

JANUARY - MARCH 2015

THE TRACKER

THE PUBLICATION FOR TIRE PROFESSIONALS
FROM WESTERN CANADA TIRE DEALERS

Winter Wonder-Land

M+S vs 'Snowflake'

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• Tri-Can Buys Integra • Fuel Cells Rising • War on Wheel-offs*



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CALENDAR

THE NORTH AMERICAN TIRE & RETREAD EXPO

April 15 - 17, 2015, New Orleans

WCTD ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

June 5th, 2015, Tee off time: 8 am - Cochrane Golf Club, Cochrane, AB

THE 2015 SEMA SHOW

November 3 - 6, 2015, Las Vegas

WCTD CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

March 10 - 13, 2016, Kelowna, BC



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Happy New Year!



By Clem Collett, WCTD President

Well here we go again, the start of a New Year. As I look back on 2014, I never would have guessed we would have seen as many things as we did. Looking ahead to the next trip around the sun, I can't help but wonder what we'll see this year.

We're already off to an interesting start; our dollar is hovering around \$0.80 US and oil prices are as low as we've seen in a long time. So what does that mean for us? With dollar parity out of the picture, will we finally see the end of cross-border shopping? After years of price increases supported by climbing crude, will there be a price reduction on the horizon?

It was almost a year ago when I last spoke about the Canadian dollar. At that time it was bouncing around \$0.90 US and I thought it was a perfect opportunity to try and regain the customers we lost to cross-border shopping. Well, since then that "opportunity" has doubled. But it still doesn't guarantee us that business. Cross-border shopping has now become somewhat of an outing, a family/friends event. People pack up and head out for the weekend. Most of us are guilty of it. We've been trained to think that the best deal is always down south—and that there's no point in looking around at home. That kind of mentality takes time to change. So we have to educate our customers on the real financial advantage—the multiplier effect—to buying locally; and win back their loyalty and business.

Oil prices have plummeted so much recently they're on the verge of rivalling the seven year low. It's also worth noting that on January 21st, 2001 our dollar hit the lowest on record, at \$61.79.

I can't help but think back to the tire price increases we've see over the last few years and wonder if now we'll see a price reduction. Everyone I speak to tends to agree that as the price of oil rose, so did the price of our tires. However now that the barrel price is dropping, suppliers are keeping quiet.

Optimistically, I'd like to believe we will see a price reduction, but I won't hold my breath. If we did see a reduction, the flip side of that is we'd be looking at de-valued inventories. Hopefully, for most of us, this should be the best time of the year for it. The winter rush is gone and it's still early enough in the year that we might not have refilled our shelves. And really, that's the best we can hope for, as I doubt our suppliers would support an inventory cost adjustment. But the bigger picture we need to look at is; how will this affect our economy? We can only speculate as to the effects that will make their way across the country due to a stagnate oil industry.

One benefit of the price of gas coming down is that we should see people driving more, and with the dollar in a nose dive, it's likely that many more Canadians will opt to stay home. In short, the US is a whole lot less appealing at 80 cents on the dollar. Now what we need to do is get the message out to our good neighbours down south that it really is okay up here. That there's plenty to see and do, and their dollar, at least for now, will get them a whole lot more.

My hunch is, if we play our cards right and tell people just what we have to offer, this year could be as busy as any over the last ten or so.

Let's hope.

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Plenty on our plates

By Andy Nagy, WCTD Executive Director



Today I learned about a friend who has cancer—and how your life changes so quickly. I also received an email telling me the sad news that Ron Labrecque passed away on December 4th. Ron was one of the directors of WCTD when I was hired and a long-time supporter of the Association. He will be sorely missed. We extend our condolences to his family.

As I thought about this I realized the thing that matters the most to me is my family. I have four grandsons, who are very active and full of excitement. Hockey, of course, is their game of choice; it's fun to watch as they move up in their divisions and become more competitive. This is what being a grandparent is all about: spending a short time with each of them before they get too old for socializing with us.

When I learned of the fight that our friend has to go through, all our problems seem so small. I looked back at my travels and thought about all the people who I have met and still keep in touch with. Family and friends are important. As I get closer to retiring I appreciate them more.

An economic shift—and issues on our radar

What 2015 will be like is anybody's guess. Overall, the oil and gas industry will survive, although some will not. That's a fact of life.

