

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2013

THE TRACKER

THE PUBLICATION FOR TIRE PROFESSIONALS
FROM WESTERN CANADA TIRE DEALERS

Meet the Leek-Seekers

Trever & Hal Sparrow Think Outside the Tank

Matt's Matters: When in Doubt, Tag it Out!

Remembering Pioneer Ed Campbell

Why Safety Bulletins Work

- *Effective Background Checks*
- *Get More from Social Media*
- *The Case for Winter Tires*
- *Pitching in for Charity*



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Bumping the Slump through Value and Service

By Clem Collett, WCTD President



I was catching up with a friend of mine a while ago, as we sat beneath the awning of his camper on a rainy Saturday afternoon. We got on the topic of the somewhat sluggish economy and how it was affecting our respective industries. He's in agriculture and specializes in animal nutrition. It seems no matter who I talk to these days, everyone seems to find that business is, and I quote; "a little slow". Our conversation expanded to what measures we were taking in dealing with the slump. The funny thing is that, no matter what industry you're in, the same topics keep popping up. Delivering good customer service; offering the right product; and giving our customers value were the three biggest things we could think of.

Customer Service

It's an important part of any business strategy. But if there was ever a time where service matters even more, it's during the slow part of a business cycle. Customers who experience that WOW factor when they step into your shop are more likely to remember that—and become a customer for life. So why not cater to them when time permits? In my opinion, customers will not expect that level of service all the time, but will certainly appreciate it when they do receive it. They will also be more inclined to refer family and friends to your store. How's that for cost-effective advertising?

Reducing Your Inventory

Cutting back on stock when sales are down seems like a no-brainer on paper. But this can prove to be quite challenging when dealing with the ever-growing SKU

phenomenon with which we're all faced today. However, with a little creativity and calculated forecasting it can be achieved. You can reduce your inventory by not cannibalizing the slower moving sizes and simply stocking your best seller in those categories. You can also reduce your inventory turnover by 15%-20% which should also improve your cash flow, a great added bonus. The risk, however, is running out of stock, so paying close attention to your inventory is a must.

Value

Just what is value? It's that perfect mix of service, price and all the things that leave your customer walking out of your store feeling confident they made the right decision. But how to measure something that means so many things to different people? Well that's up to you to decide. What I do believe is that customers who value value, (pardon the pun) will be less likely to purchase elsewhere, for fear of losing out what they get when they walk through your doors. It's this way of thinking that can create repeat business for you for years to come—during both good times and bad.

In the end, working hard to earn and / or maintain the business you are after, or already have, during the rough times will only help your company thrive during times of prosperity. If we take the time to make a game plan and take the necessary preparations, we can face the ugly storm head on. With nothing left to do but batten down the hatches.

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When the Going Gets Tough...

By Andy Nagy, WCTD Executive Director



Well it's been quite an eventful year so far: flooding in Alberta, airplane crash in San Francisco and train derailment in Quebec. It's hard to grasp all this; the resilience of people is just amazing. The homes destroyed by the flood and the hardship of it as well as the dangerous goods from a train wiping out several blocks of businesses; it's difficult to believe that this all happened in such a short time.

WCTD would like to thank all the volunteers who are still helping with neighbours and non-neighbours to get homes and businesses back to normal. What the outcome will be is hard to say. I talked to people who were so devastated by the flood that they're having to start all over again. For many it's hard to comprehend. Some are seniors who have worked their whole life getting to where they could live comfortably and now they have to start all over again.

The train accident didn't have to happen. The lack of policy by a rail company to not lock-up the engine or to ensure that the train will not move, regardless of the braking system, is beyond my comprehension. If I understand correctly how a brake system works on a train, it needs air pressure to release the brakes and a mechanical spring system to apply the brakes. How could it move? Well it did and the finger pointing started immediately. Remember: when a finger is pointed there are three pointing back!



As we approach the tire **change-over** season I want to remind technicians to keep their mind on the task at

hand, taking a short-cut will either get you hurt or having to do the job over again. There are some **safety bulletins** on our website about recent incidents in shops. It's worth your while to take some time and look them over.

The **Scholarship Program** is gaining momentum, this year we had over 30 applications. Fantastic. However, some people are not fully aware of the process: the application must be in on or before July 31st. We had a couple arrive late. Sorry! Those missed the cut-off.

I have a good supply of **2013 TPMS Charts**; please note that their availability for 2014 will be an issue.

Our next **convention** will be in 2014 in Niagara Falls in conjunction with the Tire Dealers Association of Canada (TDAC). More details will be forthcoming in the next few Trackers.

The advance **ETS** course for November in Saskatoon is filling up, if you haven't signed up, go to our website or send me an email. TIA's **Matt White** will be instructing this class which will be the first of its kind in Canada.

Our next **Tracker** is scheduled for November / December. Next year, we will be going to quarterly issues. Tim will still be hard at work on Twitter and on our website, which is slowly changing. If you have anything that you feel we should be posting on it, give us a call. We are trying to make it as user-friendly as possible.



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WHEN IN DOUBT

Tag it Out, Lock it Out

By Matt White, TIA Director of Tire Service



I am very honoured to say that last month I was asked to become a member of the WCTD Safety Committee.

My job description with TIA is simple: "I save lives." I promise I will do everything possible to keep our technicians safe in the field, shops or wherever they are.

