

CROSSROADS

A Publication For And About Valued D&T Team Builders

MARCH 2006

Scene at the MTA Awards Banquet



Harold Pflughoeft, an independent contractor with D&T Trucking Company since 1991, was the Minnesota Trucking Association's "Truck Driver of the Month" for February, 2005. He is pictured here holding the plaque he received at the MTA Awards Banquet, which was held January 16. This isn't the first honor for Harold. He has won numerous awards for his safe driving and on-time achievements, is a member of the D&T Hall of Fame, and has twice been featured in the Working Class Pride and Polish calendar for the outstanding way in which he maintains his 1995 Peterbilt.

Some descriptive comments from people who know . . .

In preparing an introduction of Harold Pflughoeft for the MTA event, Jim Walker asked D&T's Dispatch and Customer Service staffs to describe this independent contractor. Here were some of their comments.

"The kind of guy you like to have representing your company."

"Articulate . . . polite . . . the epitome of a professional truck driver."

"A great driver . . . cordial with customers and Dispatch."

"Very congenial . . . very dependable . . . always positive."

"Clean cut, a number one driver who takes care of himself and his truck and makes an excellent impression."



From left to right: Harold and Janet Pflughoeft and Carol and Lavern Pflughoeft. Lavern is Harold's brother and he and Carol were pleased to be part of the D&T contingent attending the Awards Banquet. Also an independent contractor (since April, 2004) with D&T, Lavern and his 2002 Peterbilt are the October honorees in this year's Working Class Pride and Polish calendar. It must run in the family, because Harold was similarly recognized for August, 2004 and March, 2006.

Bruce Simon Named 2005 'Driver of Year'

Twelve drivers, including D&T Trucking Company's Harold Pflughoeft, were honored recently by the Minnesota Trucking Association for being recognized as "Drivers of the Month" in 2005. But only one of them could be selected as "Truck Driver of the Year," and that was Bruce Simon of Lakeville Motor Express.

Simon has logged more than 2 million accident-free miles in his driving career. His and the other presentations were made at the MTA's annual Awards Banquet, a prestigious, image-building event for the trucking industry, which too often is unfairly represented in the minds of some of the public.

In actuality, the 12 honorees at the Awards Banquet "typify the caliber of drivers we have in our industry," said Karen Rockwell, MTA Director of Communications, who pointed out that "the 12 average 2.75 million safe miles each."

D&T congratulates all of them, with special applause for Bruce, the latest in the distinguished long line of MTA Drivers of the Year.

Practice defensive driving every day and every mile

By Jim Walker

All successful professional drivers have a system and strategy for driving defensively. They might use different wording to describe exactly how they strategize, but there are certain basic elements that are common to every effective system. The professional always “aims high” in steering, remains conscious of the “big picture,” keeps the eyes moving, leaves himself/herself an “out,” and “communicates” to make sure he is seen.

Set Sights High

Many people when walking don't look beyond about 25 feet. Unfortunately some of them (too many) even when driving still look only 25 feet ahead.

The first objective of drivers should be to set their sights high—meaning where your vehicle will be in the next 15 seconds. This provides eye lead-time of about a block ahead at city speeds and a quarter-mile at highway speeds. But . . . be on the safe side and double this; sight about two blocks ahead in the city and a half-mile on the highway.

A good rule about checking proper distance is to pick an upcoming reference point and count the seconds before reaching that point. You may be surprised at how your eyes can deceive you!

Get the Big Picture

The big picture is the sum total of every potential conflict that can be perceived. And when moving into traffic, you are constantly entering new areas and situations, with each one presenting a new or different picture.

The size of the picture should be sidewalk to sidewalk and at least a full city block ahead at city speeds. This picture contains stationary objects such as lamp poles, parked vehicles and obstructions, as well as instructions, warnings and traffic control devices. Most important, it also contains unpredictable people on foot, in vehicles, on bicycles, on motorcycles.

A driver must eliminate all barriers interfering with the ability to maintain the big picture. Two ways of doing that are to keep a six vehicle-length space cushion and reduce speed; tailgating causes low aim steering and blind zones that conceal conflict. Also, it is necessary to concentrate on driving. Distractions can and will steal part of your entire big picture, and many accidents are the result of perception too poor for existing conditions.