During the past year, we worked at several different levels on issues facing Canada's tire industry. One very important development surrounds winter tire legislation in BC: There was an outcry when we heard that the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation announced it would consider Passenger and Light Truck Tires marked with the letters "M+S" to be on a par with winter tires marked with the 'mountain / snowflake'. The Ministry didn't consult with WCTD or talk to the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) as to what the M + S letters actually mean.

When I spoke to the vice-president of the RMA he stated that the M + S letters started to appear some years ago. He could offer no explanation as to why but said he would ask. I also asked if these letters are used in Europe: He advised that they are not: the Europeans have either "winter tires" or summer tires" which are designed specifically for their environment.

We will continue to work with all ministries to better explain how important it is to assist the consumer in making an informed decision on their purchase. It is an ongoing challenge for which we will continue to lobby.

The other issue which continues to plague the industry is the TPMS warning light. In the midst of winter tire change-overs how many customers asked to not install new TPMS sensors in their change-over tires and wheels? This continues to pose a challenge for most if not all of our members. I can tell you that, at the Tire Dealers Association of Canada (TDAC) meeting in Niagara Falls last September, WCTD did ask TDAC to initiate a discussion with Transport Canada to put forward a statement that is easy to understand. Basically—just like the air bag and seat belt—the TPMS is a safety feature. If it is not working, there is a problem.

On the calendar ...

In just over a year from now WCTD will host the Tire Dealers Association of Canada (TDAC) National Conference and Trade Show in Kelowna BC, March 10 - 12, 2016, right in the heart of BC wine country. Your directors' Convention Planning Committee has been hard at work putting together what promises to be a dynamic and informative program. Speakers confirmed to date include the keynote address by Terry O'Reilly (CBC's and "Under the Influence" (formerly "The Age of Persuasion"). Terry will be speaking directly to our theme: Driving Customer Connection / Getting to 'Like' — with its special emphasis on social media. Please plan now to attend! Check out our

DRIVING CUSTOMER CONNECTION

GETTING TO LIKE 

TDAC National Convention & Trade Show | KELOWNA, BC

March 10-12, 2016



website and upcoming issues of *The Tracker* for more specifics.

Mark your calendar also for June 5th, the WCTD Annual Golf Tournament for members and invited guests. This year we are holding it at the Cochrane Golf Club, located just 20 minutes from downtown Calgary and a stone's throw from the banks of the beautiful Bow River. If we have a good turnout we will look at different locations in the future.

Have a safe day!



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A One Track Mind



By: Tim Pawsey, Editor, The Tracker

Whenever I travel, either at home or abroad, I'm always on the lookout for interesting topics to include in *The Tracker*. They may not be directly about tires but are usually somehow connected. Then again, if my 'tire radar' is never really ever turned off it probably has something to do with a now long ago first week on the road, training with Michelin. My temporary boss (who happened to be a dead ringer for Peter Falk's Columbo), while walking down the road was looking at cars going by while rapidly moving his slightly spread fingered hand in front of his eyes.

"Just checking!"

"For what?" We asked. Of course we did.

"To see which cars have Michelins..."

Yup, we trainees were so indoctrinated; we all had to try it...

Anyone who's been around tires long enough knows they can sneak up on you without warning. It's just irresistible to check out the fitment on that pimped up Mercedes' fancy wheel package...

However, I wasn't ready to be ambushed by tires at an art gallery, Regina's Mackenzie, aka The MAG.

It happened over the holidays.

If you're from the Prairies (and especially if you're in Regina) chances are you're familiar with the works of Wilf Perreault. He's a remarkable artist with a rare talent for turning the mundane into—if not exactly the ethereal—certainly something to be celebrated.

Perreault is famous for his rendering of Regina's lane ways. Over the years he's painted them in every possible scenario, setting and season, from dawn to dusk and even late into the night.



Perreault's works are distinctive for the way in which he so brilliantly manages to capture light. But they're also renowned for their variety and their detail: a lamp placed in a window. No, make that several lamps in bushels of windows, among a hundred homes, or a distant garage in the twilight, light flooding from its wide open doors. His paintings turn the underbelly of gritty everyday existence into something quite compelling.

Included in this exhibit (titled "In the Alley") were several large murals, most depicting lanes and back alleys, their semi-frozen puddles framed in ice, again, transforming the banal into something to be celebrated.

As mentioned, consummate realist Perreault never misses a detail. Even in the back alley, puddle frozen tire tracks sport precise tread patterns—and I'm sure they're all readily identifiable.

