Daimler Shows Future Truck, Calls Design a ‘Work of Art’

By Neil Alt
Editorial Director

HANOVER, Germany — Daimler Trucks peeled away the camouflage from the Future Truck 2025 it debuted this summer, revealing what its global chief called not just a vehicle, but “a great work of art.” In July, the company showed off the technology only of its autonomous driving truck from Mercedes-Benz. Last week, the world observed the vehicle’s tests on traditional features such as replacing rearview mirrors with a video-camera system and placing the headlights beneath the hood so they shine through the paint.

I have driven more than one car onto the stage, but this night was a very special night for me because it was the first time I was driven on stage,” said Wolfgang Bernhard, president of Daimler’s global truck unit and former head of the Mercedes-Benz passenger cars unit.

The Sept. 22 event, in an airplane hangar at the Hanover airport, took place before the start of the IAA Commercial Vehicles show here that runs Sept. 25-Oct. 2 and includes more than 2,000 exhibitors from around the world.

“That is what our truck has in common with all those airplanes out there at the airport,” he said. “Both things can run on autopilot.”

(See TRUCKER, p. 36)

Tonnage Hits Record High
Retail, Manufacturing Spark 4.5% August Gain

By Michael G. Malloy
Staff Reporter

August’s truck tonnage index jumped 4.2% from a year ago to a record 132.6 reading, American Trucking Associations said Sept. 23. ATA’s advanced seasonally adjusted freight index was up 1.6% on a monthly basis from July, and eclipsed the previous high set last November at 131.

ATA uses the year 2000 as a 100-reading baseline.

The year-over-year jump — the biggest this year — followed a 3.7% July increase that was revised up from an originally reported 2.9% gain.

Bob Costello, ATA chief economist, said higher retail sales and factory production in August helped push tonnage to its highest level ever.

Retail sales rose 0.6% from July to $444.4 billion, and the Institute for Supply Management’s monthly factory index rose to 59 to hit a 3½-year high.

Tonnage followed the track of retail sales this month,” Costello said. He added that “if you forced me to use one indicator to track truck tonnage, I would go with ISM” though “in reality all economic factors affect tonnage levels.”

Tonnage was up despite a slip in industrial production and housing starts on a seasonally adjusted basis from strong July readings.

“Truck tonnage actually did the opposite. Not only did it increase, it

(See TONNAGE, p. 39)

FedEx Freight’s Mark McLean Repeats as SuperTruck Champ

By Eric Miller
Staff Reporter

ORLANDO, Fla. — Mark McLean Jr., the 2014 SuperTruck Champion, would be the first to admit he had a tough critic during the intense two-day competition himself.

The 36-year-old FedEx Freight technician was so overcome with emotion that he fell to his knees speechless when he was presented the prestigious award on Sept. 24 for the second consecutive year.

“I’m relieved,” McLean said after the awards ceremony. “I put so much pressure on myself and expected so much out of myself. I wanted this so bad.”

In addition to winning American Trucking Associations’ Technology & Maintenance Council’s SuperTruck overall title, McLean also took first place in the driver-train, service information and wheel-end skill stations.

He also led the two-man FedEx Freight team, along with Matthew Nolan of Windom Locks, (See SUPERTRUCK, p. 37)

Trailer Security Experts Outline Strategies To Create Multi-Tiered Cargo Protection

By Jim Galligan
Contributing Writer

There is no such thing as a thief-proof lock, but technology and proper safety procedures can significantly reduce a carrier’s risk of cargo theft, safety experts said.

Multi-tiered security systems consisting of several layers are ideal, they said, with asset-tracking technologies, driver training, route planning and physical controls such as locks included in the mix.

And should a thief make off with stolen goods, there is broad agreement that the smarter law enforcement can react — perhaps aided by technology — the better.

FEATURE

Asset-location systems “create visibility and enable the carrier and [police] to act faster,” said Jim Sassen, senior manager of product marketing with San Diego-based Omnitracs.

Before the systems became affordable and widely deployed, crooks would grab a trailer and haul it hundreds of miles to dispose of the cargo, said Jeff Davis, vice president of safety for insurer Motor Transport Insurers, based in Indianapolis.

“Today, you’ll usually find the trailer close to where it was stolen,” he said. “Cargo is taken off trailers as soon as possible.