A simple procedure used in our industry to ensure that a piece of equipment is not moved during service is called "Lock Out - Tag Out."

Simply put, this is a lock with a tag on it that is placed on a piece of equipment to ensure that it can't be moved during service. As simple as it sounds, every year technicians are seriously or fatally injured because these procedures are not followed.

The tag has "DANGER" on it and says "DO NOT OPERATE - EQUIPMENT LOCK OUT". It is attached either to a battery box switch or, in some cases, a door — depending on what piece of equipment you are working on. It has a red lock with a key, and on the other side of the tag is a space for the tire service technician's name and the date it was locked out.

When the driver sees this, it signals them to not enter or



operate the equipment. The tire technician is the only one with the key. Therefore it can only be unlocked by him. If there are several technicians working on the equipment all of them will put their own individual tag on. Therefore they must each take their own tag off in order for the piece of equipment to operate.

Regardless as to whether it's a commercial truck, a farm tractor or a big piece of earthmover equipment, the technicians must always inform the operator that they cannot be in the equipment during service; and whether it means taking the keys or putting the lock-out tag on, they must ensure that the

piece of equipment cannot be moved

Every year we lose a technician due to being crushed or run over because this step was not followed. As always, let's be safe out there!



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ED CAMPBELL WEST END TIRE WINNIPEG

In Memoriam
Faith and Determination Spell Success

Born at Ashern, Manitoba, on April 19, 1919, Ed Campbell came to Winnipeg in 1929. He joined the air force, became a pilot and served overseas with the R.C.A.F. during WWII, from 1942-1945.

Ed entered the automotive business as a tire salesman with Hawkinson Tread in 1947.

In March 1956, West End Tire was founded. Ed Campbell and partner Bill Casselman set up shop in the tire repair, retread and vulcanizing business (which they felt was badly needed in Winnipeg for both automobiles and the trucking industry) in a former service station at Portage Avenue and Rutland Street. When business started to increase, due to cramped quarters, land was purchased and a new plant was built at 1100 Wall Street. With less than \$2500 between the adventurous pair, they started into the retread scene.

In the decade between 1958 and 1968, volume had increased many fold, with more personnel employed both in office and shop. In 1964, Ed made one of the biggest steps of his life, assumed full ownership of West End Tire by purchasing Bill Casselman's portion of the partnership.

In 1968, with new tire sales and retreading business rapidly increasing, Ed relocated his office and shop to a 20,000 sq. ft. facility at 208 Fort Street. Massive equipment used in the tire, retread, wheel alignment and brake service was put in place in the new building which accommodated four service bays. Ample warehouse area with the most complete tire stock of new tires and the largest tire retreading facility in western Canada were all housed under one roof. Ed continued his business at the location for the next twenty years.

In 1988, once again due to business rapidly expanding, Ed purchased property and relocated to 1991 Dugald Road in Winnipeg.

At least two factors that led to his success included the booming trucking industry and superlative customer service. Ask Ed how

come West End Tire was so successful and he would tell you: "Good luck and hard work." The latter in particular he did very well, with the utmost honesty and integrity.

The majority of his business was repeat customers, based on many years of confidence in product performance using the Hawkinson Tread system. Ed serviced most of the major fleets in Winnipeg.

He was a partner in the Astro Tire Company of Canada Ltd., for Manitoba and North Western Ontario.

Ed truly was a "born salesman". He had an instinct for business that told him it would pay to take risks in work he knew. Therefore, he was willing to take those risks.

Ed served on many boards. He was an associate member of the Manitoba Trucking Industry Association, member of the National Tire and Retreading Association, Manitoba Tire Dealers Association and the Canadian Tire Dealers Association. He was a founding member of the Western Canada Tire Dealers Association.

Through the years he had employed skills and talents by taking active roles in committee work and other responsibilities.

After many years of continuous growth, Ed sold his business to André and Gilles Collet in 1990. The sale was made on a handshake. For a short period of time he remained as a consultant, but soon discovered his expertise was no longer required. The company was in excellent hands.

Ed retired at the age of 71, and enjoyed his retirement years. He had many gifts. His attitude was always "positive" and for every one of his 94 years he lived his life to the fullest.

Ed passed away on April 6, 2013, in his 94th year. He is survived by his wife Vicky, three daughters, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



How a simple but ingenious invention

can let you dump your dunk tank!

By **Tim Pawsey, Editor, The Tracker**

As the saying goes, truly, “Necessity is the mother of invention,” says Trever Sparrow, one of the inventors behind The Leek-Seeker, an ingenious system for tracking down hard-to-find tire leaks.

Trever and his father, Hal Sparrow, have spent about a decade developing The Leek-Seeker. It all came about when his dad went looking for an alternative to the need for a bulky and often messy dunk tank.

“My father didn’t have the floor space for a tank, so he came up with an idea for a roller-based system,” explains Trever.



Trever and Hal Sparrow.

“He went through different versions of developing a container that would allow you to just spray the solution onto the tire and wheel assembly, which was placed on a floor roller.”

That was about a decade ago. For various reasons the project was put on hold but after years of fine tuning and developing the necessary manufacturing connections (all in Alberta), The Leek-Seeker is now ready to be rolled out.

“We’ve used a version of the original system for years,” says Trever.

In fact, both the process and equipment have been honed and fine-tuned in a highly practical setting.

A history in the industry

The Sparrow family has no shortage of hands-on experience: they’ve been in the tire and automotive industry for well over 60 years.

