



# CROSSROADS

*A Publication For And About Valued D&T Team Builders*

## **Profile of a Contractor . . . Charles Swanson** **MAY 2007**

### **BEING PROFILED BECAUSE:**

He was named "Driver of the Quarter" for the first quarter of 2007, in a new awards program introduced this year by D&T Trucking Company. Selection is based on wide-ranging criteria adding up to totally professional performance in every area of driver responsibility, including outstanding customer service. From the year's four winners of the prestigious quarterly award will come the independent contractor honored as D&T's 2007 "Driver of the Year." That announcement will be made early in 2008.

### **CHARLIE'S REACTION:**

"It was definitely a surprise, and I'm glad it happened for me now. This (the program) is a nice and thoughtful thing for D&T to do. People do not generally get a pat on the back for doing a good job. This is a real honor from D&T, no doubt about it."

### **PRAISE FROM HIS D&T DISPATCHER, RICK PRATT:**

"It is always a pleasure to dispatch Charlie. I have the utmost respect for him and the job that he does for D&T. He is very good to work with, always on time, and will do anything we ask. If we have a special circumstance where we need help, he is always willing and able. His philosophy is that the freight needs to be hauled, wherever the destination. I cannot think of one instance, other than if there were hours-of-service issues, where Charlie has not taken a load when his help was needed. He consistently arrives two to three hours early for pickups and, in most cases, arrives the night before for next day deliveries. This is a truly professional owner-operator."



*Holding his award plaque is Charlie Swanson.*

### **BACKGROUND DETAILS:**

Originally from Luck, Wis., Swanson now resides in Eau Claire. He was a computer programmer for 26 years before deciding on a career change and going into trucking in 1993. After a brief time as a company driver, he bought a 1990 Peterbilt and has been an independent contractor ever since. His present truck is a 1998 Freightliner that is well maintained and still sharp looking, "and I plan to keep on driving it," said Charlie.

### **AFFILIATING WITH D&T:**

Charlie was partnering with Joe Appel, Sr., and when Joe came over to D&T, he decided to follow, leasing on in December, 2004. "I wasn't getting the miles, wasn't making any money, where I was before," he said. Also, he was looking for the "right people" to work with; "D&T is a nice place to be—the people don't push on you here," he remarked. It helped, too, that he knew his dispatcher, Rick Pratt, who was with the same carrier as Charlie before joining D&T in September, 2004.

### **DOING WELL NOW:**

"I'm making more money now and am doing pretty good," said Charlie, who takes a load weekly to the East Coast—New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania. And D&T "does a good job" of getting him loads coming back, he added. He enjoys running when there's less traffic, heading east on weekends and returning late at night during the week, getting back soon enough so that his truck can be worked on, if need be, and ready before the upcoming weekend. And, as is obvious from his being named Driver of the Quarter, his safety and on-time records are perfect.

### **THE TRUCKING PHILOSOPHY OF CHARLIE SWANSON:**

"I'm careful about planning ahead. I know my route, how far I'm going today, where I'll stop, and I know from experience my way around out east. I like running legal and being on time, keep good logs and have always been a believer in the importance of clean inspections and in being neat and clean myself. Trucking back and forth is enjoyable to me. I try to avoid traffic jams, but if you're in one you just have to deal with it. I always try to be courteous and to avoid problems and do my best in everything I do."

# Charles Swanson. . .the first D&T 'Driver of the Quarter'



*In a new awards program introduced this year, D&T President, Bob Dolle (left) presents a plaque to the program's first recipient, Charles Swanson. Charlie also received a check for \$250.*



*Keeping his equipment and himself clean and neat is important to Swanson.*



*D&T Dispatcher Rick Pratt (left) was pleased with Charlie's selection as Driver of the Quarter.*

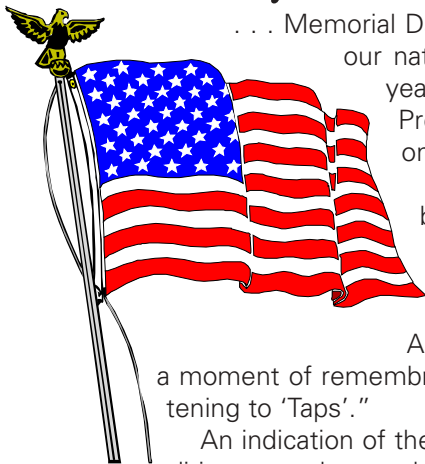
## Four more first quarter Safe Driving Achievers

Four independent contractors of D&T Trucking Company were inadvertently left off the April issue's listing of 100 Percent Safe Driving Achievers, First Quarter, 2007. They were Dale Bujak, Thomas Ouimette, Wlodzimierz Bienia and Charles Lose.