(See TRAILER, p. 10)

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INTERMODAL — Expo participants discuss industry issues such as freight rates, drivers and shipping alliances among ocean carriers. — PP. 3, 33

PRICING — Shippers at CSCMP’s annual conference are told to expect higher costs for freight transportation. — P. 2

SELF-DRIVING — Potholes and other trucking equipment manufacturers show that the future is almost here for autonomous driving trucks. — P. 38

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(See TRUCKER, p. 10)
TMW Grows, Reorganizes

(Continued from p. 2)

support, saying TMW "is going to be a much more transparent organization to give the best service and best customer commitments."

That strategy was making TMW "much more precriptive," stressing that it is one-piecing everything toward new ways of doing things than to replicate the way customers have approached problems in the past. And those customers have plenty of challenges on their plates, said speaker John Larkin, transportation analyst with Stifel Nicolaus. Not the least of which is finding drivers. And he said several factors are contributing to that shortage, from economic changes to government regulations that contribute to making trucking a less appealing occupation than it once was.

Larkin said the people who used to become truck drivers were interested in the personal freedom that today's drivers have; but that freedom makes finding drivers even harder.

"Drivers today feel they are micro-managed," Larkin said. "The long hauling is controlled 24 hours a day, fuel optimization, everything is done. There is no congestion that cuts driven miles, electronic logging, video monitoring, to name a few."

"No wonder we have a driver shortage because we let them know that trucking will struggle to find drivers until "automotive solutions" fix the problem.

And those drivers are facing a lot of pressure, said Robert Volkmann, president of the Transportation Intermediaries Association. To help ease congestion, Volkmann said Congress needs to raise fuel taxes in upcoming legislation, then deal with the longer term problem of finding a new way to fund highway infrastructure.

In the formation session that manufacturers have said that the United States needs to spend $100 billion a year to get highways in shape to adequately move the economy.

Among TMW's vendor partners announcing enhanced integration or product improvements were Rand McNally, TMW sister companies ITRAK and Aldis, Omnitracs and Global. Cloud-based mapping vendor Rand McNally said data from its mobile fleet-management devices can now be integrated with TMW's software. The integration enables fleets to manage maintenance through TMW's fleet-maintenance software, according to an announcement.

The company provides real-time vehicle fault codes and location of the vehicle, enabling fleets to have a rapid response to maintenance issues and manage repairs to minimize vehicle down-time.

ALK announced that its truck-navigation software is now integrated with TMW's fuel-optimization product and that ALK's latest update of routing software is integrated with TMW products.

The company said that TMW's IDNC ExpertFuel is integrated with ALK's CoPilot Truck in-cab navigation system through TMWSuite and Total Mail systems.

The integration allows carriers to reduce fuel expenses and out-of-fuel mileage, automate the planning and ensuring route compliance.

Cable-companies provider PeopleNet, which like TMW and IdNC are owned by Trimble, announced new integration features for its professionalRPMProduct. The new features give PeopleNet and TMWSuite users improved access to real-time data, which aids in workflow stops and cycle times, which PeopleNet said enhances fleet efficiency and utilization.

Omnitracs, the cable-communications vendor formerly owned by QuantumK, announced new TMW integration capabilities to help streamline fleet operations.

The company said the changes enable fleets using TMW's TL2000 and Omnitracs' thin client AS400 integration for mobile computing platforms to gain increased visibility into Omnitracs Portal features, as well as enhanced integration for Driver Workflow and ALK RouteSync navigation, supporting improved fleet management, customer service and profitability.

Cable communications vendor i2Global announced the launch of an in-cab imaging package with a per-second fee that reads bar codes and populates reference numbers for instant transmission from the truck to a dispatch center with simplified e-logs that require minimal driver training.

Michael Miller, chief commercial officer in North America for shortline rail operator Genesee & Wyoming Inc. in Darien, Connecticut, said Class I rail carriers are spending about $15 billion this year on capital expenditures to enhance productivity.

High demand for rail cars to carry oil has "tainted the flow of traffic" and slowed railroad revenue in many parts of the country, he said.

A representative of BNSF Railway said the company, the nation's largest railroad, is buying 900 new locomotives for $5 billion a year; "That is the largest investment in its rail lines. The plan includes double-tracking portions of BNSF's northwest route from Montanta and North Dakota to ease congestion caused by an increasing volume of sand.

The company is also hiring 5,000 people to fill positions on train crews, track maintenance and management, said Zacksie Rokski, a regional sales manager for BNSF in Columbus, Ohio.

