes-Benz Trucks Vostok (MBTV); a 50:50 joint venture between Daimler AG and KAMAZ, during June. The company is now in charge of production, sales and service of Mercedes-Benz and Fuso trucks, as well as sales and service for Mercedes-Benz and Setra buses in Russia.

Among the highlights of the MBTV exhibition was the new Mercedes-Benz Actros, which will be introduced to the Russian market in 2016. The Actros 1848 LS truck tractor took pride of place.

Designed for international transportation, the new vehicle features Euro-6 technology and is configurable with the GigaSpace cab, Mercedes PowerShift 3 automatic transmission, a full set of aerodynamic spoilers, stabilisation system, FleetBoard, bi-xenon headlamps and massage function for the driver's seat.

The bus subdivision of MBTV introduced the Setra S415 UL Business Euro 5. The bus is designed to transport 51 passengers and 5,2 m<sup>3</sup> of luggage on suburban and inter-city routes. During 2015, this division took leadership of the Russian market among foreign bus manufacturers.

One of the main highlights from Mercedes-Benz Vans was the premiere of the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Classic Edition SuperBike. This unique van is designed exclusively for the Russian market. It pays tribute to the ever-growing popularity of biking in Russia by providing bikers with a secure, weather-proof

means of transport for their motorcycles, gear and other essentials.

### **MAN**

It was a centenary celebration at the MAN Truck & Bus stand. The company unveiled to the Russian market its TGX D38 "100 Years Edition" – the flagship in the range designed to "appeal to those customers with a genuine passion for the product".

"The '100 Years Edition' offers the unique performance and efficiency of the TGX D38 with the added features of a real eye-catcher – and all ex works," says Heinz-Jürgen Löw, director of sales and marketing.

The colours: MAN stone grey metallic, MAN D38 red, MAN steel blue metallic and MAN crystal white metallic, were specially developed for this vehicle. Two large flaming lions on both sides dominate the exterior.

Alcoa Dura Bright EVO aluminium wheels add further eye-catching detail and complement the highly-polished stainless-steel front and side bars with integrated LED accent lighting.

Enhanced driver comfort is at the heart of the interior of the "100 Years Edition", including the Plus infotainment package and optimised seating.

Also making its premiere was the MAN Lion's Intercity bus. Designed to reduce overall operating costs, it can be used as a well-appointed intercity vehicle, shuttle transport and as a robust school bus. It features the 216 kW [290 hp] DO8 engine, has 55 seats, two wheelchair spaces and one wheelchair lift.

### **RENAULT**

Renault's new range made an appearance

at its stand, including the Renault Trucks T High 480 and the Renault Trucks T Optifuel 460 for long haulage; Renault Trucks K 430 and the Renault Trucks C 430 Air for heavy construction and transport construction operations respectively.

Of particular interest is the flagship of the new range, the Renault Trucks T High. It is equipped with a Euro-5 DXi 13, 358 kW (480 hp) engine and Optidriver gearbox; high sleeper cab; two aluminium fuel tanks plus a rear-axle stabiliser.

The T-Optifuel version features the DTi 11 Euro-5 engine of 343 kW (460 hp). The T-Optifuel offers an aerodynamic package and intelligent technologies, such as the fuel eco-pack, inhibited power mode, Eco Cruise control with the Optiroll controlled freewheeling mode and a disengageable air compressor for improved fuel efficiency.

Independent certification body, TÜV Rheinland, certified a 10,9 percent reduction of fuel consumption for a Renault Trucks T Optifuel, compared with a standard model.

### **VOLVO**

While 12 Volvo vehicles caught the attention of visitors, it was the FH16 6x4 truck tractor, with new heavy-duty bumper, that was the focus of visitors' attention. Also in the spotlight was the Volvo FH 4x2 Methane-diesel truck tractor – illustrating a breakthrough technology based on the contemporary demand of the Russian market.

Two interactive three-screen truck simulators of the Volvo FH and Volvo FMX were available for visitors to test the benefits of utilising Volvo trucks on long-haul routes, or in heavy construction. **IFOCUS**

*As regular readers of FOCUS know, this magazine has been appointed an associate member of the International Truck of the Year (IToY)! FOCUS is the sole South African magazine to have joined this prestigious body. One of the advantages of this association is access to exclusive articles, specially written for FOCUS by ITOY jury members. This is one such article.*



## IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE! IT'S ... THE **TELEFERICO**



South America's shanty towns are known for their rough terrain. Inhabitants are sometimes forced to walk the rocky hills on foot to get to major cities, as conventional transport is not always able to get to these informal settlements. THATO TINTE looks into the continent's cable-car system as a form of urban transit

**K**nown for the greatest football players in the world, South America is also home to some of the most remarkable geographical features on the planet. At the risk of taking you back to high school geography, I need to mention the noteworthy and diverse topography of this continent.

From the long chain of mountains that run along the Pacific coast, to the Amazon lowlands of Brazil and the luscious agricultural region of Argentina, South America is indeed a "continent of extremes".

With such a rich landscape, one can only imagine how tricky travelling around the hills, canyons, rivers and steep slopes must be. Although South America has sought-after cities such as Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Buenos Aires in Argentina, and Medellin in Columbia, there are also numerous poor, isolated, low-income informal settlements.

Some of these impoverished slums and shanty towns are easily found within, or on the outskirts of, the cities – notoriously known as *favelas* in Brazilian Portuguese. Many locals in these poverty-stricken

communities have to find ways of navigating through hilly areas to get to work into the cities.

Enter the era of cable cars as part of an integrated rapid-transit system. Historically associated with ski resorts and gondola lift systems, cable cars are fast becoming an alternative transport solution for this continent.

In Medellin, Columbia, the Metrocable started operation in 2006 in the once-isolated area of Santo Domingo.

Dubbed the first city to install cable cars



building the largest urban cable-car system in the world. With three lines already running, state company *Mi Teleferico*, which translates to “My Cable Car”, will be adding more lines along La Paz, thus creating a total of nine cable lines with routes growing from a radius of ten to 30 km.

With Medellin’s cable-car system said to carry more than 3 000 passengers per hour, *Mi Teleferico* says 27 000 passengers will be able to be ferried on completion of the nine lines. It is hoped that up to 16 lines will be completed by the year 2030.

A completion date of the project, which is being built by Austrian engineering company, Doppelmayr, is yet to be announced. It is projected to cost US\$ 450 million (roughly R6,1 billion). Doppelmayr says the cost of the additional six lines is “relatively cheaper” than building underground tunnels or tram networks.

To ride on the *teleferico* is cheaper than other modes of Bolivian public transport; a ticket costs three Bolivian boliviano (just less than six rand). This is certainly a good price to pay for built-in WiFi, 20 to 40 minutes off your travelling time, and breathtaking views of the Andes Mountains.

Although it is popular and has received good reviews and positive public feedback, the cable-car mass-transit system has been marred with a few concerns. In all cities upgraded with the system, residents of private properties below the cable-car lines have complained about a lack of privacy, with curious commuters able to peer into their homes – an act Bolivian locals say has increased curtain sales in the city.

Other concerns have evolved around the possibility of passengers being stranded in cabins during power outages. The people of South America have, however, welcomed the cable-car system as an aid to their communities, and the world at large, with its low carbon emissions.

Cable cars today – and perhaps flying cars tomorrow? What is certain, however, is that South America is paving the way for alternate transport solutions and taking the cable car, as a form of transport, to new heights. **IFOCUS**

for mass transit purposes, the development aimed to help communities living in steep, hillside villages, which are unreachable by car or bus, to commute in and out the city.

This is how Cable Propelled Transit (CPT), or cable cars, came into effect as mass transit systems in the continent. Soon after Medellin, other cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Caracas in Venezuela and La Paz in Bolivia followed suit.

Bolivia, which has the Andes Mountains running along it, has challenges of steep terrain, high density and narrow streets.

Sold to tourists as “the city that touches the clouds”, La Paz in Bolivia is the highest city in the world; impressively elevated at 3 500 to 4 000 m above sea level.

The government estimates that about 85 to 90 percent of the approximately two million people are dependent on public transport. As a result, traffic becomes a nightmare in the metropolitan area as streets are filled with fleets of minibuses and taxis.

To help alleviate this congestion, the Bolivian government has worked towards

# BIG ON CHOICE



GAVIN MYERS drove the all-new Vito at launch and found it to be a little confusing

**T**here was, in fact, much confusion at the launch of Mercedes-Benz's new Vito, during mid-September. You see, the new range consists of four diesel engine options, denoted 111, 114, 116 and 119; either front- or rear-wheel drive and a six-speed manual or seven-speed automatic gearbox; three body styles, of Panel Van, Mixto and Tourer; and two spec levels – Pro and Select.

There's more ... The all-new front-wheel drive setup is only available with the base 1,6-litre 111 engine (the other three engines being of 2,2-litre capacity), while the Pro and Select spec levels are only available on the Tourer.