Keep Eyes Moving

Traffic movement puts drivers in the middle of a complex moving picture that usually has many quick changes. Eye movement is the key to being aware of all changes that can become a traffic conflict.

Fringe vision allows us to detect objects over a wide area and acts as an early warning system to detect trouble ahead or to the sides. Clear vision allows us to make positive identifications. Fixed stares, on the other hand, prevent the eye moving action so necessary in getting and keeping the big picture. For example, many times a driver will experience a fixed stare watching a traffic light.

Eye fixation in traffic is like a person who reaches for the saltshaker and knocks over a water glass, because he was concentrating so hard on the saltshaker that he didn't see the glass in the path of his hand. When your eyes stop moving while your

wheels keep turning, the wheels lead the eyes . . . a very dangerous practice.

Leave An 'Out'

In scanning the big picture for potential conflicts, the driver should keep in mind position in traffic with respect to stopping, slowing and space for turning. A space cushion can be maintained even in crowded traffic situations; an “out” is opened up when choosing the proper lane; leaving room ahead and to one or both lanes; and reducing speed.

Many times drivers are involved in accidents because of poor “seeing habits” and failure to have options when potential trouble was spotted in advance. Leave yourself an out . . . everywhere . . . every mile . . . every day!

Make Sure You Are Seen

The key is to communicate! Few people intentionally wish to violate traffic rules, but violate they do. Conflicts caused by inattention are dangerous and lead to accidents.

When another driver or pedestrian is threatening to enter your space, make sure that person stays put until you have safely passed the danger point. Sound your horn, and do it early enough to get eye contact. Distracted pedestrians or drivers can be totally unaware of your presence, and it is up to the professional to alert them so that they will see you. Making eye contact if possible provides a margin of safety, holding the other person from stepping or driving into your path.

Always leave enough space to slow down or turn. Always communicate with the drivers behind you, letting them know your intentions by using turn signals or brake lights. And remember that misunderstood signals can cause accidents, especially at intersections if a signal to change lanes can be confused with a signal to turn.

Finally, when in doubt, play it safe. That's the best way . . . the defensive way . . . to be as sure as you can about protecting yourself and others.

Name-dropping

It was Referral Bonus time indeed most recently for independent contractor **Mariusz Okula**. He received his second quarterly bonus check for referring Tomasz Garbacz to D&T; another second quarterly bonus for the referral of Daniel Zielinski; and the fourth (and final) quarterly check for Mariusz Sycewicz.

And **Jerald Long** also was rewarded with the final quarterly bonus—this for the referral of James Long.

As said so many times before, this is like “found money” for D&T's referring contractors.

* * *

New contractors with D&T are **Gregory Grunert**, whose home is in Nekoosa, Wis.; **Kris Drinkwine** of Colfax, Wis.; and **Terry Melvin**, Baldwin, Wis. For Terry, we should say, “welcome back,” since he—like so many other drivers—has returned to D&T.

Quoting the Contractor ...

(Editor's note: The health, wellness and fitness of commercial truck drivers for some time has been—and will continue to be—the subject of articles in the Crossroads. In keeping with that important theme, and consistent with this on-going periodic series of interviews with D&T independent contractors, we talked for this issue with Jesse Jarzab of Des Plaines, Ill.)

"I'm aware of the importance of good health habits, although it isn't easy. With expenses going up, with the cost of fuel, it's harder to make a good living, and everybody thinks about pushing to earn as much as we can when we can. Still, I'm no different than most anyone else; I like shorter trips and I like being home.

"D&T does provide time when we get a load for us (drivers) to reach our destination. The company gives us enough time to rest and eat properly. Sometimes I'm even able to stop at home for awhile on runs to Ohio. This by the way is my second time with D&T. I started in 1998 and left in 2004 for about eight months. I thought I would make more money and have better trips with another carrier but found out that wasn't true. So I came back here. The work is steady and D&T is good about giving fuel surcharges.

"As far as staying healthy, I watch my eating habits. I've given up on junk food and try to plan my trip so that I keep a regular dinner hour, although that's difficult sometimes. I really look at the menu, choose carefully, no smorgasbords, and depending on when I eat dinner it might be something light and warm—good hot soup—or just a chicken sandwich. I don't snack, either, except for something like sunflower seeds.