Yet it was one work in particular which caught my attention. It was a pile—no, make that more a jumble—of discarded passenger wheels, rims and shreds of tires around an old oil drum. Here again the detail is quite remarkable. Every jagged tear, wheel and shred of tread is painstakingly detailed. Moreover, there's a curious beauty to those rust and black tones.

But that's not the point.

When was the last time you saw a pile of cast-off wheel and tire junk in a lane? My guess it's at least a couple of decades or more. I knew that had to be the case but went looking all the same. I discovered this work was painted in the earlier stages of Perreault's career, in the early 80s.

Having spent time with WCTD members over the years, I know that, going about our day-to-day affairs, it can be challenging to gauge real progress.

Nowadays we grapple with all kinds of issues, from 'right to repair' legislation to the complexities of TPMS systems, or the challenges of ensuring the safest workplaces for technicians.

I guess that's why I found this particular painting so gratifying. Among the renditions of gorgeous hues of prairie night skies and glowing homes it was hardly among the more alluring in this exhibition. Yet, because it was, by contrast, so utterly mundane—a faithfully rendered eyesore—it served as a satisfying reminder: we really have come a long way.

And that was the spark this painting kindled in me.

Indeed, there was a time when you could probably find something like this in the back lane behind virtually every auto repair shop on the continent. No more—thanks to the efforts of WCTD and other associations, working along with their members and industry at large, to do whatever it takes clean up our environment, and keep it clean.

Art really does imitate life, and for good reason.

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Register now for WCTD 2015 Training Sessions

This summer, Western Canada Tire Dealers (WCTD) and Tire Industry Association (TIA) present a series of important training sessions. These programs are vital to maintaining safety, improving workplace procedures and keeping up-to-date with industry advances.

Appealing to a broad range of needs, they include: CTS Train the Trainer (Winnipeg, MB, August 17 - 19); and ETS/OTR Advanced (Winnipeg, MB August 21 - 23).

TIA Director of Training Matt White will head up the training series. You can go to TIA's website (www.tireindustry.org) for extensive details on all the training courses listed below. Class size is limited to 15 people, so don't delay!

Registration and dates as follows:

All class times: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

CTS August 17 - 19, 2015, Winnipeg MB Location TBD

ETS August 21 - 23, 2015, Winnipeg

Cost:

CTS \$675 plus GST per person - includes materials

ETS/OTR \$750 plus GST per person - includes materials

Combine courses for 10% discount

Prepaid registrants for both CTS/ETS courses receive a 10% discount

Course Agendas:

CTS - August 17 Classroom • August 18 Hands-on practical.
August 19 - Review and Test.

ETS/OTR - August 19, 1 pm Classroom • August 20 Classroom and Hands-on Practical • August 21 Review and Test.

Class size is limited to 15. Questions? Please call Andy Nagy (403) 264-3179

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Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Western Canada Tire Dealers will be held at **11 AM on Thursday, April 16th**, at the Hilton Garden Airport, 2335 Pegasus Road Northeast, Calgary, Alberta. A quorum shall consist of eligible voting members present or represented by proxy, or in the case of a corporate body, by its duly appointed representative. Members can call in via teleconference or attend in person.

Voting members may make submissions, but these must be in writing and forwarded to the Association office, to be received by Friday, March 20th, 2015 in order to be placed on the agenda.

Printed agendas will be available at the meeting. The Directors request your attendance / participation and input to help them direct the business of the Association.

Can't make it to the AGM? Join our Webinar

WCTD members may log in to the 2015 Annual General Meeting on Thursday April 16th, at 10 a.m. Pacific Time.

Webinar log in information will be available to members only. Log in information will be available on our website March 1st, under the members site. For more information please contact: andy@wctda.ca

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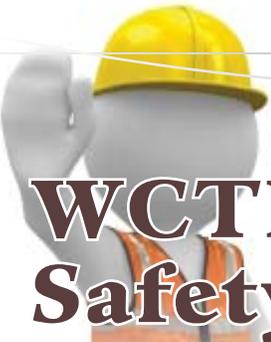
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WCTD Safety Committee Update



Among several important topics discussed were the ongoing issue surrounding snow tire regulation in BC; emergency service work in Alberta; wheel recalls; the timing of issuing safety alerts; use of jack stands; lock out procedures and more.

Emergency Service Work

Representatives from the WCTD Safety Committee met with Alberta Transportation. The province is updating the Highway Traffic Act in 2016 and will consider the Association's request for Emergency Vehicle Status at that time.