The choice is mind-boggling at first – as is the catalogue of accessories – so, best to drive them all to get things properly figured out!

Let's begin by looking at the body styles. The Panel Van is claimed to have the highest payload in its class, of 1 344 kg. The front-wheel drive versions benefit from 120 kg more payload than those fitted with the heavier rear-wheel drive setup.

The van is accessed by side sliding doors and rear swing doors that open up to 180° without the need to release any additional catch.

The Mixto version offers seating for five together with loading space, accessed

by a rising rear tailgate. Along the floor of the Mixto's load compartment are rails to which a number of accessories can be fitted.

The Tourer version is the full people mover. In the Pro variant it is fitted with the three-seat front bench of the Mixto and Panel Van (which is, unfathomably, fixed in position) for a total of nine seats. In Select spec you get individual front seats.

Mercedes-Benz has updated the interior of the Vito with an uncluttered, ergonomic design. While the overall design is pleasing, it is overly sombre with the swathes of black plastic that do appear a bit cheap – even compared to the previous model. Unfortunately, different rattles in the cabins of numerous models we drove didn't help initial impressions of quality.

Ignoring the non-adjustable passenger bench on some models, the independent suspension all round results in a comfortable ride and good on-road dynamics.

At the Zwartkops Raceway skidpan, Mercedes-Benz was keen to show us exactly how controllable the new Vito is in emergency situations. The range now features Electronic Stability Control as standard and each model reacts confidently and safely to emergency inputs.

Back to the on-road driving; the 84, 100, 120 and 140 kW motors each provide

strong, refined performance both on the open road and in town. I did not get a chance to sample the 7G Tronic automatic transmission, but the six-speed manuals are well matched to their respective powertrains. One was, unfortunately, stubborn with the engagement of its fifth and sixth ratios, requiring consistent double declutching to shift into these.

Mercedes has paid close attention to running costs with the all new Vito. Fuel consumption is said to be as low as 5,7 l/100 km on the Vito 116 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY, for example, while service intervals are set at a staggering 40 000 km. A five-year/120 000 km service plan is available on Mixto and Tourer variants.

Pricing begins at R372 780 for the 111 CDI Panel Van and goes up to an eye-watering R744 386 for the 119 CDI Tourer Select.

There's no doubting the sheer choice presented by the new Vito, and that it is quite good on the road with its new range of engines and comfortable, confidence-inspiring ride.

At these prices, though, I hope the niggles experienced on the launch were exclusive to these early models. I look forward to spending more time with the new Vito to find out – and to put my confusion to rest. **IFOCUS**

# SHOW ME THE MONEY TRUCK



**It's all about the Money Truck at Volvo Trucks South Africa as 100 customers stand a chance to be entered into a lucky draw where 1 extremely lucky customer wins back the value of their newly purchased Volvo FH.**

Here's the opportunity of a lifetime. Win the value of your Volvo FH. This exceptional offer is only valid for Volvo FH models.

So, how do you enter? It's quite simple... every Volvo Truck purchase deal concluded and delivered between now and Monday, 30 November 2015 will see 100 lucky customers, chosen at random, entered into a lucky draw.

The 100 lucky customers will attend an event in Johannesburg on 10 December where the draw will take place and the lucky winner drawn at this event will win back the value of the truck. For all Volvo Truck deals and competition enquiries, please contact your nearest Volvo Trucks sales representative.

We thank you for your interest in Volvo Trucks and trust that your next Volvo FH purchase will deliver with it your winning entry.

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**VOLVO TRUCKS**

Volvo Trucks. Driving Progress





# ANOTHER LOOK

GAVIN MYERS has the JMC Vigus for review again, and comes away pleasantly surprised a year down the line

In November 2014 we published a review on the just-launched JMC Vigus, concluding that in some respects it moved the game on for Chinese bakkies while, on the other hand, it was filled with too many niggles and short on some features expected at the price.

Shortly after that review, JMC revised the pricing and now – almost a year later – we've had the opportunity to revisit that exact same vehicle and see if some of the niggles have been ironed out.

Given general factors affecting vehicle prices, the 4x4 SLX 2,4 diesel version today costs R365 990; R14 000 less than its original, unrevised launch price. The price still includes a five-year/60 000 km service plan, three-year/100 000 km warranty and 24-hour roadside assistance.

After a year of use, the high-quality interior looks and feels as good as new. Some issues still need to be addressed, though – such as the fiddly semi-touch-screen entertainment

system and the tendency for its screen to be unreadable in sunlight. Nonetheless, not a squeak or rattle can be heard after a year, which bodes well for the JMC's build quality.

As far as driving the Vigus is concerned, our first review criticised the gearbox for being notchy and having a tendency to "lose" the gate, with one unable to move the gear lever over to select first gear. It seems that some miles have worked this issue out of the system, with the five-speed gearbox as easy to operate as it should be.

JMC claims a fuel consumption figure of 8 l/100 km from the 90 kW/290 Nm four-cylinder turbodiesel.

As before, the Vigus's compliant suspension impressed with its comfortable ride. We packed full the 1 475 (l) x 1 475 (w) x 500 mm (h) rubberised (as standard) load bay when needing to transport some heavy boxes, putting the 815 kg payload



capability to the test. The Vigus easily swallowed the boxes, though the soft suspension setup is noticeable with weight on the back.

Since our original review, rival Chinese manufacturer GWM launched two very appealing vehicles in the Steed 5E (**FOCUS** March) and Steed 6 (yet to be tested).

However, the only direct rival for this range-topping, 4x4 SLX diesel Vigus is the Foton Tunland 4x4 (**FOCUS** June 2013), with which it competes favourably on price and spec, but loses out to with regard to outright power and load capacity.

To choose between these two value-oriented 4x4 double cabs would be difficult – but the opportunity to sample the Vigus after some real mileage has shown that it has what it takes to stand up to use and abuse. **IFOCUS**

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It's our business to keep you on the road for longer. That's why the new Vito Panel van comes standard with a 5 year/120 000 km service plan and greater fuel efficiency. What's more, the Panel van offers both driver and co-driver airbags and is now available in a front-wheel drive option.

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# A SEA OF POSSIBILITIES



South Africa's maritime industry is booming, mirroring the global trend. It is easy to understand why when you look at the developments taking place ...

It is the era of the environmentally friendly vessel, and Cape Town-based Veecraft Marine, a member of the Nautic Group, is leading the way with the development of hybrid-propulsion technology for the local market.

Veecraft Marine is set to become the first vessel-construction and maritime-engineering solutions company to introduce hybrid-propulsion technology in South African-built commercial crafts.

Although hybrid-propulsion technology has been around for some time, recent advances in engine and gearbox construction have made it possible to introduce this technology on a commercial basis in smaller maritime crafts.

"Hybrid-propulsion technology in the maritime industry can be compared to that used in the automotive industry," says Veecraft Marine's Andre van Niekerk. "Similar to those found in the auto industry, today's electric motors and batteries for the maritime industry are small, highly efficient and capable of generating the power required by small commercial passenger vessels – such as ferries and tourism boats."

The company expects this technology to become increasingly popular in the years to come, due to the significant emission and fuel-reduction benefits associated with hybrid-propulsion systems.

"Hybrid propulsion is also suitable for patrol vessels used by the oil and gas industry. These vessels are required to be fuel efficient when maintaining low and sustained speeds for patrol operations, but equally capable of reaching high speeds when, for example, the vessel is needed to intercept an intruder," Van Niekerk continues.

"The flexibility of hybrid propulsion makes it possible to achieve both speed and fuel efficiency because the technology allows the vessel to go from electrical power to a combination of electrical and diesel power when additional speed or power is required."

Van Niekerk expects hybrid propulsion to become increasingly popular among environmentally conscious vessel owners and operators determined to reduce fuel costs, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, while maintaining speed and performance.

Things are also booming abroad, as Rachel Connor – marketing leader for the marine business of GE Power Conversion – states in the organisation's thought leadership piece, entitled: Five things you may not know yet about the marine industry.

"The marine industry is rapidly evolving. While new technology means that vessels are more efficient, the need to keep up with the demands of globalisation has also meant that we're seeing faster and larger ships at sea."

Connor continues: "GE technology has been at the forefront of some of these developments. The recent launch of GE Marine, which combines expertise from several areas into a single business, will also help to ensure that GE is fully dedicated to making the naval, marine and offshore industries more efficient, safer and cleaner."

She highlights five facts about the marine industry that have been shaped by these recent trends:

**1. The world's fastest ship is powered by jet engines**

Francisco, the world's fastest ship, uses



a modified jet engine that was originally developed for the first C-5 transport aircraft, to enable the plane to carry heavy cargo across the Pacific Ocean. When it took off in 1968, the C-5 was the world's largest aircraft, with the height of a six-story building and a length of over 73 m.