In 1948, Trever Sparrow’s grandfather, Tom, established Sparrow’s Wheel Alignment (a frame alignment and welding company) at Sedgewick, in east central Alberta.



After Tom passed away in the early 80s, Hal Sparrow (who had joined the business in the early 70s) grew the operation into a more tire-focused operation, offering a fertile proving ground to perfect the process.

“Earlier this year we made the decision to pursue The Leek-Seeker full time; to develop plans for the final product and move into full production,” explains Trever, who with his father now runs Relative Manufacturing.

“After several design changes and countless hours with engineers and draftsmen, we think we’ve come up with a pretty unique tire leak detection system,” he adds.

Hal’s youngest son Bryce is also involved in the business by testing various versions of The Leek-Seeker. As of late, he is currently testing their latest model specially designed for checking air-line leaks on braking systems on semi-trucks and trailers.

As easy to use as it is to install

The in-store model is a wall mounted 3.75 litre (one U.S. gallon) container holding cleverly named, biodegradable concentrated fluid called “Leek-Quid”, and is attached via a garden hose to a tap.

The roller base unit is smartly designed to be easily attached to a sump grate cover, meaning that any excess fluid that accumulates simply runs off the tire into the sump. The roller base unit can also be bolted down to a cement floor as an option.



“You turn on the water and spray the tire down as it sits on the assembly,” says Trever. “As the solution accumulates around the assembly, any leaks are immediately apparent from the bubbles that form.”

The fluid is “amazing”. Sparrow says you can walk away from the assembly for up to half an hour or more.

“Even though the rest of the tire will be dry, the liquid itself is so sensitive that the bubbles will still be coming out through any air leaks,” he explains.

“We’ve found leaks that we would never have been able to find before,” he adds.

More than meets the eye

Beyond the obvious, The Leek-Seeker has many other benefits.

It’s much more efficient and time saving because it’s so much easier to use. All the technician has to do is place the tire on the roller base unit and spray on the liquid. Then it’s a case of watching for the presence of the leak by bubbles appearing.

By using the roller and not having to lift the tire assembly into a dunk tank, the chances of staff straining themselves or putting their back out (a common occurrence) are greatly reduced.

“It’s also environmentally friendly because it saves a massive amount of water over the year,” says Trever. And you’re no longer stuck with a dunk tank that you have to empty (or should) on a regular basis.

He’s not sorry to see the back of dunk tanks, for another reason.

“Especially here on the Prairies, when farm tires come in they’re often covered with manure—and that winds up in the dunk tank—which means there’s real potential for illness. This way’s so much better because you’re not putting your hands in contaminated water all the time.”

Not only that but there’s virtually no spillage, which is usually what happens when you have to use a dunk tank. Nor do you

need any pneumatic assistance to push the tire up. That, in turn, eliminates the need for more air lines lying around and potential mechanical break-downs.

As far as what it can handle, The Leek-Seeker is just as happy tracking down pin-holes on passenger tires as it is on much larger truck and industrial assemblies.

“It can accommodate any tire that a single human being can safely manhandle onto the roller base unit,” advises Trever.

In the yard and on the road

The original system has also evolved with another, adaptable unit (currently being tested) that attaches to a hose-reel for exterior use. That means you can easily roll The Leek-Seeker’s 50 foot hose outside at a moment’s notice and spray whatever tire needs checking directly on the vehicle—which is great for agriculture, mining or heavy equipment tire repairs that arrive at your shop.

In another incarnation, there’s now also a service truck model that comes with an 18 foot hose that can be used on service calls to find leaks in everything from highway duals to combine tires to golf carts.

Trever and his father are truly delighted—and proud—that their common-sense idea born out of necessity has grown into a practical system that’s now ready for market across North America. And likely to be very much in demand.

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What's Hiding Behind the Résumé?

Background Checking 101

By **Barbara Stepic, CHRP**

Before you buy a used vehicle, you check its history. So why don't we do this with the employees we entrust with our livelihood?

When you hire for positions that handle high-risk aspects of your business, whether that means they're the public face of your company, responsible for your business' security, or tasked with handling money, how do you know if you can trust the people you're interviewing to be honest and trustworthy? After all, the news is full of stories about employees who have defrauded or embarrassed their employers. How do you prevent this from happening to you?

The bad news is, there's no foolproof method to preventing this from happening at the hiring stage. But have you considered the example of schools, daycares, banks and airports who background-check key employees? It's easier than you think. But first, allow us to provide some, ahem, "background":

What is a Background Check?

A Background Check is a detailed reference on a candidate, requested by an employer to verify and determine the candidate's qualifications. A complete Background Check will include a criminal record check, verification of education credentials, employment history, credit history, and driving record. Depending on the situation you may require all or only some of the above be included in your recruitment process.

How do I get a potential employee to complete a Background Check?

Before completing a Background Check, the candidate must sign a disclosure giving you permission to conduct the check. You need to ensure that you are following all laws that pertain to Background Checks as it applies to your Provincial and Territorial Human Rights Commission.

There are a few areas a Background Check can cover. A candidate is responsible for obtaining the information on their criminal record, education credentials, employment history, credit and driving record history from the appropriate authority and supplying the employer with original copies. Alternatively, the candidate can provide consent in writing for the employer to contact the appropriate authority to obtain the required information on their behalf.