We apologize to these highly professional contractors who delivered every load accident-free throughout the quarter and look forward to the opportunity to include them next time!

## Memorial Day May 28

### Did you know that . . .



. . . Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. It had spontaneous separate beginnings in many towns during the initial years following the Civil War and was first recognized officially on May 30, 1868. In 1971, President Nixon and Congress declared Memorial Day to be a federal holiday to be observed on the last Monday in May.

The holiday, which has evolved to honor not only Americans from the armed forces but also the memories of all loved ones who have died, is marked by visits to cemeteries, flowers and flags on graves, rifle salutes, wreath-laying ceremonies or even silent tributes. A National Moment of Remembrance resolution, passed in December, 2000, just nine months before the infamous 9/11/01 terrorist attack on the United States, asks all Americans at 3 p.m. their local time "to voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to 'Taps'."

An indication of the impending arrival of Memorial Day is the selling of red poppies for people to wear, a tradition started more than 85 years ago. In 1922, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) became the first veterans' organization to nationally sell the poppies, and this still is an important VFW project. Funds raised are used to aid disabled and needy veterans.

## A lifesaving event

# Roadcheck 2007 set for June 5-7

There is no question about it; statistics show that an annual program sponsored by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) saves lives and reduces the number of injuries and truck and bus accidents.

The event, consisting of intense roadside and traffic enforcement activities around the clock for 72 hours, is scheduled this year for June 5-7. Called Roadcheck 2007, it will involve approximately 10,000 specially-trained and certified officers—federal, state, provincial and local—blanketing roadways throughout North America.

Officers will be conducting 37-step inspections which include items related to vehicle, driver and cargo safety. They also will give drivers educational materials on various aspects of commercial vehicle, driver and hazardous materials safety.

More than 3 million North American standard roadside inspections take place annually under the Roadcheck program. According to statistics from 2001 to 2003, activities over that period by the certified officers saved 2,241 lives and helped to avoid 37,424 injuries and 49,126 crashes.

Moreover, it has been further estimated that, between 1998 and 2003, there was a 48 percent increase in the number of lives saved as a result of CVSA's Roadcheck.

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance is a not-for-profit association of local, state, provincial and federal officials responsible for the administration and enforcement of truck and bus safety laws in United States, Canada and Mexico. For more information on CVSA and its 2007 event, visit [www.cvsa.org](http://www.cvsa.org).

## *Be prepared*

Being prepared for roadside inspections is always smart and common-sense advice. But the upcoming Roadcheck 2007 June 5-7 is an occasion for a timely reminder about the importance of, for example, equipment with no safety-related defects; logs kept current and accurate; and having on person a current CDL and medical certificate. Also, it is necessary to be polite, cooperative and a good listener; such personal behavior, along with safe equipment, shows the professionalism of the commercial driver.

## MTA Championships test driving skills

For truck drivers who have a competitive instinct with regard to their professional driving skills, their time is coming; the annual Minnesota Truck Driving Championships will be held June 8-10 at Yellow Transportation, Burnsville, Minn.

Sponsored by the Minnesota Trucking Association, the Championships provide drivers with a unique opportunity to test their skills against others in the industry. There are eight classes of competition: Straight truck, three-axle, four-axle, five-axle, tank truck, flatbed, twin trailer and sleeper berth.

First, second and third place winners in each class will be awarded special plaques. First place winners in addition are eligible to represent Minnesota in the MTA National Truck Driving Championships, which this year will be held in Minneapolis in August.

## Regulations forbid driving when ill

The subject: Section 392.3 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, ill or fatigued operation.

"No driver shall operate a commercial motor vehicle, and a motor carrier shall not require or permit a driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle, while the driver's ability or alertness is so impaired, or so likely to become impaired, through fatigue, illness or any other cause, as to make it unsafe for him/her to begin or continue to operate the commercial motor vehicle. . ."

So. . . anyone feeling "under the weather" from, perhaps, a respiratory illness or an intestinal virus or. . . whatever. . . and perhaps drowsy from medication or lack of sleep should not be on the road—in any weather.