"Through research and development across GE, the TF39 engine (which was developed by the company for the airborne behemoth) has been adapted for marine use, with the modified LM2500 engines producing up to 34 MW of power each," Connor explains.

Using these engines, the Francisco ferry is powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG) and can travel at speeds of up to 58,1 knots (nearly 110 km/h) carrying up to 1 000 passengers and 150 cars.

**2. The largest ship in the world will not actually sail ... for 25 years**

Once complete, the Shell Prelude will be a staggering 488-m long and will displace 600 000 t of water, or as much as six aircraft carriers. "This ship will be fixed in place above the Prelude gas field off the coast of Australia for a projected 25 years, as the

world's largest floating LNG plant," Connor points out.

"GE solutions will drive the large refrigerating compressors and will produce all the electric power required on board by steam turbines."

**3. Over 90 percent of the world's trade is carried by sea**

Connor adds that, while the shipping industry emits far less carbon dioxide per tonne for each kilometre travelled, compared to trucking, global trade continues to increase. "Enhancing the efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint of these ships will be essential."

**4. The world's leading shipbuilders are concentrated in Asia**

From container ships and LNG carriers through to drill ships, floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) units and offshore supply vessels, demand for larger, more complex ships is driving strong competition in the industry.

"The race for new developments and efficiency is led by the world's largest shipbuilding countries, China and Korea, with

Japan continuing to build its position in LNG," Connor explains.

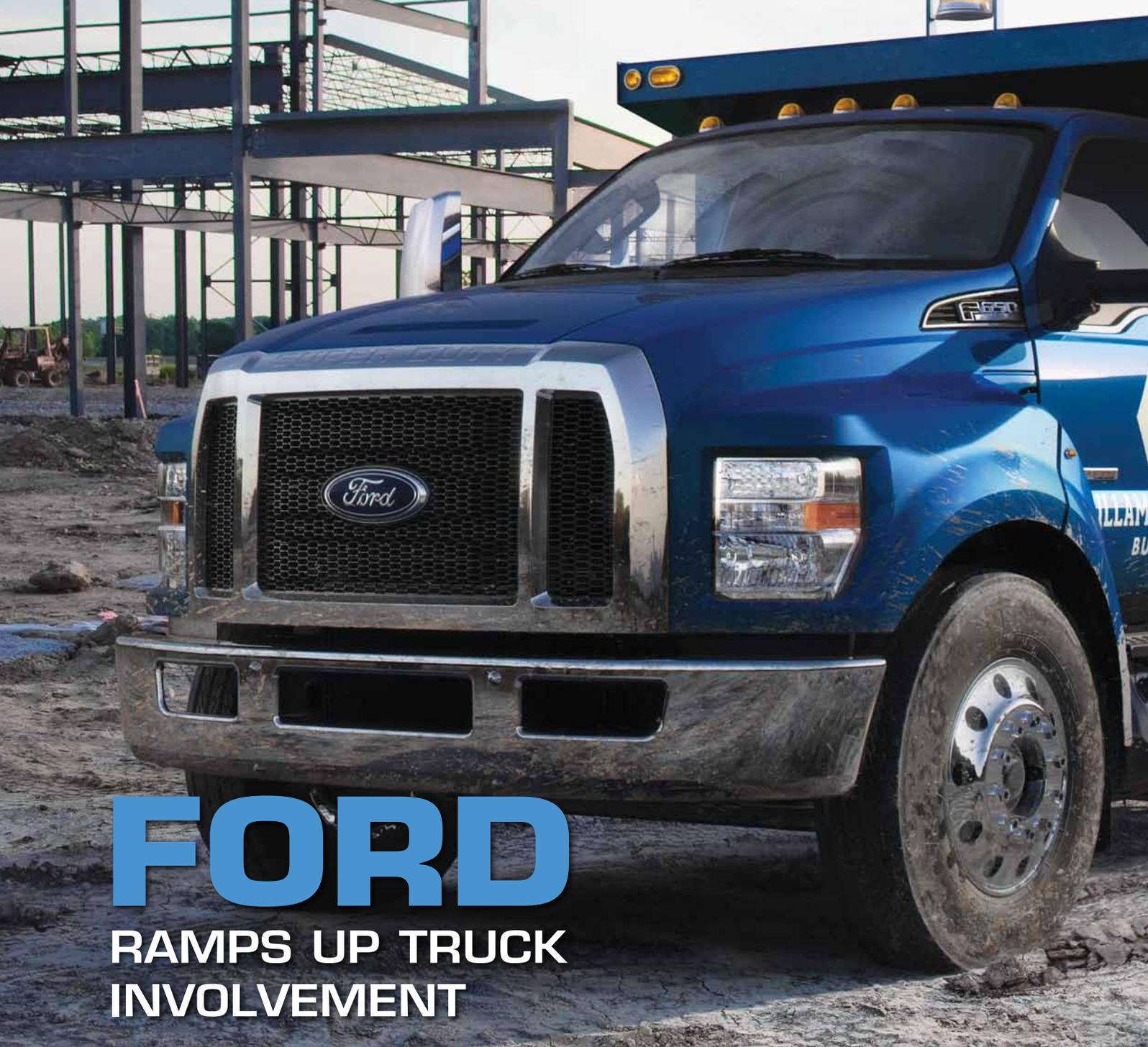
"Our teams and specialist facilities put GE's expertise close to customers. South Korea has some of the world's biggest shipyards; including several specialising in using GE technology to produce all-electric vessels, such as Hyundai Heavy Industries. GE also equipped the first six electrically propelled LNG carriers for China."

**5. The USS Zumwalt can produce enough power for 78 000 homes**

"To put it into context, early naval destroyers were able to produce between three and four kilowatts of electricity," Connor points out.

"The Zumwalt is able to produce an incredible 78 000 kW – enough to meet the power needs of 78 000 homes. Its all-electric system provides power that is able to propel the ship, power the radars and computer systems and provide a surplus to drive all the weapons systems."

With so many new developments and promising prospects, it will be very interesting to see what the future has in store for this booming industry, both locally and abroad ... **IFOCUS**



# FORD

## RAMPS UP TRUCK INVOLVEMENT

In his monthly review of global news for local truckers, FRANK BEETON discloses the most recent significant developments in Ford's reawakening truck interest, reports on Australian testing of Allison's ten-speed automatic transmission, and further clarifies the Navistar International situation "down under"

**S**ince mid-2011, Global Focus has regularly included news snippets suggesting that the Ford Motor Company was increasing its involvement in the global commercial vehicle business.

Although it is true to say that Ford never completely left this field of activity, it certainly retreated significantly from the position it had occupied in the 1970s, when Ford-branded medium- and heavy-duty trucks were a common sight on roads in areas as far afield as North America, Europe, and here in South Africa.

The subsequent sale of the iconic Louisville

Line to DaimlerChrysler in the United States (US), and disposal of European trucking assets to Iveco, seemed to leave Ford with only European van and American pick-up spinoff models. We recently discovered, however, that truck manufacture continued in places like Brazil and Turkey, and it is from these bases that future growth can be sprung.

### DRIVEN BY "ONE FORD"

Much of the renewed impetus appears to be rooted in the "One Ford" global strategy, sired by former president and CEO Alan Mulally in 2007. This strategy brought about the selling off of the Jaguar, Land Rover and Volvo car

brands, and resulted in a purification of Ford's global image, concentrating on its famous "blue oval" emblem.

Its manifestation in the trucking arena has seen the development of new Cargo truck ranges in Brazil and Turkey. The latter are powered by newly developed in-house Ecotorq diesel engines. A strong alliance has also been formed with Chinese enterprise Jiangling Motors Corporation, in which Ford now holds a 32-percent shareholding.

In April 2013, it was announced that Ford Otosan (Turkey) had licensed its Ecotorq engine technology to JMC, and its affiliate JMC Heavy Duty Vehicle Co. Limited, for use



*Ford has retaken total production and driveline responsibility for its North American cruiserweight truck range.*

promising starting points for future rollouts, but much will depend on favourable costings.

Turkey is becoming an increasingly important alternative manufacturing base for European brands, but the recent devaluation of the Chinese yuan may be a complicating factor with regard to export possibilities from the JMC source, so we will be watching for future developments with keen interest.

**ALLISON'S TEN-SPEED AUTOMATIC IMPRESSES ON TEST IN AUSTRALIA**

The subject of automatic and automated transmissions in trucks has taken on added importance in recent years. Following a period when full automatics were mainly used in intensive stop-start, relatively low-speed operations such as refuse collection and other "vocational" scenarios, the increasingly widespread use of automated mechanical transmissions (AMTs) in the 21st century has resulted in an intensified general demand for more driver-friendly driveline configurations.

The AMT's capacity to reduce vehicle abuse, and compensate for lower-skilled drivers, while retaining fuel consumption at levels similar to well-driven manual gearboxes, has seen this transmission type enter virtually every facet of the operational spectrum, including long-distance line-haul.