Criminal Background Check

The candidate needs to go to their local police or Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) station and request a criminal record check be completed and obtain a Criminal Record Search Certificate or Certified Copy. They will have to state the reason why the check is required, and if necessary, provide their fingerprint and pay a fee to obtain the information.

Education Credentials

An employer can check a candidate's education credentials with the educational institute's administration offices to verify the authenticity and completion of degrees provided by the candidate.

Employment History

Have the candidate provide work references of former and present employers. Contact the Human Resources Department for each reference to verify employment, reason for leaving and if they are eligible for rehire.

Credit History

The candidate can obtain their credit and financial history from a Credit Bureau (e.g. Equifax or TransUnion). They will need to provide their Social Insurance Number and pay a fee to obtain the information.

Driver Record Inquiry

A Driver Record or Motor Vehicle Record is provided by the Provincial Drivers License Bureau or Licence Registry. The information confirms traffic violations and accident history. There is a fee associated for the applicant to obtain the information.

What if I don't feel comfortable managing this process myself?

Some employers outsource their Background Checks. There are many companies that specialize in background checking and there are advantages to outsourcing this function. The advantages of this method include:

- Pre-authorized Consent Forms are supplied by provider
- They provide a report outlining all details of the Background Check
- Quick turnaround time
- Legally compliant
- They usually provide different packages ranging from full background checks to only select information you require.

Either way you choose, in-house or outsourcing, you should have an established background checking procedure as part of your overall recruitment process. After all, metaphorically speaking, it's always better to find out about a bad apple before you bite into it.

Barbara Stepic, CHRP is the HR Generalist at Federated Insurance, having joined the company in 1994. Her articles on human resources topics have appeared in numerous trade magazines across Canada.



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WCTD Safety Committee Update

The value of shared information

By **Tim Pawsey, Editor, The Tracker**

Comprised of representatives from across the membership base, WCTD's Safety Committee meets regularly to address common issues of interest arising in the workplace and beyond.

The group pays special attention to high risk activities—such as the use of pry-bars, which has recently caused incidents requiring medical aid at one location.

The group discussed possible ways of reducing the hazard and, ultimately, injuries. In a case such as this, various options are considered, including issuing a Safe Work Practice Review, and reviewing training, as well as the use of placing grips on the end of the bars. It was agreed that several member locations would try out potential ways to reduce the hazard and will communicate results at the next meeting.

Other topics included the use of jacks and jack stands, as well as loading and unloading of tires. Some areas utilize forklifts but many are still using manual labour which poses potential injuries. Safe lifting practices and procedures are recommended to educate employees and prevent incidents.

Safety alerts may be sent to Executive Director Andy Nagy anonymously and redistributed to the group for discussion in order to raise awareness on a given topic or common problem.

If you experience safety incidents or have concerns relating to a specific area, as always, regardless of where you are, or the size of your operation, your input is invaluable—and may ultimately help reduce injuries, or even save a life.

SAFETY ALERTS

***Beware of installing under-sized tires
Even a slight variation from the recommended rim size can prove catastrophic.***

What happened?

A tire technician was installing three tires on three new rims. The first two went as planned. When he was installing the third tire he grabbed the wrong rim. When he started to inflate the tire it blew off the rim.

Why it happened?

The employee attempted to install a 16 inch tire on a 16.5 inch rim.

The employee was airing up the tire on the tire machine when it blew apart. The employee's hand was cut and he was taken to the hospital where he required four stitches to close the wound.

Corrective Action or Preventative Measures Taken

An important part of the Tire Industry Employee (TIA) training specifically addresses the issue of ensuring that 16" tires are not installed onto 16.5" rims.

Ensure that all employees are paying attention to the tasks at hand.

Don't lift or move it without knowing what it weighs!

What happened?

Two associates and a customer were rolling a 16.9-30 calcium filled tire towards the customer's truck in an attempt to load it. In the process of rolling the tire, they lost control of it and it fell on top of one of our employees, breaking his pelvis.

Why it happened?

When the tire started to tip over, one of the employees' tool belt got stuck on the tire. They lost control of the tire and it fell on top of the employee.

Both individuals tried to lift the tire from the injured employee, however, they were unsuccessful. The Manager ran over and it took four employees to lift the tire off of the injured worker.

9-1-1 was called and the employee was told not to move and remained on the ground until the ambulance arrived.

The injured employee was taken to the hospital where it was determined that he had a broken pelvis. No other injuries were noted.

Corrective Action or Preventative Measures Taken?

Ensure that employees are aware of the weight of tires and know their ability to lift or move them.

Ensure that the proper equipment is utilized to move and lift tires such as the boom of the service truck or a forklift.

Employees are to know their limits and exercise their right to refuse unsafe work when needed.

If you experience safety incidents or have concerns relating to a specific area, as always, regardless of where you are, or the size of your operation, your input is invaluable

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Getting More from Your Social Media Efforts

These tips will help you pave the way

By Jody DeVere, courtesy of *Tire Review*

Social media is everywhere. If you run a business, you can't avoid hearing about it! Whether it is a Facebook profile, Twitter account, Pinterest Board or LinkedIn page, all of these tools quickly add up to a significant percentage of your market share. So, what do you do once you've set up your business page on Facebook or created a Google+ account? You did all the right things but if you're still not seeing the results you'd like, these tips can help pave the way for the next-level of social media campaigning.