Consistent signage for all service trucks

As part of the discussion, Alberta Transportation recommended that all tire service companies use the same procedures when working on the side of the road, including beacons, signage. The Committee is coordinating a survey of procedures including beacons, signage, parking, etc.

Lock ring recall notification

There was recently a serious incident in BC with regards to this type of assembly, as well as others, with sizes ranging from 20.5" to 25".

Timing of safety alerts

As soon as safety alerts are issued they will be posted on the WCTD website, as well as included in the next issue of *The Tracker*.

Use of jacks and jack stands

Matt White (TIA) notes: "Jack stands are rated in pairs,

so the proper method is to jack the axle centre or one side at a time and install two (2) stands per axle. As we know, on certain applications this is not possible, so the technician is only able to put a single jack stand in place. I have been suggesting to companies the use of cribbing in commercial truck applications, as it can assist in some certain situations."

Lock out procedures

In regard to proper locking out of equipment, particularly for commercial vehicles: Some companies use a lock out tag. Some are using the steering wheel cover. Both are decent options. However, in a court of law, the question that will be asked is: "Did you do everything to remove the hazard of starting the vehicle?"

Bead blaster safety

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Safety Alert!

CORRECT PROCEDURE FOR 3-PIECE WHEEL ASSEMBLY

This safety alert is the result of a fatal accident within our industry, involving an employee who was working on a 3-piece wheel assembly.

The following safety procedure can reduce the frequency and / or the severity of the loss:

- All components of a multi-piece rim **MUST** be in place prior to inflation—especially the lock ring (safety ring);
- Everyone **MUST** remain out of the trajectory zone when inflating any tire;
- A remote airline **MUST** be used during inflation; and

- All technicians **MUST** be trained to safely perform the job / tasks.

If you are unsure about a process or task, **STOP** and ask for clarification or help

Loss of life, injury and property damage can be prevented. Training staff to follow proper procedures is critical to ensuring everyone's safety.

Please be sure to share this bulletin with your employees.

Let's be careful out there!

Safety Alert!

SAFE WORK PROCEDURES KEY TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

In April 2014, a large construction company was fined more than \$180,000 under the Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations for the avoidable death of an employee.

The worker was hired through a contractor to dismantle a Quonset structure and was struck by a 10-foot metal rod when the fabric ripped from a large tent panel they were working on.

The company failed to identify, communicate and control hazards. They also didn't make sure the contracted workers had written safe work procedures for the dismantling of the Quonset.

Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations – protect workers and other persons from risks to their safety, health, and welfare arising from workplace activities.

Key Lessons to Learn*

1. Safe Work Procedures should be developed and trained for the greater good of your workers and your company **NOT** because "it's the law".
2. Most deaths and serious incidents result from failure to identify, communicate and control hazards. Meaningful hazard assessments are for you and your people, **NOT** because "It's the law".

3. Prime Contractors must ensure that sub-contractors ensure that work will be performed in compliance with the WSH Act and Regulations. Just because subs are "COR Certified" **DOES NOT** mean they are in compliance. Contractors (those who hire contracted and self-employed workers and direct their work) must ensure that workers are not exposed to unnecessary risk that is within the control of the contractor.

Note: Bill C45 – is federal legislation that amended the Canadian Criminal Code and became law on March 31, 2004. The Bill established new legal duties for workplace health and safety, and imposed serious penalties for violations that result in injuries or death. The Bill provided new rules for attributing criminal liability to organizations, including corporations, their representatives and those who direct the work of others.

Workplace injury can lead to action from Workplace Safety and Health.

So let's be careful out there.

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*Source: Largest Workplace Safety Fine in Manitoba History Under New Crown Attorney, 1Life Workplace Safety and Health, May 1 2014



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Winter Wonder-Land

Confusion over snow tire markings continues.

As of October 1st, 2014, The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure announced new winter tire rules for British Columbia as part of the *Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review*. The changes stem from a 2013 review, in which the Ministry asked BC motorists to weigh in on various issues surrounding the use of snow tires.

Overall, the Province of British Columbia appears to have relaxed the rules around snow tire and winter tire use. We're putting those terms together because at the crux of the issue is a decision that appears to treat 'snow' tires and 'winter' tires as one and the same.

The Ministry says: "As a result of the technical analysis completed during the (review), winter tires have been defined as those labelled with either the winter mountain /snowflake symbol or the mud and snow (M+S) designation. Winter tires must also be in good condition with a minimum tread depth of 3.5 mm."