**ALLISON'S COUNTER ARGUMENT**

Traditionally, torque converter/planetary gear automatics were expected to deliver higher fuel consumption profiles than the ubiquitous friction clutch/manual gearbox combination in higher average speed applications. This tended to limit their appeal in anything other than the lower-speed, stop-start scenarios, where fuel consumption was only a secondary consideration.

As the major global supplier of these gearboxes, Allison Transmission recognised the need to capitalise on the growing popularity of two-pedal driving in the global truck market, and set to work developing a solution that would enable it to take on AMTs over a broader operational spectrum than previously possible.

This led to the launch, in September 2011, of the Allison TC10TS transmission, an unconventional fully automatic unit combining a torque converter with a ten-speed mechanical gearbox, transmitting its power through wet clutches in the main five-speed gearbox and a two-speed planetary range change section.

At the launch, Allison claimed that

in domestic Chinese and export commercial vehicle applications.

**IMPORTANT NORTH AMERICAN DEVELOPMENTS**

The pace of rolling out this strategy has been steady, rather than spectacular, but it does seem to be heading in a positive direction. More recently, the announcement of a new Ford medium-truck series for the North American market has prompted a series of important developments in the global giant's own back yard.

One of these was the fact that production of the latest F-650/F-750 medium-duty series has been moved from the Blue Diamond joint venture – shared with Navistar International and located in Mexico – to Ford's own Avon Lake, Ohio, facility. The other important point

is that this line-up will incorporate an in-house sourced driveline (including 6,8-litre V10 petrol and 6,7-litre V8 diesel power units) and six-speed TorqShift automatic transmission, in place of the bought-in Cummins/Allison combination previously employed.

Both of these moves signal a highly visible and significant increase in commitment by Ford to its domestic truck business, with the added benefits of securing employment and increasing investment in its own country of origin.

It would be unrealistic to expect Ford to unveil a complete global range of medium- and heavy-duty trucks anytime in the near future, but an incremental rolling out of products into receptive markets is a definite possibility.

The Chinese joint venture with JMC and the Turkish Ford Otosan operation seem to be



Allison's TC10 full-automatic transmission has been developed to take on the AMT brigade on a broader front.

TC10-equipped test vehicles were returning average fuel consumption benefits of five percent, when compared to manual transmission or AMT-equipped units.

Until recently, Allison has been concentrating its sales efforts on the TC10 in its home market of North America, where it has reportedly been well received. An example was put on display, two years ago, at the Brisbane Truck Show in Australia. This initial interest-generating exercise has since been followed up by installation of a test transmission in a Kenworth T359 6x4 car transporter operated by Prixcar Services. The rig grosses 36 t and, because of the TC10's characteristics, the final drive ratio has been raised from the normal 4,3:1 to 3,08:1.

#### HOW DOES TC10 SHAPE UP?

At time of writing, the rig was reportedly returning somewhat better fuel consumption than AMT-equipped units in the Prixcar fleet, although no absolute numbers have been published. These are likely to be withheld until the combination has covered significantly more mileage.

The driving impressions reported by several journalists given the opportunity to sample the TC10-equipped Kenworth, at the recent 2015 Brisbane Truck Show, have, however, been most favourable. Comments included a feeling of above-average performance for an 11-litre engine and a "seamless" feel to the gear changes.

The TC10 is programmed to keep engine revs as low as possible, has two reverse ratios, and senses the gradient situation, vehicle load condition and engine brake status when timing its gearshifts. It also has a feature that selects neutral when the vehicle is stationary with the driver's foot on the brake pedal, and

then re-engages drive when the brake pedal is released.

One of the testing journalists expressed the opinion that the TC10 was able to perform more decisively than present-generation AMTs in the situation where the driver slows down before entering a roundabout, and then accelerates into a gap in the traffic.

This scenario reportedly has the potential to "confuse" an AMT, resulting in some indecisive hunting for the most appropriate gear. The general consensus was that, given confirmation of the claimed fuel consumption benefit, the TC10 would provide American, and some Japanese, manufacturers with a viable alternative to AMT fitment at the heavier end of the gross combination mass (GCM) spectrum.

#### NAVISTAR "INTERNATIONAL" BRAND BACK IN AUSTRALIA

Two issues back, in our initial coverage of the Brisbane Truck Show, we noted some changes in the profile of the former NC<sup>2</sup> operation in Australia. Significantly, these included a name change to Navistar Auspac, the arrival of Tim Quinlan [formerly resident in South Africa] to head up the operation, and the announcement that the International truck brand would be returning to the Australian market.

This latter revelation raised many eyebrows, because, for more than eight decades, International trucks were greatly favoured by Australian operators, and their success in that market led to the development

of unique families of locally manufactured, indigenous models named ACCO (Australian Model C Cab Over), S-Line and T-Line.

These vehicles combined US-style truck engineering with the configuration preferences of Australian operators. They were built for both the domestic and some export markets, including South Africa.

However, the demise of the original American parent International Harvester Company in 1986, and its subsequent replacement by Navistar International and the International Truck and Engine Corporation, eventually led to the acquisition of International's substantial Australian assets, including the Dandenong factory, by Fiat Group truck manufacturer Iveco. The International nameplate then gradually disappeared from the Australian scene.

After 1992, Iveco Trucks Australia, in addition to its own range of products, took responsibility for the marketing and support of certain Navistar International trucks in the "land down under". Having obtained the rights to the ACCO line in the acquisition, Iveco Trucks Australia subsequently continued to manufacture and market these models successfully, and rebranded them as "Iveco" products in 2002.

#### NAVISTAR RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA IN 2010

Navistar International subsequently announced that it would formally dissolve its supply, technical, assistance and licence agreement with Iveco Trucks Australia on October 9, 2010, and that, from that date,

it would assume responsibility for the launch of new products from the NC<sup>2</sup> range into the Australian market.

It was also announced that NC<sup>2</sup> would establish a truck assembly facility at an existing Caterpillar manufacturing site located at Tullamarine, Victoria. Since then, however, the global cooperation between Caterpillar Inc. and Navistar, which had resulted in the creation of NC<sup>2</sup> branding, has been progressively scaled back. Further announcements, made at the most recent Brisbane show, have shed more light on the future direction being plotted for the Australian operation.

This commenced with the local launch of the International-branded ProStar, which also happens to be the model on which the Australian Cat range has been based. However, the International-badged version will be powered by a Cummins ISX ES rated up to 410 kW (550 hp) in place of the Navistar-built C13 and C15 engines used in the Cat-branded CT610 and CT630 models.

Other features include three cab options (day, extended and high-rise), GCM ratings of up to 90 t, and wheelbase dimensions of 4,6 or 5,7 m. Future plans include a lighter and smaller displacement engine, possibly from the Chinese-manufactured Cummins

ISG range, and the possible introduction of further International-branded products such as the WorkStar vocational truck family and retro-styled LoneStar.

Existing Cat dealers have been offered the option of also selling International-branded products, and a total distribution network is currently being formulated.

#### OUR COMMENT

We continue to be astounded by the efforts being made by Navistar to grow its Australian presence, while its future position as a new vehicle supplier in South Africa remains clouded in mystery.

At best, the American manufacturer can capture a share of that portion of the Australian market currently held by the likes of Kenworth, Western Star and Freightliner with their normal-control models, but with the International and Cat brands dividing any success into smaller slices of cake.

The absence of a forward-control model in the Navistar line-up will preclude any direct competition with Kenworth's market-leading K Series, Freightliner's Argosy, or any of the premium European models lining up for increased Australian market share.

If, on the other hand, Navistar had continued

its earlier plan to develop a replacement for the forward control 9800 Series, which enjoyed much long-term success in South Africa, it could have retained its previous substantial presence here, and created a suitable spin-off derivative to cover a much bigger slice of the available Australian demand.

Meanwhile, back in the US, Navistar claims that it has taken the industry-leading position in offering Eaton's Precision dual-clutch transmissions to US operators. These new seven-speed automated transmissions will be made available to buyers of International DuraStar medium-duty trucks, and IC Bus CE series school buses.

Global Focus first covered the introduction of the Precision transmission in the June issue, noting that it was intended for trucks with gross vehicle mass ratings from 8 864 to 15 000 kg, has an input torque limitation of 895 Nm, and can be installed behind engines such as the Cummins ISB with outputs of up to around 225 kW (300 hp).

Navistar has also announced that its WorkStar vocational models can now be specified with Cummins ISB 6,7-litre engines, rated up to 242 kW (325 hp), as an alternative to Navistar's own 9,3-litre and 13-litre MaxxForce power units. **| FOCUS**



*Global FOCUS is a monthly update of international news relating to the commercial vehicle industry. It is compiled exclusively for FOCUS by Frank Beeton of Econometrix. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit [www.focusontransport.co.za](http://www.focusontransport.co.za) and have your say.*



*International's ProStar leads the brand back into the Australian market.*

# SHORT HAULS



## VAN WETTENS GOES BLACK!

Since launching its new Pomona, Kempton Park, branch in March, operations for Van Wettens Breakdown Services in the Johannesburg area have grown from strength to strength.