Consider the Benefits of a Facebook Contest or Event

Simply asking people to "Like" you on Facebook in return for regular updates from your company is not the best way to engage your customers. A great way to drum up actual activity on your Facebook page is with a contest or event. Cute babies, adorable pet photos, "Caption This" contests, all are fair game – but remember, just because it's a Facebook contest, doesn't mean you only promote it on Facebook. That's a recipe for a failed Facebook contest. Announce your contest or event in every media you can – word of mouth, email, newsletters, flyers, you name it. Make sure people hear about this contest everywhere else – then they'll find you on Facebook!

"Promote This" on Facebook

Are you running a special that you want to draw a little extra attention to? The "Promote this Post" function on Facebook is a budget-friendly and very effective way to get a little extra mileage out of an otherwise unremarkable status update. You can name your budget, decide the duration of the promotion, and even dictate exactly who sees your promoted posts.

Rewrite that wordy bio

Twitter has been changing alongside Facebook, and if you haven't looked at your Twitter profile lately, you may not have noticed that now that "bio" text you typed in bleary-eyed one morning before you had your coffee is now plastered along the

header to your Twitter page for all to see. Take a second look at that bio and give it a fresh rewrite – be brief, clear and concise, just as you would be in the header area of any web page.

Twitter Ads

As Facebook ads have evolved, Twitter is now developing some advertising tools of its own. While Twitter has always been a much better PR platform than Facebook, the addition of Twitter ads makes it that much more formidable. We've been experimenting with the new ad functionality at AskPatty.com and we've found that it is every bit as powerful and flexible as Facebook's advertising, with the simplicity that comes along with the Twitter platform. Promoting a Tweet couldn't be easier, and best of all, you name your own budget.

Think Outside the Facebook Box

Using Tools Like Instagram to Build Your Brand: The social media world doesn't begin with Facebook and end with Twitter. Be creative, and utilize the things you love to build your brand in some unlikely spaces. Social media is all about the human face of every business, so ask yourself – if I had a Pinterest page, or an Instagram feed of my own, what sorts of photos would I share? Would it be full of photos of your precious family pet? Snapshots of sporting events? Take those items, and see if you can figure out how to brand yourself in those images. For instance, Dave Kerpen, author of *Likeable Business* and CEO of Likeable media, uses Instagram to build brand awareness by posting pictures of the Likeable logo – a giant foam hand - at baseball games around the country. What can you do that's fun, friendly and paints your brand with a positive brush? Don't be afraid to experiment! If you try something and it isn't working, you'll know – and you can adjust. Happy sharing!

Jody DeVere is the CEO of AskPatty.com.

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Pitching in for Charity

By Kaylee Yawney

On July 13th and 14th, Regional Tire Distributors hosted a Charity Slo-Pitch Tournament to raise money for Ronald McDonald House® Northern Alberta. Staff members spent the weekend soaking up the sun in Morinville at the Skyline Diamonds. Seven teams participated in the tournament and battled to win first place. “The Runs” took home the big win on the “A” side and received 15 jackets donated by Big League. Furthermore, the Regional Tire Warehouse team won the gold on the “B” Side and took home 15 movie tickets donated by Absolute Safety Consulting, but no team left empty handed thanks to great sponsors and their generous donations.

Participants also had access to a BBQ and concession that was put on by Regional Tire’s amazing volunteers. Overall, the participants raised over \$4200, which will go a long way in helping



the families at Ronald McDonald House®. For more information on Ronald McDonald House® Northern Alberta please go to their website www.rmhnorthernalberta.org and see what you can do to support their worthy cause.

The event was a great success and everyone had a great time socializing, playing ball, and helping a great cause; therefore, Regional Tire Distributors hope that the Slo-Pitch Tournament becomes an annual event and continues to grow each year.

Regional Tire Distributors would like to thank some of their sponsors, including Big League, Tirecraft, Trail Tire, Hunter Engineering, City Neon, Corus Entertainment, and Uni-Select Canada for their generous donations and everyone who participated and volunteered; without them the event would not have been a success!

Conti, Google, IBM Collaborate on Automated Driving System

—courtesy of *Tire Review*

Continental has been working on automated driving systems for some time now, and began open road trials of this technology early last year. It also entered into a research partnership with BMW to develop an ‘electronic co-pilot’ in January 2013. The German firm is now extending its collaborative activities; the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper shared on August 21 that Continental intends to develop self-driving cars together with IBM and Google.

Spokespeople from the three companies either declined to comment or were not available, however it is understood that a deal is close to being signed and further details will be announced at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September. Conti’s decision to put its head together with the two US firms is, at any rate, in line with the direction it intends to take when developing such technologies.

“At Continental we believe that the internet does not just come into the car, but that the car becomes a part of the internet,” said CEO Dr. Elmar Degenhart in early August. “This opens up so many exciting opportunities for shaping the mobility of the future through innovation and creativity. We think the best way to unlock

the opportunities of the connected vehicle is to look for collaborations, where we bring together areas of expertise and allow breakthrough technology to be imagined, developed and brought to market.”