Many makes of All Season tire also carry the M+S symbol, which means, technically, these would be permitted.

However, the Ministry also states —*Under 208 (1): For the purpose of this section, "winter tire" means a tire that is*

(a) advertised or represented by its manufacturer or a person in the business of selling tires to be a tire intended principally for winter use, and that provides, or is designed to provide, adequate traction in snow or mud; and in the condition respecting tread wear and other particulars the regulations prescribe.

The Ministry also reduced the period for when winter (i.e. winter and M+S) tires are required to Oct. 1st to March 31st (from previously April 30th).

Also in its announcement, "The ministry encourages drivers to always drive to the road conditions and choose the best tires possible. Tires with the winter mountain/snowflake symbol provide the best level of traction and safety in severe snow and ice conditions."

Concurrent with the announcement the Ministry also released a detailed highway map of the province delineating which routes require winter tires during the period and which do not.

Several commentators suggest that the revised regulations along with their new signage are confusing. A check of pertinent forums and websites reveals that many consumers are indeed confused.

Prior to the change in the act the signage read: "Use Winter Tires or Carry Chains – Beyond This Point – October 1st – April 30th".

However, this in itself was not ideal as, according to some police sources, it suggested that motorists could drive on summer tires, as long as they had a set of chains at the ready.

The new signs for cars and light trucks read "Must Use Winter Tires" and show both the M+S and 'mountain snowflake' icon side by side.

WCTD responds

Western Canada Tire Dealers has written the BC minister to express our "sincere concern"—as follows:

"The Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) has described the M+S on tires as limited use for mud and snow use – they are not meant for winter conditions like what is experienced on BC highways. Any tire with a 30% void-to-tread ratio can have the M+S designation – and many tires that qualify for this 30% ratio, have summer compounds that become hard and treacherous on snow and ice."

"The only occasion where M+S tires are acceptable for winter conditions is if they also have the mountain snowflake symbol. Only those tires displaying the mountain snowflake severe service emblem are winter tires. They have been designed specifically for use in cold and severe weather conditions. I have attached a page out of the RMA's Care and Service publication for your review."

The Association went on to request that the minister: "reverse the allowance of M+S tires under the winter tire program," and stated: "Travellers using these types of tires for winter could encounter dire consequences if they travel on these roads. The recent report, "Rural Highway Safety and Speed Review" states that a safety analysis of crashes in BC showed that serious winter crashes attributed to tire condition are low and have decreased 28% between 2003 and 2012. Letting the public now drive with a tire that is not winter-rated, is moving in the wrong direction and we feel will attribute to more winter crashes due to tire condition."

TRAC weighs in

In an open letter to BC Transportation minister Todd Stone, Rubber Association of Canada president Glenn Maidment has also expressed strong concern, calling BC's new rules "inadequate" and saying in no uncertain terms that the province "errs in assuming that M+S tires will perform as well as dedicated winter tires in severe weather."

"We feel this decision could seriously compromise driver safety," Mr. Maidment said. "The Review Committee's recommendation is bound to lead to unnecessary road accidents as motorists attempt to scale severe snow condition roads on all-season tires only."

British Columbia must change its winter tire rules and road signs to require winter tires only on mountain roads during severe weather periods, according to Mr. Maidment.

BC's loosening of the law surrounding snow tires came at a time when other provinces are actually adjusting legislation in a



Continued on page 19



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Winter Wonder-Land

Confusion over snow tire markings continues.

Continued from page 17

different direction. For instance, Ontario has recently lengthened its studded tire season in the northern part of the province.

At the time of writing the matter in BC remains under discussion.

A cross country conversation

Uncertainty surrounding the issue is not confined to British Columbia, which currently has one of the lowest rates of snow tire use in Canada. That, in part, is a result of the milder climate in the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island, home to the bulk of the province's population. However, hemmed in by mountain passes, lower mainland residents understand full well the severity of winter conditions that must be handled when travelling to the interior.

Examination of winter tire requirements is currently taking place in other jurisdictions across the country. Nova Scotia, which along with the rest of the eastern seaboard has been experiencing heavier than usual snowfalls this year, has also been pondering how to handle the issue, although discussions about making snow tires mandatory have been shelved for now.

Overall, Nova Scotians have one of the highest rates of snow tire use in the country, although Halifax, with its steep streets and regular snowfalls, can be problematic and is driving the discussion over mandating. Provincial statistics show that Halifax drivers are the most likely in the province to encounter vehicles without winter tires. Recent reports following snow storms in the city suggested that cars fitted with all-season tires were having trouble getting up Halifax hills, delaying those behind them.