The company has also added some new machinery to its arsenal – the star of which is a new black Western Star that boasts a 432 kW (550 hp) Cummins motor and Eaton autoshift gearbox.

“This vehicle can tow any fully loaded rig with ease and can meet any requirements,” says Morne Fourie, group tactical manager, Van Wettens. “We’ve commissioned all the additional units to ease the work and give better service to our customers. New business and contracts require a lot of commitment, so the additional units enable us to keep our capacity up.”

From the new Pomona branch Van Wettens has been able to enter into a subcontract for Putco bus towing in Pretoria and Selby, Johannesburg.

Van Wettens has also secured a two-year contract to transport and store accident-damaged vehicles for one of the country’s largest auction companies, from depots in Mpumalanga to its office in Johannesburg.

Currently, Van Wettens has four large recovery vehicles in Gauteng, with another two arriving in November that will assist in Johannesburg.

Also at hand is a three-axle low bed as well as another three five-tonne roll-backs, from UD and Fuso, for towing light motor vehicles.

“The Traileze can winch and transport chasses, burnt-out vehicles and buses. In addition to assisting with breakdowns and recoveries, it can also do low-bed work – carrying anything from rollers to small excavators and front-end loaders,” Fourie says.

Fourie explains that this black Western Star will be based at the Ermelo branch where it will service the Bethal/Kriel/Secunda area. “It is equipped with a 40-t NRC crane and a two-stage wheel lift that can tow any combination,” he adds.

Van Wettens Pomona can be contacted for all towing or lowbed needs.

## MOVING WITH SURVIVORS

It was proved, at this year’s Professional Movers’ Association (PMA) Congress, which was held at Mabula Lodge during September, that members of the PMA are survivors – in more ways than one.

First, the interactive theme for the conference was just that – Survivor. Delegates were broken up into eight teams. Each team had to build and dress a mascot (and lug it around wherever they went). They also had to come up with a motto and tribe name.

“This got a great vibe going among the delegates,” says Ian Pettey, who took over presidency of the PMA at the conference. He will be joined by Julie Romanis, who is now at the helm of the South African International Movers’ Association (SAIMA).

“At the gala dinner we announced the winning tribe and survivor, who were “Barney’s Bitches” and Justine Murray, from PETport, respectively,” says Pettey.

There was more light-heartedness this year, too. On the first night there was a Flinstones-themed boma dinner. On the second night the African-themed Saima dinner was held in the adjoining game reserve, and a Gatsby-themed gala dinner, sponsored by Mercedes-Benz South Africa, was held on the third night.

Doug Fear, from Brytons Removals, won the best-dressed prize at the welcome dinner. He was also voted Mr Personality 2015. Tanya Oosthuizen won the female best-dressed prize, while Colleen Clackworthy from Pets en Transit won Mrs Personality 2015.



“Doug and Colleen really were the life of the conference this year; they were a hoot the whole time,” Pettey laughs.

Of course, with Survivor as the theme, the conference wasn’t all fun and games ... Two industry-relevant speakers really hit home with some good advice about hot industry topics. “It’s known that collusion has been an issue in our industry, so Nick Altini, from Cliffe Dekker Hoffmeyer, spoke about the Competition Commission and gave us all guidelines on how to protect ourselves in the future.

“Then, as all moving companies sell insurance to their clients, Fred Abrams from Price Forbes gave us a full run down on what we need to do to become FAIS compliant. They were both very interesting to listen to and their talks were well received by everyone at the conference,” Pettey says.

Among the issues was the feel of general concern within the industry. “There is definitely a downturn in business worldwide, as well as in corporate moves, which has affected our business. Times are really tough,” Pettey adds. “By having really topical speakers it helped keep the focus on the important issues that will help overcome the tough times.”

No doubt the 2015 PMA congress has helped instil the survivor spirit in its members.

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## COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR AUGUST 2015

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

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 13 781
AMH	636
Fiat Group	16
Ford Motor Company	2 567
GMSA	2 736
GWM	113
Jaguar Land Rover	44
JMC	41
Mahindra	199
Mazda South Africa	92
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	12
Mitsubishi Motors SA	22
Nissan	2 688
Peugeot Citroën SA	7
Renault	9
Suzuki Auto	6
TATA	117
Toyota	3 959
Volkswagen SA	517

Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 889
AMH	20
Fiat Group	8
Ford Motor Company	69
GMSA	246
Iveco	27
JMC	18
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	172
Peugeot Citroën SA	6
TATA	34
Toyota	191
Volkswagen SA	98

Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 348
FAW	41
GMSA	93
MAN	4
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	45
TATA	39
Toyota	88
Volvo Group Southern Africa	83

Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 693
Babcock DAF	24
FAW	15
GMSA	31
Iveco	20
MAN	84
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	322
Powerstar	37
Scania	161
TATA	19
Toyota	22
Volvo Group Southern Africa	280

Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 74
MAN	35
Mercedes-Benz SA - estimate	18
Scania	30
TATA	4
Volvo Group Southern Africa	5

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

## VOLVO IS STATE OF THE ART IN BLOEM

There is a new destination for Volvo and Renault truck operators in Bloemfontein: Farm 44 on Gemsbok Road, Kwaggafontein – or Volvo Trucks & Renault Trucks Bloemfontein.

The address was strategically chosen as it is on the N8 route that connects Upington, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Maseru in Lesotho. It is also close to other major transport corridors including the N1.

More than 18 months in the making, the new facility was developed at an investment of R45 million to provide state-of-the-art support for Volvo and Renault operators across the region.

"We see a lot of economic growth potential in the region, and are proud to have made this investment in order to more effectively support our customers operating in the area," says Torbjorn Christensson, president of Volvo Group Southern Africa.

"We believe that if you want to grow your market share, your aftermarket service has to be outstanding. We are fortunate to have such a strong team of experts at the new dealership in Bloemfontein."

The dealership can service and maintain around 420 trucks a month (including on-site servicing at some key fleet customers). Some advanced equipment is employed to fulfil a complete spectrum of truck sales, service and maintenance (including auto-electrical), finance and parts support.

Equipment includes: a 3,2 t overhead crane, a Maha brake roller tester, Josam wheel alignment equipment and play detectors, and JAB lifts.

These German-made lifts can each lift 32 t to a height of 1,8 m and can be synchronised to lift a complete articulated bus. There are only two other (non-Volvo) workshops in Gauteng, with these specific lifts.

The premises also feature an on-site training facility, a 240 kVA Penta generator system, and timed extractor fans that ensure technicians aren't exposed to the harmful exhaust gasses in the workshop.

Service by appointment is available on Saturdays as is 24-hour roadside assistance.

"Some of our key fleet owners operate in the region and we are proud to offer them round-the-clock support in order to keep their fleets going and well-maintained," says Christian Coolsaet, MD of Volvo Trucks and Renault Trucks South Africa.

"We believe that this new facility will go a long way in addressing their specific market requirements in a very efficient, productive and timely way," he concludes.