Continental has previously voiced its expectation that vehicle automation will arrive in stages, starting with partially automated driving from 2016, high levels of automation from 2020 and—ultimately—fully automated systems from 2025. Google began conducting road tests of its driverless car at the start of 2012, taking advantage—as Continental has—of a law change in the US state of Nevada that enables autonomous cars to drive on public roads. Project leader, Google engineer Sebastian Thrun, claims the car can reduce road accidents by 90%, reduce wasted commute time and energy by 90%, and reduce the number of cars on the road by 90%. The third figure would admittedly involve car sharing, a setup that sounds better in theory than in practice. (*Tyres & Accessories*)



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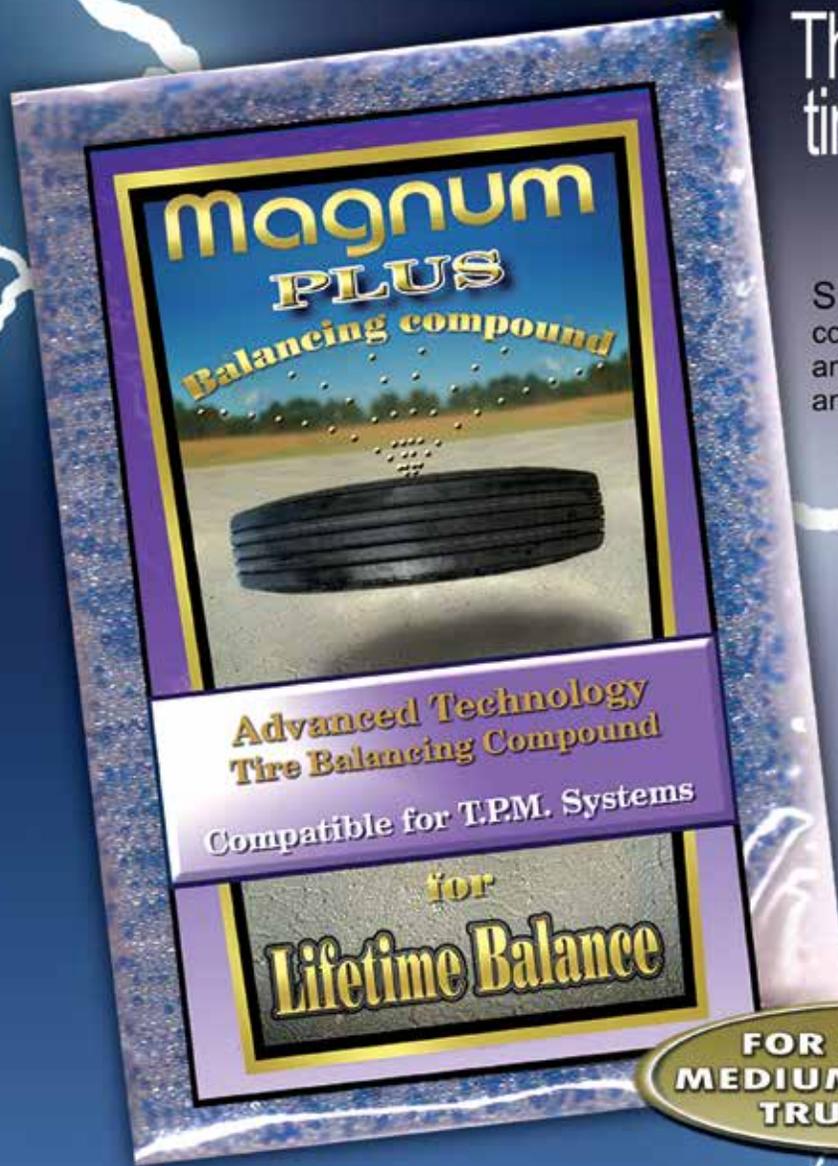


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Alberta Golf Tourney a Huge Success

Stewart's Tire Captures Best Ball

By **Tim Pawsey, Editor, The Tracker**

The 28th Annual WCTD Golf Tournament was held at "The Links" Spruce Grove on June 23, 2013 and it was a beautiful day for all participants. On behalf of WCTD, I would like to thank "The Links" for accommodating us and preparing a delightful dinner at the end of the day.

First and foremost, we would like to thank everyone who donated a prize or prizes for this tournament to make it a huge success. Here's a list of companies that sponsored each hole and also brought some nice prizes to the table: #1 - DT Tire; #2 - Napa Auto; #3 - Prema; #4 - Trican Tire; #5 - Mickey Thompson; #6 - Continental Tire; #7 - Yokohama; #8 - Bridgestone / Firestone; #9 - Tirestarz; #10 - Kumho Tire; #11 - Toyo Tire; #12 - Michelin Tire; #13 to #15 - Hunter Engineering; #16 - Cooper Tire; #17 - Costar; #18 - Trail Tire / RTD / Tirecraft.

A Big Thank You goes out to Federated Insurance for sponsoring the "Hole-in-One" prize of \$10,000 in which some golfers came close, but no fortune to be had! Better luck next year.

The winning team for this "Best Ball" tournament all came from Stewart's Tire in Edmonton. Darren Jackson, Derek Wiedmer, Brad Wiedmer and Dillon Wiedmer combined their efforts to achieve a 12 under for a 60. Congratulations guys!

The following award winners were successful at designated prize holes throughout the course:

Longest Drive

Men (Hole #16)
Brian Emsley
(Rimex)

Women (Hole #3)
Sherri Beille
(Federated Insurance)

Longest Putt

Men (Hole #9)
Don Perusini
(Tune Tech)

Women (Hole #18)
Michelle Stewart
(Stewart's Tire)



Left to Right: Darren Jackson, Derek Wiedmer, Brad Wiedmer and Dillon Wiedmer

Closest to the Pin

Men (Hole #14)
Mark Wishart
(Tirecraft 178 St.)