To get more capacity, Harper of J.B. Hunt said shippers and carriers still need to work more closely to get better utilization out of existing track and rail equipment.

"Freight costs are going to go up if you continue to do things the same way you've been doing for the past three or four years," declared Mike Regan, a shipping industry consultant and co-founder of TransAct Technologies in Elms- wood, Illinois.

Regan received the 2014 Distin-

McLean Repeats as SuperTech-Champ

(Continued from p. 1)

Connecticut, to victory in the team competition.

Defeng said everything that the TMC SuperTech competition and TMW were founded to highlight: professionalism, deep technical knowledge and practical application of skills, said Carl Kirk, ATA vice president of maintenance, information technology and logistics.

McLean, who works out of Newmanh, New York, said all 134 competitors were highly qualified, capable of standing on the winner's platform.

"We all on the same level here," McLean said. "Everyone has the knowledge. Maybe I had a little bit of luck."

He led a FedEx sweep of the top three overall finishers, with Eric Vos of Bone, Idaho, placing second and Charles Kerr of Shock, Texas, placing third.

Jeffrey Neshen, a Ryder Systems technician from Carol Stream, Illinois, scored highest on the written test.

While getting to SuperTech was tough, placing in the top 10 scorers was even more difficult. Only seven competitors were required to complete a 100-question knowledge test, work through 11 computer stations and 14 hands-on, real-world stations that tested a range of well-honed diagnostic skills.

"Being one of the winners guaranteed not only bragging rights, but also a bevy of awards ranging from expensive diagnostic tools and trips to NASCAR races to gorgeous gift cards and tool cabinets."

But even those techs who did not win will take back to the companies they represented a wealth of technical knowledge and ideas for training programs, said Mike Defend, president of WheelTime, a SuperTech sponsor.

Defend said support for the 10-year-old competition has grown as fleets have learned that it helps "connect the dots" between training in technology and improving their bottom lines by reducing repair "comebacks" and rejected warranty claims, while increasing productivity and customer satisfaction.

"Ten years after inception, Techs competed for a $1 million prize pool awarded to the best trucking company in America. Suppliers, manufacturers and diesel technicians emerged as the true winners."

Fedex Freight's McLean brings home more honors.

Technicians repair trucks under the scrutiny of judges at TMC's 10th annual SuperTech competition in Orlando, Fla.

Pricing Key To CSMC

(Continued from p. 2)

of BofD Transportation in Billerica, Massachusetts.

AFT's survey also showed carriers are paying the same costs for equipment and secondary items, such as tolls and healthcare benefits. The most of the price on costs for equipment is coming from driving pay increases.

"The driver situation is real," said Craig Harper, chief operating officer for Fast Services in Lowell, Arkansas, which runs No. 5 on the Top 50 list for 2014.

Harper said his company is spending $600 million this year on recruiting and driving pay increases to mitigate growth in its intermodal and dedicated contract carriage

businesses, but faces shortages of drivers in its asset-based truckload and drayage units.

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SuperTech is changing the way companies are doing business," Defend said.

SuperTech also influences the types of equipment shippers and their techs, said George Armars, SuperTech competition coordinator.

The skill problems that competitors see this year could disappear by next year's SuperTech. The ones that techs have difficulty with sends a clear message to motor carriers that more training is needed, Armars said.

Many of this year's SuperTech competitors were proud to make it to the big show, but at the same time in awe of the level of difficulty.

Zachary Bosteen, a mechanic for Garners Transportation Group who works in Findlay, Ohio, placed third in his state competition, but said he was finding the national contest far more difficult.

"Although he's been a technician for 10 years, Bosteen said he had never seen the TMC recommended practices book that is included in the hands-on competition confident they were doing well.

"FedEx in Orlando, a FedEx Freight shop tech from Jackson- ville, Florida, said the competition tested his "little speckles" of technology's knowledge, but nonetheless, "All the other competitors, he was out to win.

"You don't think we've got a pot a money to put in the competition, the preventive-maintenance inspection section. He said his fel- low FedEx techs were chosen after an internal company contest vs. other carriers before entering the competition for the first time.

"It's gone from trucks with no computers to 10 or 11 computers," said John Genen, a Del Flamens, Illinois, tech for Con-X Freight.

"You have to understand electron- ics pretty well and one computer communicating with another. One key to the game is knowing the charging gears and sprockets and you charge it, everything's gone from the mechanical end to the electronic end."