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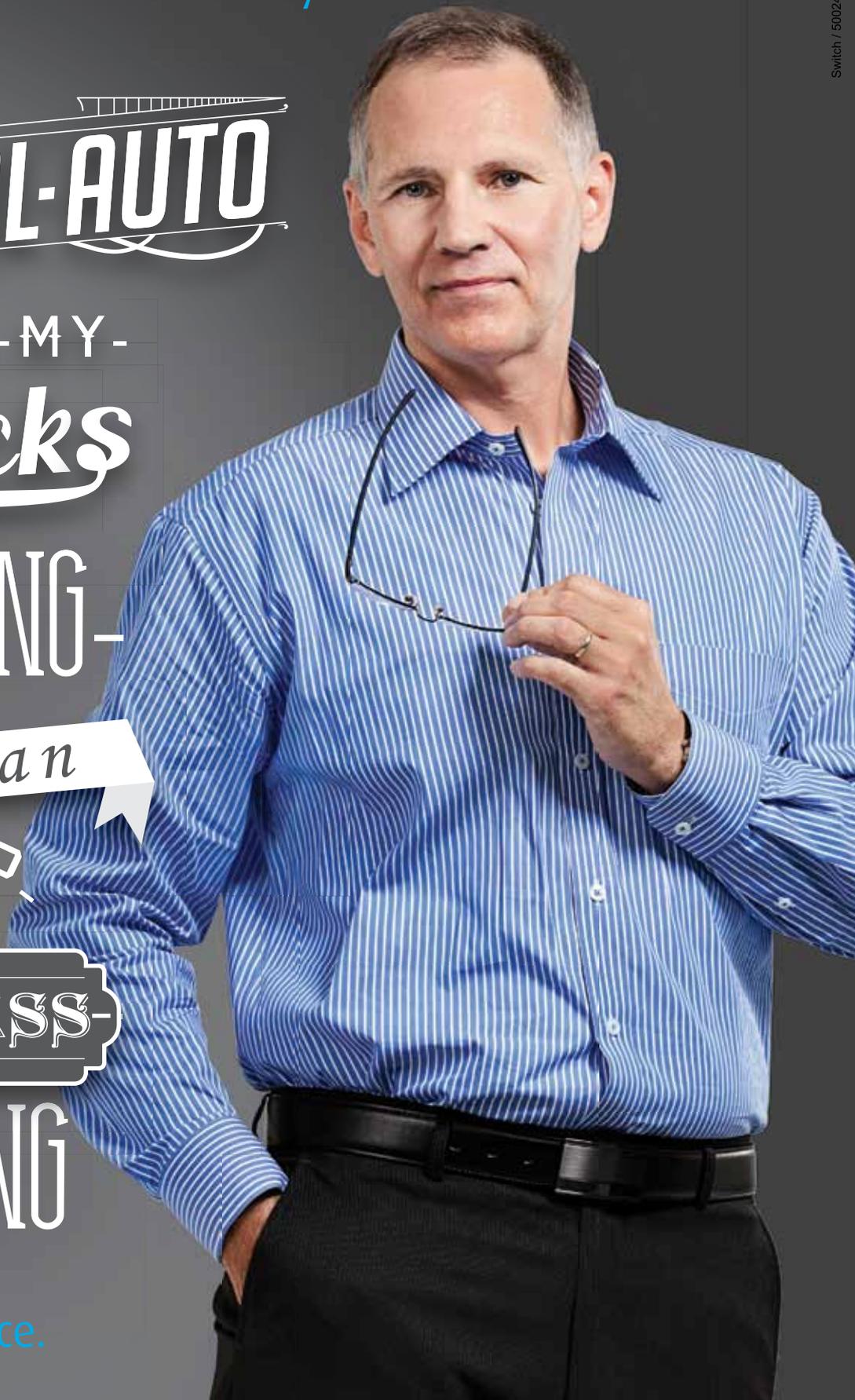
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**UD TRUCKS RECOGNISES DRIVERS FOR “GOING THE EXTRA MILE”**

In a battle of truck driving brawn, UD Trucks Southern Africa set a challenge for its fleet customers to crown “the best of the best”.

In an effort to find the most skilful driver, UD Trucks Southern Africa held its first ever UD Extra Mile Driver Challenge at the Gerotek Vehicle Test Facility on August 28.

The event formed part of UD Trucks’s celebration of the brand’s 80th anniversary since inception in Japan in 1935.

Truck drivers from ten of South Africa’s largest UD fleet customers competed against each other in a bid to be crowned the brand’s top fleet driver and represent the country in the global Extra Mile Challenge, taking place in Japan in November 2015.

Participants were made up of 17 teams that consisted of a driver and co-driver from ABI, Afgri, Parmalat, Eqstra, Vital Distribution, Unitrans, Shoprite, Checkers, Imperial Retail Logistics and Clover South Africa.

Teams competed in a series of activities that simulated a collection and delivery route with real-world factors built-in. The challenge comprised a pre-drive inspection carried out on a Quon CW26 490, followed by a driving test and an alley-docking parking test, which were both completed in a Quon GW26 410 with tridem trailers loaded to 35-t gross combination mass.

In addition to driving skills, experts from UD Trucks evaluated teams on fuel efficiency, adherence to road rules and productivity in the form of time taken to make deliveries and accuracy of goods delivered. All information was then retrieved from the trucks’ telematics systems.

On the course-familiarisation drive, before the competition started, the drivers looked cheerful and energetic as they geared themselves up to compete against one another.

“I have entered many road safety competitions before, so I am not anxious about

this challenge. I really hope to win as I’d love to go to Japan,” exclaimed Mmusa Ramohloloane, the driver representing Clover Heilbron.

At the end of the day, winners were announced at the prize-giving and dinner event where Team Afgri’s driver, James Mavuso and co-driver Hennie Schutte claimed victory of the South African leg of the challenge.

Thrilled at the outcome of the event, Rory Schulz, MD of UD Trucks Southern Africa, says the company is looking at making the challenge an annual event.

“Truck drivers play such a vital role in the success of any fleet company, and we are glad to be able to recognise their enormous contribution in this way. We wish Team Afgri all the best with the global competition in November,” Schulz adds in excitement.

Second place went to Sthembiso Mthembu and Gansen Rajoo from ABI while Mphakamiseni Zulu and Msizi Collin Ntombela from Unitrans were placed third.

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# Touring only with the best.

"Hylton Ross has strong and able competitors and that forces us to deliver the very best service we can, and we don't forget this. We remind one another constantly that we deal with people's dreams and once-in-a-lifetime experiences, therefore we can't perceive what we do as just work. We are enabling unforgettable experiences and every single tourist deserves our utmost," says Geert van Doorn, CEO of Cullinan Transport, of which Hylton Ross is a subsidiary.

Hylton Ross is a force to be reckoned with in the travel and tourism industry and it can partner with any manufacturer when it comes to bus chassis. Instead it looked for a leader in the bus chassis manufacturing business.

"Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach succeeds in upholding one of our core beliefs: that business is about people dealing with people. They treat their products, staff and clients with respect and it comes across when you partner with them," says Van Doorn.

"Additionally, their product range is trustworthy and diverse, making it easy for us to find a suitable chassis that we can trust, quickly - whether we need it in the desert of Namibia or the highways of South Africa. Lastly, their after-sales service is great because they also truly care. They put in the effort to ensure that their service continues long after the vehicle leaves their premises," he notes.

"Guests who see the Mercedes-Benz emblem on our coaches experience peace of mind because they know they are boarding a reliable vehicle. The Mercedes-Benz brand manages to embody luxury, safety and status - a reputation similar to our own," he says. "Our objective is to create a partnership between Mercedes-Benz and Hylton Ross that becomes a two-way street of credibility."

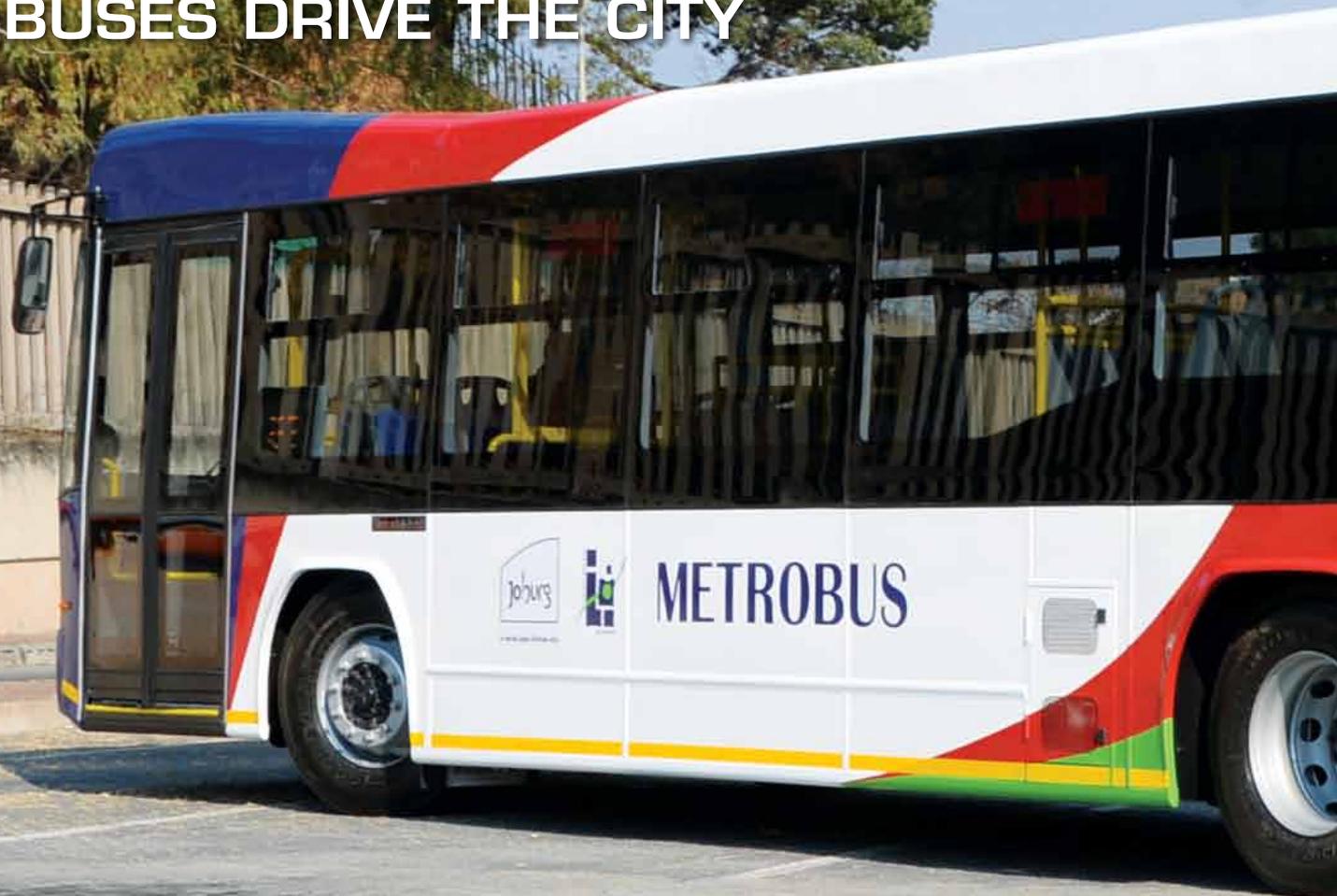
Finally, Van Doorn concludes by saying: "Safety will always be our first priority and Mercedes-Benz has successfully built a reputation for the safety of their vehicles. Our experience is that, from stability control to anti-lock braking systems, Mercedes-Benz offers the best that we can utilise in our vehicles to keep our passengers safe on the road."