## A safety anniversary for these contractors

With all of the miles that the professional driver travels over the road, it is no easy feat to be accident-free even for just a quarterly period. So recognition is even more appropriate when, in a given month, there are independent contractors of D&T Trucking Company who have their specific anniversary year as a Safe Driving Achiever.

Following are the contractors for whom April was their anniversary of achievement with D&T.

10 Years	-	<b>James Adams</b>
3 Years		<b>Lavern Pflughoeft</b>
2 Years		<b>Charles Noll</b>
1 Year		<b>Brandon Bergman</b> <b>David Croes</b>

# In trucking, being 'in a hurry' doesn't pay!

Always being on time and never being in a hurry are not contradictory challenges in the trucking industry. On-time deliveries are made by the driver who is skilled and knowledgeable and who uses common sense, and the same driver is never "too busy"—too much "in a hurry"—when it comes to following certain procedures that could otherwise lead to non-driving or driving errors.

The safety-conscious D&T independent contractor knows that it doesn't pay to be in a hurry. There are tasks or steps that cannot be forgotten or skipped or ignored because "they are not important," such as:

- Getting out of the truck to verify the height and alignment of the trailer before coupling. Not doing this can result in jumping the trailer kingpin over the fifth wheel.
- Verifying that the fifth wheel is locked after coupling. If not done, this can be one of the worst mistakes of someone "in a hurry," since it could lead to the trailer detaching in traffic.
- Taking proper care in uncoupling to avoid damage to the air ride system, rear tires, the rear of the tractor and/or the apron plate and kingpin, the air and electrical "pigtailed," etc.
- Reviewing trip paperwork. The industry has seen cases where the driver who skipped or forgot this step ended up at the wrong customer or even in the wrong city, with the wrong load!
- Verifying condition and count (or the seal number). Not doing this is the cause of an unknown number of cargo claims in the industry; but what is known is that there is the potential for a large, very preventable freight claim.

In addition to non-driving errors, the hurrying drivers tend to make speed management and space management mistakes on the road.

Common speed management errors are operating too fast for conditions; not reducing speed when in a constricted area; and driving over the speed limit. Common space management errors include changing lanes unnecessarily; pulling out or changing lanes while too close to other traffic; and not verifying clearances in tight maneuvering situations.

Such mistakes can be costly to the driver and the company, which is why the safety "pro" doesn't make them.

## The Noll family at Talladega



*A free family trip to NASCAR races at the Talladega (Alabama) Superspeedway was Chuck Noll's reward for winning the D&T Special Referral Promotion drawing. Pictured with him at the "good time weekend" are his wife, Lisa, and their son, Jake, 12, who was surprised at "how fast the NASCAR cars go," said Chuck.*

## Rear-enders can bite one who isn't looking ahead

When people in the insurance business look through losses in their world of claims, something that really jumps out at them is the frequency of rear-end crashes. So it was ironic that Jan Markison of the Daly Agency in Minneapolis experienced that very incident as a passenger in a motor vehicle.

"Simon (the motorist) was driving along and when he glanced down to pick up his cell phone, the BMW in front of us suddenly stopped," said Jan. "Simon's reaction time was very good but, unfortunately, because his perception time was hindered (by the fact that he was looking at his cell phone instead of the road ahead), he didn't perceive the hazard until it was too late.

"Fortunately, no one was hurt, (but), the point is that rear-end accidents can jump up and bite anyone, anytime, anywhere, if the driver is not looking at the road ahead and not maintaining a safe following distance."

Enough said.

## Watch for anxiety signs after a traumatic event

More than 5 million adults each year are affected by an anxiety known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is triggered by an event—assault, war, natural disaster, tragic injury, vehicle crash—that the person witnessed or that in some way directly affected him/her.

Not everyone involved in a traumatic event suffers from post-event anxiety. But for those who do, there are signs and symptoms that typically appear within three months after the event—although in some cases, the first reaction occurs even years later.

Here's what to watch for:

- Recurrent thoughts, flashbacks or nightmares about the event.
- Having to avoid places reminiscent of the event.
- Depression, sadness or emotional numbness.
- Trouble concentrating on making decisions.
- Angry outbursts or anxiety.
- Being easily startled or irritated.
- Having trouble relating to others.
- Difficulty in sleeping.
- Difficulty in your job.

If troubling feelings such as fear, anxiety or sadness last for more than a month, see your health care provider. PTSD is treatable, so don't wait. Professional help can help!