"Exercise is important, too, or course. At home I like to go for walks or bike in the summer. I like to breathe the fresh air. On the road you can find some nice rest areas, there's one in Ohio that I really like, where you can rest and walk around. But it can be hard sometimes to find a spot where you can pull over, so you have to think ahead, to figure it out ahead of time.

"You absolutely cannot push it if you're getting tired."

From the 2006 Working Class Pride and Polish calendar

Equipment (and driver) of the month for April

Listening to one's father can be very good advice indeed. James Long just wishes he had done it sooner.

James started driving about 10 years ago and became an owner-operator three years later. His father, Jerald Long, was and still is (since September, 1995) an independent contractor with D&T Trucking Company. He told his son all about the good things at D&T and finally, in February, 2005, both James and his brother-in-law, Shawn Nelson, leased on with the company.

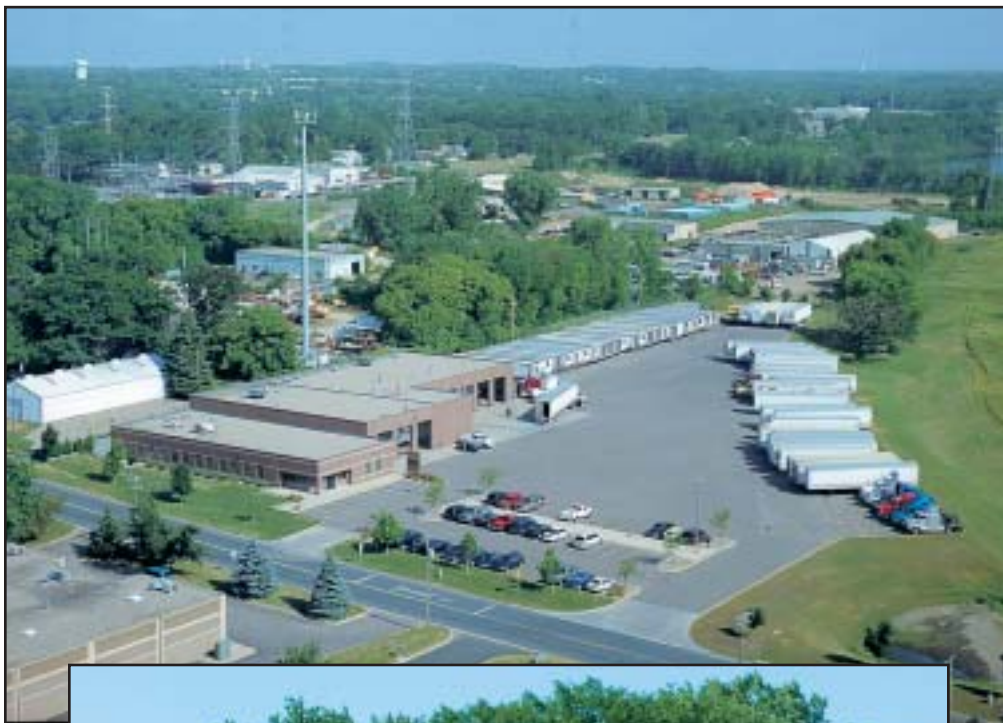
"I should have listened to my dad and done it sooner," said James, "because I was wasting my time where I was. But I'm glad I came when I did. There's freedom of choice at D&T, and things are going really good."

As for being in the calendar, "that's pretty cool," he said. "There's only 12 drivers in it, and I'm one of them." He added that he's had compliments from customers about the appearance of his truck, which validates the purpose of the Working Class Pride and Polish calendar – to further the image of the trucking industry in general and the D&T fleet in particular.

James lives in Foley, Minnesota and has three young daughters, Morgan, Madison and Macie.



April 17, 1959: The beginning of a trucking tradition



The roots of D&T Trucking Company were really planted even before 1959, going back to the days when Bob Dolle, Sr. was “just a kid” hauling milk and later logs and accumulating enough money to buy his first truck.

After World War II, during which the elder Dolle was in the Army and participated in the landing on Okinawa in the South Pacific, he jumped back into trucking in earnest. Eventually he owned five trucks and in 1957 started D&T Truck Leasing.

The incorporation of D&T as a trucking company took place about 18 months later, on April 17, 1959, and its first home was a 40 by 60-foot shop on the outskirts of St. Paul in an area called Landfall. Today D&T “resides” on a six-acre site in Little Canada, Minn., operating out of a custom-built 25,000 square foot facility with three dock bays, five service bays and ultra-modern shop capability.