Quebec: the mandatory route

The one province which has been unequivocal in its approach, Quebec has seen a significant rise in snow tire use, along with a marked decline in winter traffic fatalities, since the introduction of its mandatory snow tire legislation. Statistics show that winter collisions have fallen by 17 percent, and crashes causing serious injury or death are down 36 percent.

The province's initial legislation, introduced in 2008, required all taxis and passenger vehicles to be equipped with winter tires from Dec. 15th to March 15th. However, this past year that requirement was clarified and further tightened with the stipulation that winter tires must bear the "mountain snowflake" pictogram—recognized by Transport Canada and tire makers as certifying that the tire meets or exceeds tire industry snow traction requirements, according to the Tire and Rubber Association of Canada.

According to *Tire Business*, "TRAC noted that tire makers estimate that 90 percent of Quebec's motorists already were using winter tires when the province introduced its law making winter tire use mandatory. At the same time, TRAC reported that winter tire use outside Quebec has risen steadily since the province's winter tire law was enacted.

"The role played by Quebec's winter tire law and drivers in the province in making roadways safer right across Canada should not be underestimated," TRAC President Glenn Maidment told *Tire Business*.

"The experience of Quebec motorists raised awareness of the safety and performance benefits of winter tires and influenced many thousands of drivers to switch over to winter tires during the cold-weather months," he said.

Currently, TRAC estimates that about half of Canadian drivers outside the province use winter tires. Nova Scotians and other Maritimers lead the pack in making snow tires a habit (at 73 percent), with Ontario at 56 percent and Alberta at 45 percent.

Much of the challenge has to do with the commercial success of the "All Season" tire—which, when it comes to handling severe winter conditions is essentially inadequate. While many point out the need to differentiate between M+S and 'true' winter tires signified by the 'mountain/snowflake' icon, a few suggest that another all too often overlooked and specific fact is the advantage offered by a cold weather responsive winter tire rubber compound.

Needed: a stronger winter message

As *Tire Review* notes: "Winter tires are built using rubber compounds that remain soft even in extremely low temperatures. On the other hand, most summer and all-season tires use rubber compounds that harden at low temperatures, resulting in compromised cold-weather performance.

"The hardness of these tires at lower temperatures means they no longer conform to the surface of the road," says Joerg Burfien, director of research and development for Continental Tire. "This leads directly to reduced grip on the road and a much-reduced overall performance — mileage, braking distances, cornering, handling, etc. — ranging from 20-25 percent."

Burfien also noted: "Stopping distances can double if you are not using a winter tire as temperatures decline."

"The problem with the all-season tires," says Ron Margadonna, senior technical marketing manager for winter tires at Michelin North America, "is that people have a higher expectation on the delivery of the winter component, particularly when they live in an area where they really need a winter tire. I think that's a fundamental problem."

Better consumer understanding would go a long way towards strengthening the case for winter tires, according to Darrin Bossence, vice-president of marketing at Dynamic Tire, which distributes Sailun tires.

Speaking recently to Autosphere, "The 7°C benchmark is where you want to put your winter tires on," said Bossence. "This is because winter tires have different compounding to keep the tires soft and supple in colder temperatures, and these tires outperform all-season tires as the temperatures begin to drop. While snow and ice are a top concern for many winter drivers, the outside temperature can have just as much of an impact on the performance of your tires. This is why it's especially important to change your tires over in the winter months, regardless of where you're driving or how the roads are maintained."

The Tracker will continue to monitor the winter tire debate—and welcomes your feedback or comments.

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The War on Wheel-Offs Has Not Yet Been Won



By: Richard Frost CIP, CRM • Federated Insurance Loss Prevention Consultant, Winnipeg

How much damage does a 50 to 140lb tire do to another automobile, cyclist, or pedestrian if it comes off going 50 or, worse, 100 km/hr? Wheel-offs still happen, and they put unsuspecting motorists and innocent pedestrians at risk. So how can you stop it from happening?

Typically when we hear about a wheel-off we think about commercial vehicles and semis. There have been guidelines and best practices set up that have helped to reduce the frequency of the problem, but they still do happen. And now, to compound matters, another front has opened up in the war on wheel-offs.