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# GREEN

## BUSES DRIVE THE CITY



Metrobus recently unveiled its first fleet of 70 eco-friendly buses. It includes 40 new dual-fuel buses and 30 that have been converted to use both diesel and compressed natural gas. We bring you the details

**P**arks Tau, executive mayor of Johannesburg, unveiled Metrobus's new fleet of energy-efficient buses at the Milpark depot recently, describing it as "a symbol of a new journey for the city".

The new buses will set an example of sustainable, environmentally friendly transport for the industry, and will also boost job creation by supporting the growth of a local biogas industry.

The first batch of 70 new Metrobuses have been branded in colours similar to Joburg's Rea Vaya bus rapid transit (BRT) fleet in order to reinforce the city's commitment to quality, integrated public

transport. The 70 buses include 40 new dual-fuel buses and 30 existing buses that have been rehabilitated and converted to use both diesel and compressed natural gas (CNG).

Metrobus MD, Mavela Dlamini, says the fleet project is "paving the way for better transport sustainability, while also providing instant gains for passenger transport and for society".

He adds that there will be 190 new buses travelling on the streets of Johannesburg by June 2016. Metrobus currently has 412 buses. About 270 of these are more than ten years old, and 11 are more than 20 years old. Older buses will be removed as

new buses are brought in, Dlamini says.

Furthermore, all new and rehabilitated buses will be fitted with a fleet management system that will allow buses to be tracked and driver performance to be monitored across the city, while an in-house gas filling facility will cut out wasteful refuelling travel time.

Tau says the buses mark a new beginning for both the public and Metrobus. "This fleet is a culmination of a long process that was undertaken to define a different future. It is a symbol of a new journey for the city."

He adds that the buses will stimulate entrepreneurship and the growth of new green industries. "We hope to produce biogas at our land-fill sites, as well as grow crops



## **NO MORE GUILT TRIPS**

Cape Town is also doing its bit in terms of "greening" the public transport industry. Commuters can buy a Green Pass and get on board The Green Bus for a daily shuttle ride via the Atlantic Ocean coast to the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Point.

The carbon footprint of the Green Bus is reduced by deploying emission-reduction technologies. It departs from the Central Business District and picks travellers up in Hout Bay, Noordhoek and Slangkop Beach Camp in Kommetjie.

for biomass on our mine dumps and other unused land. Thus we stand to create five jobs per bus in the biogas fuel supply chain."

Lesley Monyane, a driver, who has been working for Metrobus for over 20 years, says: "We thank the city for introducing the new buses. We encourage you to do this always, so that we are able to provide a good service."

The rollout is in line with Johannesburg's long-term Growth and Development Strategy – GDS 2040 – as well as the Metrobus turnaround strategy. The new buses, and the rest of the existing Metrobus fleet, will progressively be converted to run on a mixture of CNG/biogas (70 percent) and diesel (30 percent).

In addition, the new buses will further stimulate the improvement of public transport in the city and increase commuter confidence, in line with the Ecomobility Festival, which will be held in Sandton in October, to foster the use of public transport and non-motorised forms of transport, such as walking and cycling.

The Festival will enable residents and visitors from across the globe to experience what a future, car-free precinct would look and feel like. A core part of the Sandton central business district (CBD) will be closed for regular traffic for the duration of the Festival. A traffic-management plan is in place to minimise the temporary impact of disruptions and to keep the public informed about alternative arrangements. **IFOCUS**



# ARE ELECTRIC BUSES TAKING OVER?

FRANK BEETON re-emphasises the growing move to electric bus manufacturing

**R**egular readers of this column will be all too aware of the increasing frequency of “electric bus” stories that have appeared recently. By 2012, we had become fully used to reading and writing about various forms of series and parallel hybrid drivelines, alternative fuels (gas and hydrogen), and even flywheel-driven vehicles. However, towards the end of that year, we reported that Polish manufacturer Solaris Bus & Coach was “pushing the electric bus envelope”.

We added that it was probably fair to say that the renewed interest in electric-powered public transport was initially prompted by the necessity to develop new technology to support hybrid drivelines. Once the traditional mould of a fossil-fuelled engine driving a live axle through a mechanical transmission had been broken, manufacturers seemed to have become more receptive to the development of increasingly radical traction solutions.

We stand by those comments, and the plethora of stories relating to all-electric traction that currently flood the specialist media cannot be ignored. Here are some recent highlights:

- Ebusco – the Dutch electric-drive and electric-bus builder – is evaluating the option of taking on a 20 000 m<sup>2</sup> site in Helmond to assemble electric drivelines and buses. Currently, Ebusco's buses are built in China under contract using a substantial number of European components.

With current business including the support of two, two-door, low-floor 12-m fully electric buses with 250 kW motive power operating in Stavanger, Norway, an order to build six buses for Bonn, Germany, and a number of outstanding tenders, the company perceives that there will be benefits in moving to local production.

- Power Vehicles Innovation of Gretz-Armainvillers, France, has secured an order for eleven Gepebus Oreos 4X fully electric buses from the Paris transportation authority, RAPT.
- Chinese manufacturer BYD, which claims to be the world's largest electric bus builder, has delivered 35, 12-m electric buses for operation at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport. These units have two battery packs instead of the usual three, resulting in reduced mass and increased passenger capacity.
- At the 2015 China Beijing International Exhibition on Buses, Trucks & Components staged in May, all-electric buses were displayed inter alia by:
  - Xiamen King Long (fully integral 12-m, 57-passenger city bus, powered by 100 kW motor and rated at 18 t gross vehicle mass [GVM]);
  - Higer Bus Company (seven-metre, 44-passenger medium-duty city bus, powered by 100 kW motor);
  - Jiangsu Alfa Bus Company (eight- and ten-metre city buses, 66 and 89 passenger, rated at 12 and 16,5 t GVM, power units up to 250 kW);
  - Chengdu Bus Company (11,5-m, 85-passenger monocoque city bus, powered by 65 kW motor);

- Dongfeng Yangzhiqiang Automobile (8,2-m and 12-m city buses with separate body/chassis design, rated at 12,5 and 18 t GVM, powered by 65 and 96 kW motors);
- Nanjing King Long (53-passenger, 12-m, fully-integral city bus, rated at 17,5 t GVM, powered by 94 kW motor);
- Jinhua Youngman Automobile (92-passenger monocoque city bus, rated at 18 t GVM, powered by 270 kW motor);
- Yangzhou Asiastar Bus Company (11-m, 53-passenger monocoque city bus, rated at 18 t GVM, powered by 200 kW motor); and;
- Zhongtong Bus Holding Company (12-m, 107-passenger city bus rated at 18 t GVM, with 150 kW motor).

Interestingly, none of these companies would have been considered a “mainstream” bus manufacturer as recently as one decade ago. The swing to all-electric buses appears to have been mainly exploited by a number of new entrant manufacturers, and has been particularly well supported in China, presumably because of that country's urban pollution issues.

However, Volvo Buses announced its 10,7-m, 155 kW, 86-passenger Electric Concept Bus at the UITP exhibition in Milan, Italy, during June, and appears fully committed to participating in this market.

The outstanding features of this vehicle include its two-speed automated transmission, and front-central driving position. This model started regular traffic testing in Gothenburg on June 15, and production is due to commence in 2017. **IFOCUS**

# BUS STOPS

## **CITARO NGT MAKES WORLD PREMIERE**

Quiet running and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are the foundations for the new Mercedes-Benz Citaro NGT that will have premiered at Busworld Kortrijk, Belgium, by the time you read this.