Dolle, Sr., retired and living mostly in Arizona, sold D&T Trucking Company to his son, Bob Dolle, Jr., about 15 years ago. Since then, the traditions established at the outset have flourished and become stronger: The continuing emphasis on service and commitment; strong customer relationships; account retention; treating everyone with respect; and meeting transportation needs with a 100 percent owner-operator fleet.

Happy birthday to us!

Come on in, sit down, and have some cake with D&T on our official birthday Monday, April 17. A lot of other motor carriers have come and gone since the founding of this company. We’re still here, though, and still dedicated to the same principles that have made us so successful through good times and some not as good. So let’s celebrate together and talk a little trucking—past, present and future.



Recognizing yearly Safe Driving Achievers

In January and February, 15 independent contractors of D&T Trucking Company reached an annual "safety anniversary"—meaning that they completed a specified yearly number during which they were accident free. This is always a meaningful accomplishment, and the Crossroads is most pleased to recognize these 100 percent Safe Driving Achievers.

JANUARY

14 Years - Ken Kosbab
5 Years - Duane Rubner
4 Years - Tryan Winston
2 Years - Artur Karwat
1 Year - Pawel Dzimira

FEBRUARY

5 Years - James Grey
Lloyd Schofield
4 Years - Mark Crom
3 Years - Royce Beek
Don Burton
Andrezej Dajwowski
Urszula Dajwowski
2 Years - Pawel Winiarz
1 Year - Shawn Nelson
Earl Shrader

Some 'news of the day' in 1959

The founding of a little, unknown trucking company more than 45 years ago wasn't story material. But here's a sample of what was, as seen in these news headlines from the April 17, 1959 edition of the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

"Nixon will visit Russia in July"
"Barbers nix \$2 haircuts in Philly"
"Mock air raid drill set today"
"World peace through law is Bar Association goal"
"Justice Department units battle crime syndicate"

And how about this advertisement . . .
"Edsel, the king-size value in the low-price field"

And this from a supermarket ad . . .
"Rath's thick-sliced bacon, 2-pound package, 89 cents"
"Hills Coffee, 2-pound can, \$1.19"
"Fresh lean ground beef, 49 cents a pound"

Bob Dolle, Sr. remembers . . .

"We respected the owner-operator, treated him 'like a man' (all drivers were male in the early days) and rewarded performance. Not all trucking company owners felt the same way. One said to me 'Quit thinking about your operators so much. They're a dime a dozen.' But I always believed in making sure that someone driving for you was on your team. We hardly had any driver turnover in those days, and often when someone did leave, he wanted to come back."

(Editor's note: And the same is true today).



Bob in his boat, living the good life!

Burma Shave signs: A history lesson for drivers

Before the beginning of the Interstate era, truckers (and motorists) made their cross-country runs over roads enlivened off to the side with the famous Burma Shave signs. Posted in farmers' fields throughout the countryside, these were small red signs with white letters.

At a given location there was a sequence of five such signs, the first four each containing one line of a "poetic" four-line couplet. The fifth was the "signoff," so to speak; it concluded the rhyme with "Burma Shave," a popular shaving cream of the day.

The advertising, now a part of cross-country history, was extremely successful in making Burma Shave a household name. But some of the long ago couplets are as applicable today as they were then.

Such as:

*Don't lose your head
To gain a minute
You need your head
Your brains are in it*

*Drove too long
Driver snoozing
What happened next
Is not amusing*

*Brother speeder
Let's rehearse
All together
Good morning, nurse*

*Passing school zone
Take it slow
Let our little
Shavers grow*

*Both hands on the wheel
Eyes on the road
That's the skillful
Driver's code*

This is a nostalgic reminder for those who actually saw and remember the Burma Shave signs. And for others, it's a history lesson showing that the past is not necessarily obsolete in its messages.

April anniversaries of service with D&T

Customers like to see continuity from those who serve them. The importance of this on-going capability is why each issue of the Crossroads recognizes contractors and staff personnel reaching anniversaries of service. For this issue, they are ...