Women (Hole #11)
Christine Marshall
(Tune Tech)

Closest to the Pin Everyone

Men (Hole #6) George Wert (Federated Insurance)

If you have any feedback regarding this past tournament, please email Darrell Budney at Trail Tire Distributors darrell@trairtire.com

Hope to see you all next year!

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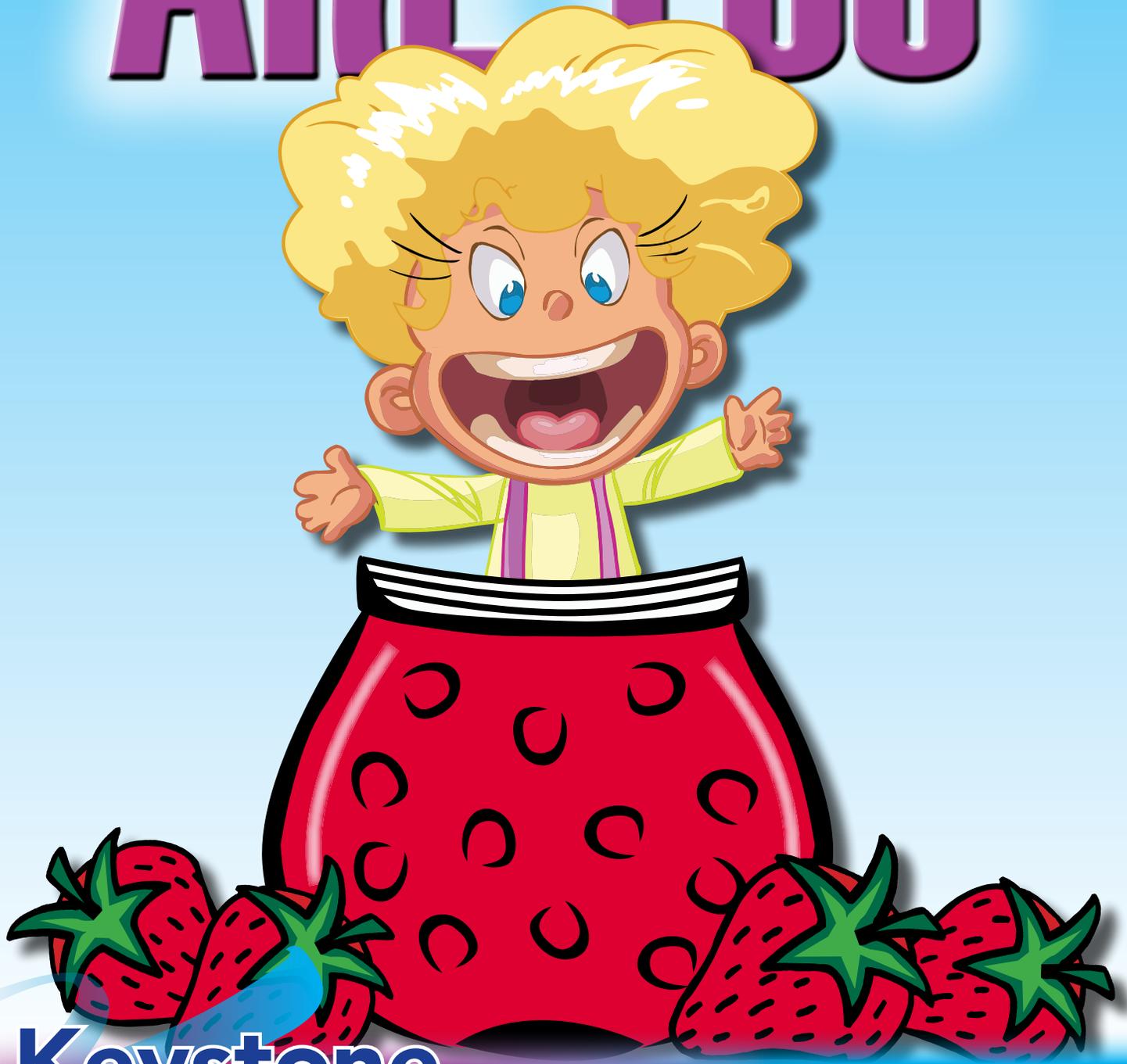
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Winter Tire Update

By Joanne Draus Klein, adapted from *Tire Review*

When it comes to the benefits of dedicated winter tires, North American consumers still need some convincing.

“You don’t have to live in Iceland to benefit from winter tires,” says Michelin North America’s Ron Margadonna. Yet North America apparently is the least likely continent to recognize that fact.

“North America is the only market in the world that has an all-season tire product,” explains Giti Tire USA’s David Shelton. “But all-season tires are a balance of properties, or a compromise that places the product’s capabilities between a dedicated summer-only tire and a true winter tire. With a compromise, one loses some of the benefits on the extremes in road conditions we encounter in different climates.

“A winter tire is engineered to be flexible and grip in extremely cold temperatures and is designed to handle the slush, ice and wet pavement,” adds Shelton, Giti’s director of marketing. “Only a dedicated winter tire will give the consumer the control and traction they need and expect in order to get them to and from their destination – to get them home safe when the weather outside is frightful.”

Exactly what, a North American consumer might ask, is frightful enough weather to warrant winter tires?