# The Customer Comments . . .

*(Editor's note: The positive relationships between D&T Trucking Company and its customers form the basis for this continuing series of Crossroads interviews. Commenting here: Hassan Benaouis, Warehouse Manager, F&A Dairy Products, Dresser, Wis.).*

"We are a manufacturer of Mozzarella and Provolone cheese produced from a million pounds of milk per day coming into our plant. Last summer I got a cold call from Jay (Matykiewicz) of D&T. He wanted to know if you could help us out with some trucks to the East Coast.

"I asked him about routes and how many trucks were available. We use a number of motor carriers, and I told him what I am always looking for. I want a stable trucking company, one that has been around a long time, and I want good service. That's a number one priority to F&A Dairy Products. And there's price, that's important, too.

"So D&T started with us with a truckload every other week or so. Now you're getting two or three truckloads a week. The way I put it, our customers 'need our product there when they need it,' and D&T's service in response to that, being on time, has been fantastic. I just have to tell (Dispatchers) Art (Hemenway) or Rick (Pratt) what I want, and when, and then I don't have to worry about our loads being delivered on time. There have never been any complaints.

"Our customers like the service and the nice D&T trailers, and they are happy with your drivers, too. They are clean, polite and patient, and customers also like to see a familiar face and know that reliable person by his first name. This relationship is important to F&A Dairy Products, because the motor carrier and its drivers are an extension of us. They represent us to our customers.

"So everything is working our very well for us with D&T."

## F&A Dairy Products continues old-fashioned tradition

F&A Dairy Products prides itself on being a modern, state-of-the-art manufacturer of pizza and deli cheeses while still adhering to the principles of old-fashioned quality. That's the way it's always been, ever since two enterprising Italian brothers, Frank and Angelo Terranova, founded the company in Grand Rapids, Mich. in 1958.

At that time they were selecting and distributing the best cheese and pizza supplies they could buy. But their standards were higher than what they could find, so they went into manufacturing themselves by purchasing the Belle Cheese plant in Amery, Wis. in 1965. Later they acquired the Indianhead Dairy in Dresser, Wis., renamed it F&A Dairy Products, Inc., and eventually merged Belle Cheese into F&A to form a single company.

Since then there not only has been expansion and modernization of the Dresser operation but also construction of an entirely new cheese production facility in Las Cruces, New Mexico in 1995. At that plant, 1.7 million pounds of milk flows in per day, and 4 million pounds of cheese comes out monthly.

In both locations, the tradition of quality, excellence and "unmatched personal service" remains alive today (sort of like D&T in trucking), with Frank and Angelo's time-honored, hands-on methods having been passed from one F&A cheese-maker to the next for generations.

"We specialize in producing great cheese at a good price and in consistently exceeding our customers' expectations of value," the company states, adding that "we don't manufacture the most cheese, just the best; it's old-world cheese, made the old-fashioned way."

And therein lies the success of a company that will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year!

## Reaching anniversaries in June with D&T are . . .

A customer pointed out in this issue of the Crossroads that stability is an important consideration in choosing a motor carrier. That's one of many categories in which D&T rates highly—if we do say so ourself!—and illustrating this fact is the longevity of service of staff and contractors.

It is always a pleasure, therefore, to acknowledge those who have reached another anniversary with our company, and observing that occasion in June will be those named below.

### CONTRACTORS

- 24 Years - Paul Christle
- 13 Years - Frank Mackes  
Steve Petersen
- 8 Years - Dave Wallace
- 7 Years - Rick Steidl
- 6 Years - John Bracelen
- 5 Years - Wojciech Gawiec  
Kathy Wallace
- 4 Years - Svetoslav Popov
- 2 Years - Ryszard Jucha

### STAFF

- 37 Years - Bob Dolle, Jr.
- 6 Years - Darrold Geist

# Scott's Law is THE law in work zones

Scott's Law sounds as if it might be the title for a TV series. But it has much more meaning than that for—potentially—drivers passing through Illinois.

The law is named after a fire fighter who lost his life while responding to an accident on an expressway in the Chicago area. Basically it—and similar legislation in other states—requires a driver to slow down, and change lanes if possible, for emergency, construction and maintenance vehicles and workers.

A person violating this law can be fined up to \$10,000, must appear in court, and can have driving privileges suspended. Additional penalties can apply in extreme cases such as involuntary manslaughter and reckless homicide. If someone kills a person while operating a vehicle and is convicted, the result could be imprisonment from three to 14 years.