CONTRACTORS

- 15 Years - John Heldt
Evelyn Heldt
- 9 Years - James Adams
- 5 Years - James Boyer
- 2 Years - Lavern Pflughoeft
Norman Potter
Charles Noll
- 1 Year - David Croes
Brandon Bergman

STAFF

- 2 Years - Jeff Lucas

Happy birthday wishes to:

Yvette Castillo	April 11
Edwin Hohneke	April 19
Nathan Jensen	April 1
Calmer Johnson	April 29
Terrance Johnson	April 8
Kelly Klemme	April 21
Joe Lang	April 18
Shawn Nelson	April 19
Lavern Pflughoeft	April 14
Norman Potter	April 1
Rick Pratt	April 17

Clean roadside inspections

Thank you to the following independent contractors for passing roadside inspections in February with no violations: John Hostetler, Paul Green and Joe Appel, Jr. This accomplishment represents true professionalism and contributes greatly to D&T's carrier profile. We appreciate it.

On the Lighter Side . . .

WHATEVER WORKS

Linda was an active member of her church group formed to visit and aid members of the congregation who were ill. While driving around town one day, making the rounds to see the homebound, she ran out of gas. But fortunately a gas station was nearby.

She walked over to borrow and fill a gas can, but the attendant did not have a can available. Returning to her car, Linda noticed the bedpan she always had with her in case it was needed by the bedridden. Back to the station she went to get gas.

As she was pouring the contents of the bedpan into the car's tank, two men happened to be walking by. One of them recognized Linda and knew how active she was in her church.

"If that works," he said, turning to the other man, "I'm going to start attending services again."

* * *

ANSWER THIS ONE

Riding with her family to the cemetery for her grandfather's burial, four-year-old Jane held a beautiful bouquet of flowers. She was silent for a time, obviously thinking deeply, and then suddenly asked, "Will Grandpa come back as a flower?"

"Oh, honey, wouldn't that be lovely," her mother replied. "Yes, I think perhaps he will."

Jane fell quiet again and finally, with a puzzled look on her face, looked at her flowers and remarked, "I wonder who all these people are."

* * *

EASY TO SAY

Sign at the entrance to a medical clinic specializing in foot and ankle injuries: "We're open. Just walk right in."

* * *

HOW APPROPRIATE

The children's airport play set came disassembled, and it was taking Joe much of the afternoon to put all of the pieces together—planes, runway, airport counter, control tower, baggage chute.

"Almost done?" his wife asked as he dug the last piece out of the box and stared at it in disbelief.

"Yep," responded Joe, "but this piece came damaged and might not fit."

"What is it?"

"The luggage."

* * *

LISTEN UP

A man slipped on a patch of ice and dropped to the sidewalk, stunned. Immediately onlookers ran to his side. One person kneeled, grasped the man's hand, and said urgently, "Sir, are you all right? Can you hear me? Squeeze my hand once for 'yes' and twice for 'no.'"

Safety tip from



Watch out for road rage. If you see another driver exhibiting aggressive behavior, back off. Often that kind of driver can turn violent over what seems to be a trivial situation. While you can't control the actions of other drivers, you can control your own. First, be courteous . . . it's often contagious. Second, don't engage in aggressive actions that could provoke road rage from others—such as tailgating, blocking the passing lane, failing to use turn signals, beeping the horn excessively, or using high beams. Never use tactics designed to "punish" other drivers.

Be watchful at loading docks to keep cargo secure

The security of cargo is always on everyone's mind in the trucking industry, and especially nowadays. Thieves have become increasingly sophisticated and thorough, so the motor carrier and its drivers must be equally prepared and watchful for their own interests and to best serve the shipper and receiver.

An area particularly vulnerable is the loading dock during the loading and unloading process. D&T's independent contractors therefore should be alert to suspicious activity.

For example, a common ploy is to divert the driver's attention just long enough to create a shortage. This can happen under the guise of someone trying to get the trailer loaded or unloaded and away from the dock with unusual haste or, in another vulnerable situation, the driver might be so hasty about the schedule of the run that he/she is not paying attention to what's happening with the load.

In addition, any delay in loading or unloading after the product has been counted provides an opportunity for possible thievery.

It also is important to document when there is a real shortage of product due to damage. Follow D&T's policies and procedures, including having an instant or disposable camera to take pictures of damaged product.

A final note of caution: Cargo with questionable paperwork, or pallets, cartons or containers that appear to have been tampered with, should either not be accepted or at the very least brought to the attention of the shipper in such a way as to ensure that the receiver does not blame the carrier or driver.