In the past couple years there have been a number of passenger tire wheel-off incidents, as well as agricultural equipment incidents resulting in significant equipment damage. Some of these incidents have resulted in serious injury or death. The fact is, with passenger tire wheel-off incidents, the possibility of a commercial truck-size catastrophe is very real.

Why is this still an issue?

The causes that have been reported are long, varied, and unfortunately in many cases, not very specific:

- Lug bolts and nuts – inferior quality, defects, different threads, etc;
- Type of rim – e.g. steel and aluminum rims may have been a factor in several wheel-offs;
- Rim not cleaned properly – dirt, foreign particles between rim and hub or rim and lug nut;
- Rim not set on hub properly – improper work;
- Over torqueing – some machines are not calibrated properly, a clear case of more is not always better;
- Under torqueing – even no torqueing; and
- Road side work vs. shop work – possibility of work done away from the shop not as precise due to conditions, tools, and/or safety.

Winning the war on wheel-offs

Auto service providers are deemed the experts in the eyes of their customers, the public, and the courts and are held to higher standards. The customers rely on them to do the work properly and to inform them of additional steps that need to be taken. What steps can you take to ensure the work is done properly?

Training and Education

Since there does not appear to be any single smoking gun for all these incidents—no “if you do X you will prevent Y” answer—it will take a general awareness of the issue to hopefully one day eradicate it. The first step is ensuring the customer, dealership, technicians, and management have been properly educated on the matter.

- **Educating the consumer:** What are their responsibilities, the dangers and simple steps that can be taken to control these incidents?
- **Training technicians on the job:** Many of the causes listed above are linked to human error, generally where a technician has forgotten to do something or to complete that step properly. Training helps. Checklists can prove good reminders. Mentoring of junior technicians works. Discussions of near misses or incidents that have occurred in other branches, dealerships, and even personal experiences are good reminders.
- **Formally educating technicians:** Tire Industry Association, Canadian tire associations, and the larger dealers have great training programs that should be utilized for all technicians (and serve as great reminders for supervisors, as well).
- **Educating owners and managers:** This work takes concentration and disruptions or multi-tasking leave room for errors. Junior technicians may need extra help or assistance to ensure the work is completed properly.

Torque Checks

A torque check is a simple, quick way to prevent most of the causes of wheel-offs. How can you encourage customers to get torque checked?

- **Have a torque check clause on the invoice:** Have the customer sign it separately, and make sure they get a copy afterward.
- **Advertise it:** Signage/ posters promoting the reasons and benefits of torque checks.

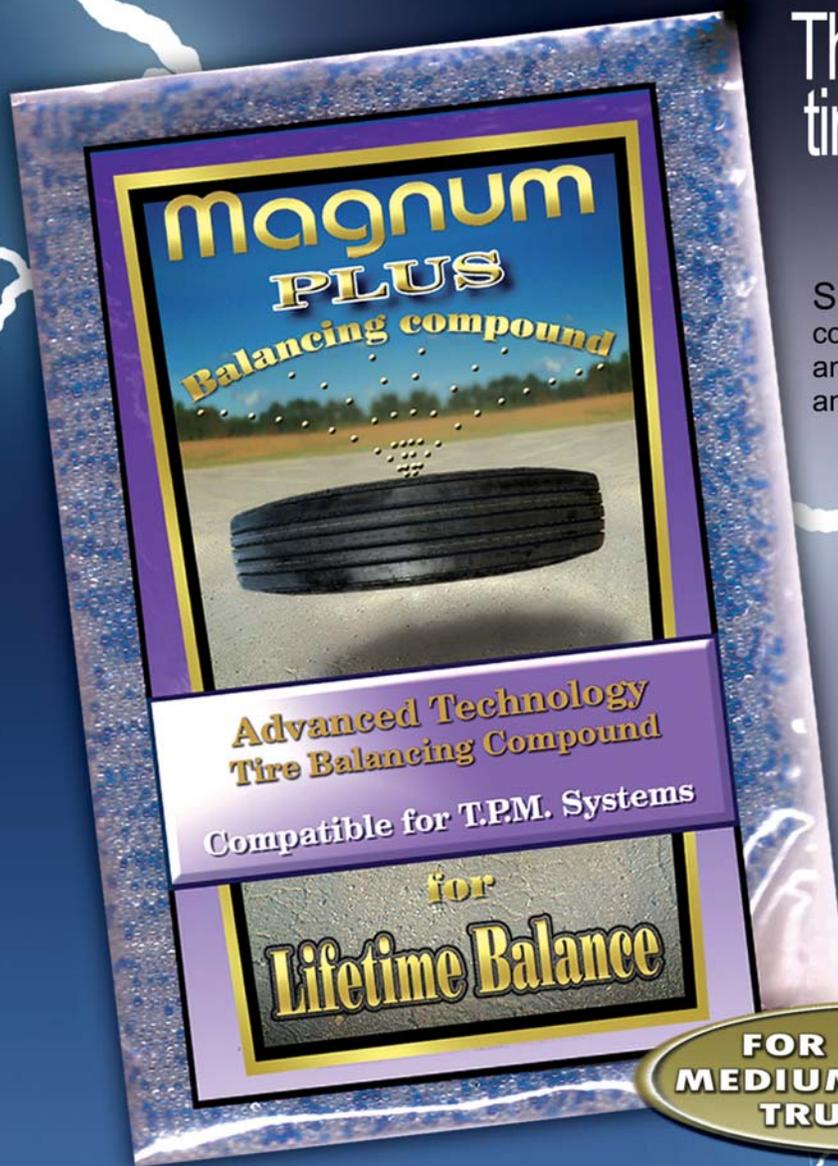
If everyone gets on board and gets educated, and if torque checks become the rule, not the exception, hopefully one day the war on wheel-offs will be ancient history.