Under Scott's Law, reckless homicide is defined as being under the influence of alcohol or any other drug or drugs at the time that the moving violation caused the death of another individual. Normally a Class 3 felony, the offense becomes a Class 2 felony if committed in a work zone and therefore could lead to the aforementioned severe imprisonment.

Further information on laws applicable to vehicle operators when in work zones can be found in the Criminal Code and Vehicle Code for the State of Illinois; they can be researched on the State of Illinois websites.

Information also is available about signs and other traffic control-related requirements prescribed by the IDOT in work zones. These can be found in the Highway Standards and other specification requirements, which can be reviewed on the IDOT website under the link of "Doing Business," then under "Construction Guides," then under "Specifications/Special Provisions/Highway Standards," <http://www.dot.state.il.us/desenv/hwyspecs.html>

## On the Lighter Side . . .

### OLD STORY

In ancient times, there was a group of traveling actors who went from village to village entertaining the people. At one stop, the only son of a village elder was so fascinated by the cast that, when they moved on, he ran away with them.

But the villagers, noticing the boy's absence, caught up with the actors, surrounded them, and picked up rocks to throw at them. No one, however, wanted to begin the attack.

So another village elder pointed at the boy's father and suggested, "Let he who is without son stone the cast first!"

\* \* \*

### QUICK THINKING

Johnny was stocking the produce area of the supermarket when a man came over and asked to buy half a head of lettuce.

"I'm sorry, sir," the teenager replied. "We only sell whole heads of lettuce."

"I don't need a whole head, only half," the man insisted

So Johnny said he would check with the manager, found her, and reported that "there is some jerk who wants just half a head of lettuce."

As he was finishing saying this, though, he realized that the man had followed him. "But I think that will be okay," he quickly added, "because this gentleman standing right here is willing to buy the other half."

\* \* \*

### GETTING THE RIGHT ORDER

Peggy stopped at the bakery on her way home from work to pick up the cake she had ordered for her party that evening.

After giving her name and eyeing the assortment of specially-prepared items on the back shelf, she said, "I hope my order is ready. Do you know which is mine?"

"Oh, certainly," the clerk smiled. "You're the fruitcake."

\* \* \*

### OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF CHILDREN

The elementary-age youngsters at their church were given a test on the Old and New Testaments. Among their written responses—spelling and interpretations left uncorrected:

"In the first book of the Bible, Guinnesses, God got tired of creating the world so He took the Sabbath off."

"Moses went up to Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Commandments."

"Joshua led the Hebrews in the Battle of Geritol."

"Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do unto others before they do one to you."

"The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 Decibels."

"Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony."

\* \* \*

### FINAL THOUGHT

You know you're getting "old" if you remember when "chip" meant a piece of wood and "software" wasn't even a word!

# Highway to Health

As pointed out in "Gettin' in Gear: A Wellness, Health and Fitness Program for Commercial Drivers," the human body is built to move, not to sit still—as in driving! The phrase "use it or lose it" applies here; muscles, joints and bones get stronger when used. Unused, they shift into low gear and begin to break down, making a person more susceptible to strains, sprains, injuries and illnesses.

Thus Gettin' in Gear emphasizes the need to "start moving"—to improve physical condition through regular exercise. Physically fit people have more energy and stamina, feel better, and have stronger hearts to pump more blood to muscles when required and to the brain for staying awake/alert. They also sleep better, are more likely to have a positive attitude, and are better able to deal with lengthy periods on the road.

Exercise doesn't have to be complicated, either. A little movement goes a long way, meaning that modest levels of activity—just taking the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator for example—can contribute to improved fitness. Walking in fact is one of the most convenient yet beneficial forms of exercise. A brisk walk of about 30 minutes three to five times a week can be as effective as a program of jogging or running.

There also are simple strength training exercises that, like walking, can be performed even while you are on the road. These are designed to firm up the body, increase endurance, prevent back problems and lighten daily tasks. Having more muscle mass acquired from strength training helps in burning more calories when you work and are using those muscles.

As with any fitness program of course, it should be done with care. The program should not be so vigorous as to lead to strains or cause the person to lose interest because the program "seems too tough to do." Intensity should be increased gradually and in keeping with how comfortable and capable the person is. And for someone over age 40 and 20 or more pounds overweight, do not begin a vigorous program without first consulting your physician for advice.