D&T wants to take every step to protect the load and the good names and reputations of the company and our independent contractors. In doing so, potential liability can be avoided and the best service provided.

Security: A 'call to action' checklist

In this "call for security," it's infinitely better to take "proactive" action rather than to react after the proverbial barn door (or trailer door) has been left open! Here then is an easy-to-follow checklist for independent contractors of D&T Trucking Company.

- Inspect loads as they are being loaded (or picked up if pre-loaded). The contractor is the only D&T person who can be sure of what has actually been loaded and should always verify what is being hauled.
- Make sure to seal all loads. If freight is then stolen, a broken seal will alert the driver that trailer security has been breached. Report immediately per company procedure.
- Park in safe locations or create a safe parking environment. Well-lighted areas with supervision and/or a lot of traffic are preferred. If such a location is unavailable, park with cargo doors against a fixed object (fence, wall, another truck or trailer, etc.), and of course lock the doors wherever you park.
- Keep eyes open. Approach the truck so as to be able to view three sides before getting to it. This could alert you to the presence of strangers congregating or waiting by the truck.
- Perform a "walk-around" inspection after stopping and before starting again. Check tires, lights, vehicle condition, signs of tampering, including a broken seal.
- As security "follow-up," keep a good count on overseas or shipper-sealed freight when unloading takes place. Verify the freight and the piece count; if the freight or count does not match the paperwork on a shipper-sealed trailer, contact D&T immediately.
- Even at our facility, observe traffic and people. Contractors are in the unique position of coming and going at random times and therefore will have a greater opportunity to spot an intruder.

These are all reasonably simple and effective actions to implement. Drivers are on the "front line" of security in the trucking industry. The more aware you are, the safer the truck, trailer and load are.

A new member of the D&T (and Garbacz) family!

Congratulations to Agata and Tomasz Garbacz (Tomasz joined the D&T contractor team about 18 months ago) on the birth of their daughter, Emily. She arrived January 17 at 8 pounds, 8 ounces and 21 inches long. The Crossroads is happy to run these photos, and we would welcome family news/photos (births, graduations, birthday parties, awards, etc.) from other team members, too.



Julia is happy to have a new sister.



The Garbacz family: Julia, Emily, Agata, Tomasz.



"Who are you?" Emily seems to be saying.

Highway to Health

Each year about 50,000 Americans suffer a mini-stroke, which is also known as a transient ischemic attack (TIA). This is a warning that fast medical care is needed to avoid a major stroke and its life-threatening effects.

A mini-stroke is believed to happen when blood clots temporarily prevent blood from flowing to the brain. Symptoms appear suddenly, usually disappear within one hour, and are similar to stroke symptoms. But they generally involve no brain damage, according to medical experts.

Warning signs may include weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, typically on one side of the body; vision loss; confusion; trouble speaking or understanding; dizziness; loss of coordination or balance; and a sudden severe headache. Since effects tend to last no longer than 24 hours, say the experts, many mini-stroke sufferers don't realize what happened and thus do not seek treatment. That can be a critical mistake.

A medical exam within an hour of a mini-stroke helps doctors learn its cause. It also aids in determining measures to prevent a major stroke. The doctor may prescribe drugs to reduce blood clotting, for example, or suggest surgery to clear plaque from arteries.

Older people, African-Americans and those with a strong family history of heart disease, stroke and diabetes are more prone to mini-stroke and stroke. But their (and anyone else's) chances of avoiding both are improved if they make health lifestyle changes.

For instance, studies indicate that keeping blood pressure at the proper level can cut strokes by 35 to 40 percent, heart attacks by 20 to 25 percent, and heart failure more than 50 percent. Being overweight, by the way, is the leading risk factor for developing high blood pressure, and weight loss almost always reduces elevated pressure.

Here are some lifestyle changes that can contribute to better health.

- Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Keep cholesterol below 200mg/dL.
- For those with diabetes, keep the fasting blood sugar within normal range.
- Keep blood pressure below 120/80 mm/Hg.
- Do not smoke and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Get plenty of exercise, and keep active in doing things you enjoy.
- Work closely with your health care provider in developing a program regarding all of the above and any other relevant matters.