“It comes down to geography and temperature,” says Margadonna, MNA’s senior technical marketing manager. “If the temperature is consistently below 44°F or 7°C, tires need the extra grip that only winter tires can deliver. Even if consumers have four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive, they still need winter tires on the front and back to conquer the elements and stay safe.

“When the temperature falls lower, the tread compound in all-season or summer tires starts losing flexibility, which compromises winter traction,” he adds. “All-season tires don’t have the tread design engineered to provide traction with winter’s snow, ice and slush.”

Traction in winter tires is indeed improved with the use of softer and more pliable tread compounds, according to

Travis Roffler, director of marketing for Continental Tire the Americas, because they remain flexible and grip better in cold temperatures. But winter tires also typically have more sipes and blades, he adds, which provide more biting edges for improved snow-and-ice traction.

Nevertheless, milder North American winters in recent years have slowed winter tire sales, perhaps encouraging consumers to stick with all-season tires – though Andrew Briggs, director of marketing and product planning for Yokohama Tire Corp., says winter tire numbers are simply in sync with those of other tires.

“Winter tires are following the same rim trends as all-season tires,” he explains. “The 15-inch-and-below market is decreasing, the 16-inch market is relatively flat and the 17-inch-and-above market is increasing.”

Many experts, however, see significant shifts happening.

Consumer Awareness

The introduction in 2008 of the Quebec winter tire law, mandating the use of winter tires by all drivers in the Canadian province, certainly raised consumer awareness of the tires’ safety benefits – across Canada and well into the U.S. Increased OEM use of all-season HP and UHP tires and larger wheel diameters prompted the realization that such tires don’t provide the traction and grip required for Canadian and northern U.S. winters. And an expected return to normal winter weather across North America should certainly boost sales in the future.

“Consumers want to feel confident and in-control at all times, even when the weather is especially challenging, so they are starting to invest in winter tires,” says Brandy Gadd, Goodyear brand manager for Canadian and winter commuter / touring products. She says the winter tire industry, in fact, has a projected annual growth rate of about 4.5%.

“We are bullish,” agrees Marc Bujold, vice president of marketing and communications at Nokian Tyres Inc. “We feel that as more people understand the importance of having good winter tires, business will continue to grow.”

Continued on Page 31

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Winter Tire Update

By Joanne Draus Klein, adapted from *Tire Review*

Continued from Page 29

"The main challenge that remains," says Anant Gandhi, product manager for Bridgestone Americas, "is the fact that the majority of consumers are not properly educated about the sheer benefits and performance advantages that winter tires offer."

Slick Selling Points

So, how does a dealer go about addressing these concepts, educating consumers and helping customers pick the right winter tire?

"Selection of an appropriate winter tire should be made based on the expected driving environment and vehicle, as well as the driving style of the consumer," Roffler says. "For example, does the consumer drive in an area where roads are always icy? If so, they may want to consider a studded winter tire (like our General Altimax Arctic). A consumer with a high-performance vehicle who wants to preserve the sportiness of that vehicle should consider a high-performance winter tire, such as our ContiWinterContact line.

"Finally, for most consumers who are searching for a good balance of winter performance, comfort and mileage, a touring winter tire should be used, such as our ExtremeWinterContact. It excels in cold temperatures, on ice and on snow, while providing a comfortable, long-lasting ride," he says.

"It's a matter of safety and economics," Shelton offers. "The challenges with winter driving are the conditions you expect, such as snow and wet roads, as well as those you don't see or expect, such as black ice. It's economically more feasible to ensure you have dedicated winter tires than taking the chances of driving with tires not optimized for such conditions. An accident may lead to higher insurance premiums."

"First and foremost, ensure that the tire is marked with the mountain / snowflake symbol, indicating that the tire is designed for severe winter performance," Margadonna states.

"Make sure the customer understands that winter tires are

only recommended during winter, not for year-round use. Some winter tires are marketed for year-round, which may compromise winter performance.

And check the recommended speed rating of the customer's vehicle. It's permissible by Michelin to allow the rating of winter tires to be less, by two levels, than the speed rating on the vehicle placard, to ensure optimum winter performance."

"It's important to provide value to your consumers to promote trust and loyalty," Gadd says. "So, when consumers are buying winter tires, encourage them to buy a wheel-and-tire package to protect their investment. If they buy a separate set of wheels for their winter tires, it helps maintain the integrity of their tires as they don't have to switch out tires and wheels every spring and winter. Also, it costs less.

"Another great value to the consumer, an excellent loyalty program and a great additional source of income, is tire storage," she adds. "Many consumers don't have the space or don't want to store their second set of tires. The dealer can offer a storage program, having consumers pay a nominal amount to have their all-seasons or winter tires stored during the off-season. That consumer will come back at least twice a year for a tire change-over, and will also more likely come to the store for other services."

"Also, explain to consumers that to help maintain control and stability of their vehicles in severe snow conditions, it's recommended by the RMA that winter tires are installed in sets of four," Gadd concludes. "Retailers are selling peace of mind. Don't underestimate the power of providing consumers with a sense of safety. It's important to the vast majority."

"Regardless of whether the consumer is new to winter tires or buys them every few years," Gadd says, "once they feel the confident traction and handling that winter tires provide, they never look back."

"Selection of an appropriate winter tire should be made based on the expected driving environment and vehicle, as well as the driving style of the consumer,"

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