*(Editor's note: The Gettin' in Gear program is available free to independent contractors of D&T Trucking Company. See Jim Walker for more information).*

## 'Gee. . .I wish I hadn't said that!'

Anyone who has ever been afflicted with foot-in-the-mouth disease is in the same boat with plenty of distinguished company. Words can have permanent staying power, and here are some famously regrettable statements and predictions recorded for posterity and deliciously recalled in a United Feature Syndicate column by businessman, author and motivational speaker Harvey Mackay.

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons"—Popular Mechanics magazine, 1949.

"But what is it good for?"—An IBM engineer in 1968, referring to the microchip.

"There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in their home"—Ken Olson, co-founder of Digital Equipment Corp.

"What use could this company make of an electrical toy?"—The president of Western Union in 1876, turning down the opportunity to buy exclusive rights to the telephone for \$100,000.

"The aeroplane will help peace in more ways than one. . .it will have a tendency to make war impossible"—Orville Wright.

"The problem with television is that people must sit and keep their eyes glued to a screen. The average American family doesn't have time for it"—The New York Times, 1939.

"The concept is interesting, but. . .the idea must be feasible"—A Yale University professor, responding to a student's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service; the then-student who wrote the paper was Fred Smith, who eventually founded Federal Express Corp.

"Law will be simplified (in the next century). Lawyers will have diminished, and their fees will have been vastly curtailed"—New York Tribune journalist Junius Henri Browne, writing in 1893.

*'Happy birthday  
to you...'*



Jim Adams	June 19
Urszula Dajwowski	June 26
Linda Fales	June 27
Darold Geist	June 30
Bernetta Jones	June 9
Todd Kohnen	June 13
Jerry Long	June 18
Tryan Winston	June 9



The D&T Trucking Company



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# Avoid the high cost of fuel inefficiency

Do the math!

No one has to tell independent contractors about the impact of fuel costs on their professional life. And it also is well recognized that fuel efficiency can be maximized by employing common sense procedures/practices.

This subject is often discussed in terms of percentage increase in efficiency or more miles per gallon. But of course another way to look at it is the cost of inefficient vehicle maintenance and driving practices. Do the eye-opening math yourself by multiplying the needless use of an additional 2,500 or 3,000 gallons per year by the price per gallon.

Industry experts point out that there are a number of factors that can be controlled by the driver in achieving the most economical fuel consumption. With good judgment and intelligent decision making, there can be a 10 percent increase or more in miles per gallon. Here are some specifics.

**Preventive maintenance**—Simple maintenance steps, such as being sure that tires are properly inflated and the engine is tuned on a regular basis, can make a difference. Also, routine PM not only results in better mileage but in addition reduces overall maintenance costs over the lifetime of the vehicle.

**Idling** —On average, between .5 and 1.5 gallons of fuel are burned each hour an engine is allowed to idle. Besides wasting fuel, excessive idling can foul fuel injectors, thus reducing engine efficiency.

**Startup/Cool down**—It no longer is necessary in most instances to idle an engine for an extended period when starting the day. And in any case, five minutes should be more than enough for proper engine warmup. Similarly, cool down time at the end of the day should be limited. After a hard run, two or three minutes can be enough, and if you have been traveling at slow speed for at least 15 minutes (for example, on city streets) that time can effectively replace engine cool down duration.

**Trip planning**—Efficient planning—selecting the best route for the specific situation—saves on fuel consumption as well as time. The shortest route in miles might require more fuel because of slowdowns, cross-traffic, driving through towns or over hilly terrain, etc. Look-ahead planning can also sometimes help in avoiding bad weather.

**Driving practices**—Smooth acceleration conserves fuel; uneven acceleration wastes it. Maintaining a steady speed is also more efficient; braking unnecessarily causes a vehicle to lose momentum, requires acceleration to regain momentum, and thus means burning more fuel. Traveling at slower speeds reduces fuel usage. Tests show that every mile per hour of speed over 55 mph costs an additional 2 to 2.2 percent in fuel consumption for the obvious reason that the faster the vehicle is traveling, the more the horsepower required to run the engine. And slowing down of course is safer as well as fuel-wise.

**A few final tips**—Shorten rest stops when feasible; starting a warm engine is easier and more fuel efficient, naturally, than starting a completely cold engine. Keep oil at the proper level. Use a quality fuel. When fueling, accept the pump's automatic shutoff rather than trying to top off, which can result in a wasteful spill, and then be sure the fuel cap is securely in place before you drive off. And finally, review and compare fuel usage records before and after implementing driving efficiency practices. The savings realized can be a powerful motivator for the future!

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