Locally, this entire subject was brought tragically home recently with the death by stroke—at age 45—of beloved Hall of Fame baseball player Kirby Puckett. Kirby played for the Minnesota Twins, and Twins manager Ron Gardenhire lives in Little Canada, Minn., where D&T Trucking Company is based.

It was reported that friends of Puckett had been concerned about his gaining weight. Also, both of the former baseball star's parents died before age 50 from heart disease, he had said; two of his brothers died young; and several of his other siblings reportedly have had illnesses.

Kirby had made plans to be an organ donor when the time came. But in a story written by Curt Brown in the (Minneapolis) Star Tribune, a friend was quoted as saying, "Kirby is already helping people by making them take a hard look at their (own) mental and physical health."

Weight management: fact vs. fiction

Fiction Skipping meals will help me lose weight.

Fact When you skip meals, you don't give your body the energy it needs to work. Not only that, but hunger makes you more likely to overeat later on. It's best to spread your calories throughout the day. Eat at least 3 smaller meals a day including breakfast. Plan on fruits and vegetables for snacks.

Fiction The faster I lose weight, the better.

Fact Rapid weight loss is usually due to loss of water or muscle mass. You want to keep your muscle mass. What you're trying to get rid of is extra fat. Aim to lose 1/2 to 2 pounds a week. Then you're more likely to lose fat rather than water or muscle.

Fiction The fewer calories I eat, the better.

Fact This seems like it should be true, but it's not. When you eat too few calories, your body thinks food is scarce. So it slows down your metabolism (how fast you burn calories) to save energy. By eating too few calories, you make it harder to lose weight. Unless your doctor suggests it, don't eat fewer than 1,200 calories a day.

Fiction Low-fat and fat-free mean low-calorie.

Fact You may be tempted to have one more cookie—after all, it's low fat. But all foods, even fat-free ones, have calories. In fact, some low-fat and fat-free foods have more calories than their full-fat counterparts. Eat too many calories of any kind, and you'll gain weight. It's OK to treat yourself to a fat-free cookie or two. Just don't eat the whole box!

Fiction I can't start exercising until I lose weight.

Fact The sooner you start exercising, the better. Exercise makes weight loss easier, faster, and healthier. It helps burn more calories, tone your muscles, and keep your appetite in check. And people who continue to exercise after they lose weight are more likely to keep the weight off. After checking with your doctor, make exercise part of your weight-loss plan.

Fiction Once I lose weight, I can go back to living the way I did before.

Fact Going back to your old eating habits and giving up exercise are sure ways to regain any weight that you lost. The lifestyle changes that help you lose extra weight can also help you keep it off. This is why you need to make changes that you can stick with.

Shop Talk

By Mark Wells

Fifth wheels are probably one of the most neglected components on a truck. Some truckers believe that as long as everything seems to be working well, maintenance is unnecessary. That's not entirely true. Fifth wheels are almost maintenance-free, but inspection and periodic maintenance are necessary to keep them in good shape. There are several things that a driver can do:

Most importantly, keep the fifth wheel lubricated. Lubricant is the lifeblood of fifth wheels. Without it, top plates become chafed and worn, jaw locks corrode and bind, and steering gets difficult. All this leads to unsafe driving, especially on slippery roads.

How often should you lube your fifth wheel? Most standard fifth wheels require top plate lubrication once a week or every 3,000 miles (more often with frequent drop-and-hook use) and jaw lubrication every 30,000 to 60,000 miles, depending on manufacturers' recommendations. Many fifth wheel specific lubricants are available, but high-quality chassis grease remains the most popular and economical product for top plate lubrication when the ambient temperature remains above 0 degrees Fahrenheit. During cold weather, ice and grit can build up, causing lubricants to become thick and binding at low temperatures. When the temperature drops below freezing, Fontaine recommends the use of a cleaner or degreaser on the latching mechanism to make sure that the moving parts operate freely. This should be followed by an application of 90-weight oil to all moving parts.

Beyond lubrication, fifth wheels last longer if they're not abused. Often truckers squeeze their rigs under fully loaded trailers, and then slam into the kingpin. Such techniques accelerate wear and can cause damage to tractor and trailer parts. Deflate the truck's air suspension to allow backing under a trailer. Ideally, a trailer nose should make contact with the fifth wheel slightly behind the pivot pins, tipping the top plate flat during coupling. When dropping a trailer, crank the landing gear down, and then dump the suspension air to reduce the weight on the fifth wheel before pulling away.