These advantages count in the new vehicle's favour in the heavy traffic of city centres; the engine combines strong performance with low fuel consumption and extended maintenance intervals, Mercedes-Benz claims.

The vehicle's low weight allows for a correspondingly large number of passenger seats.

The new M936 natural-gas engine has a displacement of 7,7 litres and produces 222 kW (302 hp). Mercedes-Benz offers the new powertrain variant as a Citaro NGT solo bus and as a Citaro G NGT articulated bus.

The high-tech gas bottles are made of composite material. The vehicle on display at the premiere also featured new optional LED main headlamps – an industry first.



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# ALL ABOARD THE 235?

Back in 1961, South African songwriter Jeremy Taylor put together a ditty called *Ag Pleez Deddy*, which became a local hit – outselling Elvis Presley in that year, we are told. Many of us “oldies” will remember the catchy tune, and with some up-dated lyrics it has strong implications for public transport ...

**A**g pleez deddy can we take the bus to PeHa  
It's only two hours on the 235 – Milnerton and Table View, Koeberg and Atlantis too!  
There's so much to see, and you won't have to drive!

It's unlikely that “daddy's” response in 2015 will be any different to that of 1961, when he bluntly told the kids to “voetsek”, but it is well worth taking a closer look at Pella, which can serve as an example of how to improve public transport throughout South Africa.

Pella is a settlement 75 km north of Cape Town, about two kilometres beyond Atlantis. For many years the community was served by a few buses in the morning and afternoon, provided by Golden Arrow Bus Service (GABS).

Most residents started their journeys at Mamre, a slightly larger community just further north, and Pella was merely a four-kilometre deviation from the Mamre route.

On a route of 75 km, a short deviation isn't much of a problem, but now that MyCiti has extended its trunk bus rapid transit (BRT) route to Atlantis, both the Mamre and Pella routes have become “feeders” to the transfer station at Atlantis.

I am sure the MyCiti planners scratched their heads over whether all the feeder buses to Mamre should go via Pella – in which case a four-kilometre deviation becomes an issue for the majority of passengers who wish to go to Mamre – or whether there should be a

separate route for each settlement?

They decided to go for the separate option, so we now have route 234 running between Atlantis and Mamre and route 235 going to Pella. I rubbed my eyes – both the Mamre and Pella services have been improved beyond recognition.

GABS only operated 20 or so trips on weekdays, most of them in the peak time and in one direction only. There were four trips on Saturdays and only one on Sundays. Now routes 234 and 235 run all day, every day.

There are no less than 42 round trips on weekdays, and 36 each on Saturdays and Sundays. Buses run every 20 minutes in the peak and every half hour at other times. The “spread” is also quite impressive – from about 05:00 to about 20:40 on all days.

Is this overkill? Not at all; it does not provide more than government policy stipulates. Every corner of South Africa should have a service running at least once an hour. It doesn't even have to be part of a BRT scheme though, or even make use of a bus – a 15-seater minibus taxi, running to a schedule, will do the trick in many areas.

[The recent torching of brand-new buses in George should teach us that the vehicles don't have to be new, either, but that could be the subject of another article.]

I hope that students of sociology and transport economics do some research into this improvement. I am sure that there is a Master's degree in this for someone who is prepared to do some hard work interrogating

the communities of Pella and Mamre and analysing their response to these improvements.

Now for an obvious question – why didn't this happen long ago? Over the years, GABS has complained long and loud about being starved of funds. How come there is money for BRT, but not enough for existing operators? I'll leave GABS and MyCiti to sort it out in the Western Cape, but it is a question that needs to be addressed nationwide.

In Johannesburg, exactly the same thing is happening – enough money to run half-empty BRT buses (even during the peak times) but an ever-dwindling Metrobus service, notwithstanding the delivery of 70 new buses.

Both BRT and the existing operator, Metrobus, are run by the same organisation; the Johannesburg City Council, which, in five years, has done nothing to integrate the two services to make both more productive.

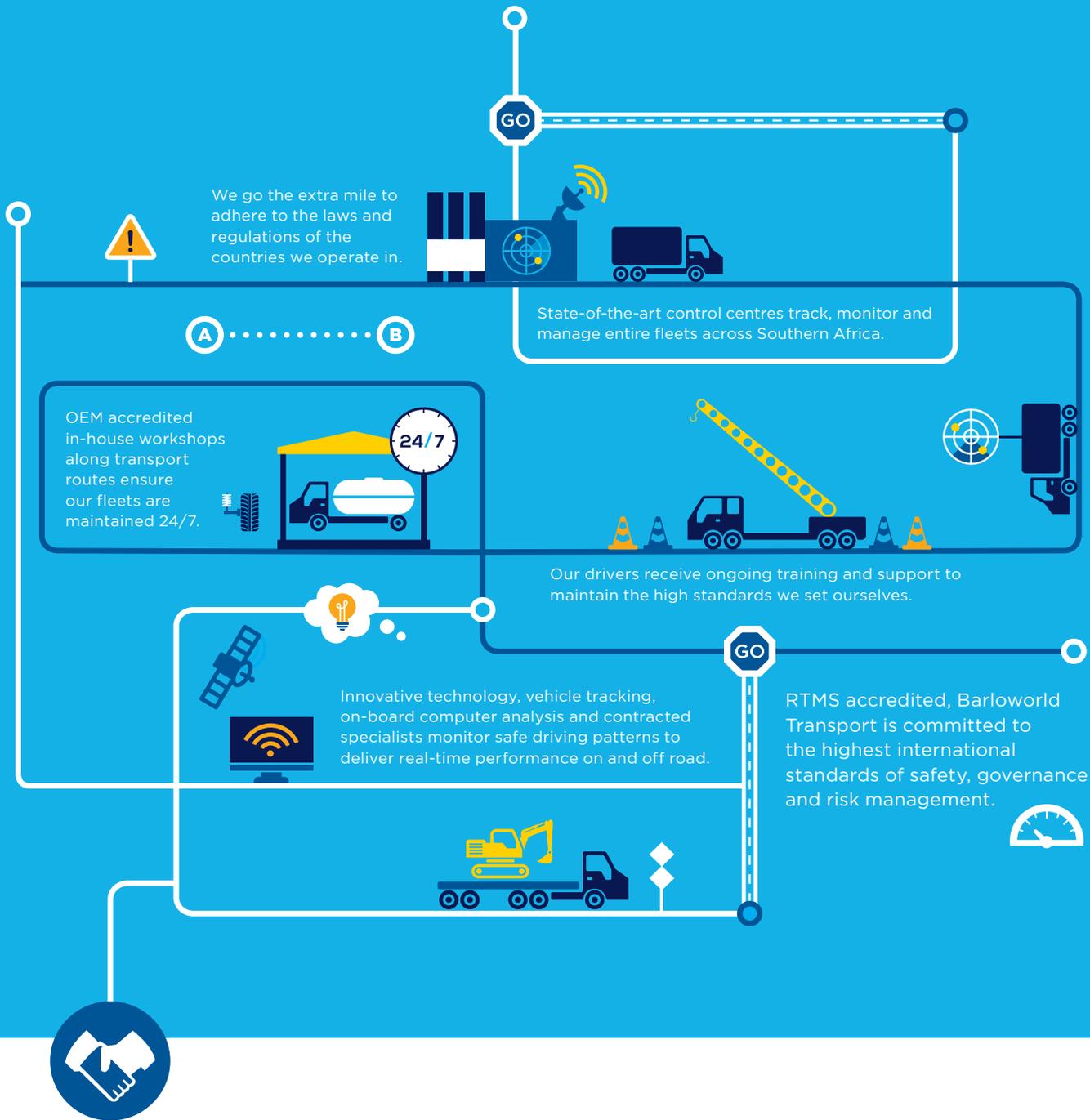
In an article published in the December 2013 edition of **FOCUS**, Lisa Seftel, boss of the show, was quite dismissive of my comments. More than 18 months down the line, not much has happened to fix things ...

What is going on in the bus industry? It's not only the BRT-addicted municipalities ... The recent Labour Court ruling, that some government-contracted bus operations are no longer a “going concern”, should frighten everyone working for a bus company.

Meanwhile, let's envy the lucky residents of Pella and Mamre, and hope that MyCiti will be able to keep them happy, well into the future. **IFOCUS**



Vaughan Mostert developed a love for public transport early in life, which led to a lifelong academic interest in the subject. He recently retired as a senior lecturer from the Department of Transport and Supply Chain Management at the University of Johannesburg. Through *Hopping Off*, Mostert leaves readers with some parting food for thought as he continues his push for change in the local public transport industry.



## Smart Partnerships

Smart Partnerships form the cornerstone of creating a competitive advantage for our clients allowing us to create a portfolio of business units, each with a unique brand positioning tailored to a specific industry. This is why we are able to offer a range of flexible, sustainable transport solutions for companies across sub-Saharan Africa.

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