Make sure that your fifth wheel is connecting properly to the trailer. This is the safest way to examine your fifth wheel's jaws and make sure they aren't worn out...it's a two-person test, so ask someone to help you out.

- Latch the fifth wheel onto the trailer as usual.
- Set the trailer brakes.
- Back lightly against the trailer kingpin
- Have your helper make a mark on the 5th wheel and trailer
- Pull forward against the kingpin
- Have your helper observe how far the plate moves relative to the trailer

DOT regulations say that the maximum amount of movement allowed between the fifth wheel and trailer is 1/2". If more than 1/2" of movement is present, the fifth wheels jaws may be worn or misadjusted. Worn or improperly adjusted jaws can cause the trailer to come uncoupled, usually with disastrous results. Have a qualified professional inspect the jaw area, looking for damage, missing parts and excessive wear. Before fifth wheels wear out, they can usually be adjusted to reduce the slack that comes with use. When that fails to correct the problem, fifth wheels can be rebuilt. Obviously, the procedure for rebuilding varies by brand, model and type of kit. The job isn't technically difficult, usually entailing fewer than a dozen parts. The biggest challenge for most people will be the removal of the fifth wheel, an unwieldy slab of iron weighing upward of 300 pounds.

The best way to avoid the expense and effort of fifth wheel repair or replacement is with regular inspections and proper lubrication. Make it part of your maintenance routine.

A fitting description . . .

It's interesting how the attributes that enable a person to succeed in one occupation could be applied with equal relevance to another. Take for example the characteristics and qualities that have been used to describe a good coach. Such a coach ...

HAS leadership skills and is goal-oriented.

HAS the ability to communicate.

HAS great knowledge of his/her profession.

HAS a vision of the future.

HAS the ability to get to know people.

HAS a sense of humor and the ability to laugh at oneself

HAS a great deal of enthusiasm for the job.

HAS strong character attributes, such as respect, responsibility, resiliency and integrity.

Sounds like the words "professional truck driver" can be substituted for "coach" and the description would be just as fitting, doesn't it?

The D&T Trucking Company



A publication for and about
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Good stuff.



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The 50th anniversary of ‘buckling up’

Fifty years ago this year, the first factory-installed seat belt was included in the equipment of a motor vehicle. Since then, an estimated 200,000 lives have been saved in the United States by seat belt usage, and that number would be greater if buckling up had been the norm early on.

But the fact is that acceptance came slowly. Many drivers, including truckers, initially were skeptical. Some vehicle manufacturers were not overly enthusiastic. Federal hearings took time; actually, states, among them Wisconsin, and not Congress were early leaders in the evolution of belt usage.

It should also be pointed out, however, that these leaders were preceded by other pioneers. In the 1880s, belts were used in horse-drawn vehicles to prevent occupants from being ejected. Pilots of open-cockpit airplanes in the 1920s made certain (for obvious reasons) that they had belts securely fastened. And some doctors began equipping their own cars with belts as far back as the 1930s.

By 1964, lap belts in the front seat were standard equipment on all automobiles. And all trucks manufactured on and after January 1, 1965 had to come with a seat belt assembly that conformed to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

D&T Trucking Company of course has had a long-standing policy that our independent contractors buckle up. Beyond that, it's the law: "A commercial motor vehicle which has a safety belt assembly installed at the driver's seat shall not be driven unless the driver has properly restrained himself/herself with the safety belt assembly."

Today, in this "50th anniversary year," education—and the law—have taken hold. Only about 11 percent of Americans wore seat belts in 1979; now the figure is 82 percent. One wonders what the remaining 18 percent is thinking, because the evidence is indisputable.

The modern lap and shoulder safety belt design has been proven to hold a driver—in automobile or truck—securely behind the wheel in the event of a crash. By preventing ejection, the safety belt reduces injuries and fatalities. Also, it shifts crash forces to the strongest parts of the body structure and spreads forces over a wider area of the body. This allows the body to "slow down" gradually, thus protecting the head and spinal cord.

In the trucking industry, statistics from 2003 show that about half of the drivers killed in crashes were not wearing safety belts, and a significant percentage of those deaths occurred when the driver was ejected from his/her truck.

Imagine not just the economic repercussions from injuries and fatalities but also the effect that they have on family and other loved ones, and that says it all about the need to buckle up.

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