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Richard Frost, CIP, CRM, is Federated Insurance's Loss Prevention Consultant for Special Risks and Associations.

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Ronald Allan Labrecque

September 12, 1946 – December 4, 2014

WCTD is saddened to hear of the passing of long time supporter and former director Ron Labrecque. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family, and reprint his obituary here.

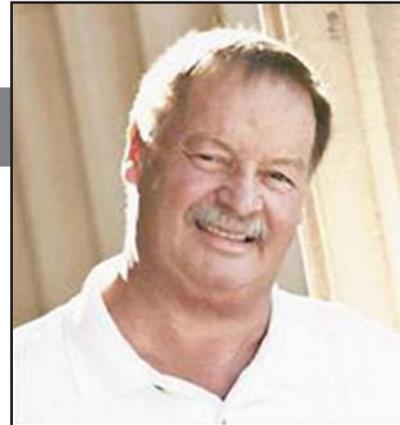
It is with heavy hearts that our family announces the passing of our husband, father, grandfather, brother and uncle Ron Labrecque.

Ron is lovingly remembered by his wife of 45 years, Cathie; children: Nicole, Ryan (Brenda); grandchildren: Sydni, Sarah, Wilson, Coleson; and six siblings and their families. He was predeceased by his parents, Ceil and Bill, and sister, Diane.

The family would like to thank Dr. Taparia, Dr. Kasza, Dr. Lien and Unit 57 at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre in Calgary for their care and compassion.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Wednesday, December 10, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Vital Roman Catholic Church, 4905 - 50 Street, Beaumont, Alberta. Cremation followed.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Alberta Lung Association.



INDUSTRY NEWS

NHTSA wants new automatic braking system on cars



Source: *Tire Review*

American Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has announced that the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) plans to add two automatic emergency braking systems to the recommended advanced safety features included under its New Car Assessment Program (NCAP).

The agency will continue to encourage development and commercialization of additional safety-related technologies of vehicle automation through its recommendation of two automatic emergency braking systems – crash imminent braking (CIB) and dynamic brake support (DBS).

According to NHTSA data, one-third of all police-reported crashes in 2013 involved a rear-end collision with another

vehicle at the start of the crash. The agency also found that a large number of drivers involved in rear-end crashes either did not apply the brakes at all or did not apply the brakes fully prior to the crash. Crash imminent braking and dynamic brake support systems can intervene by automatically applying the vehicle's brakes or supplementing the driver's braking effort to mitigate the severity of the crash or to avoid it altogether.

This action also marks the first step in a broader revision of NCAP and seeks to ensure the program continues to encourage both consumers and automakers to develop and adopt advanced vehicle safety technologies.

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TriCan buys Integra; to adopt new name



By: Bruce Davis, *Tire Business Staff*

TriCan Tire Distributors Inc., an American Tire Distributors Holdings Inc. subsidiary, has purchased the interests of Edmonton-based **Integra Tire & Auto Centres Canada Ltd.** and will take over management of the Integra Tire affiliated retail dealership program.

Separately, TriCan and ATD announced a new identity, National Tire Distributors, for the firm's wholesale activities in Canada, which currently go to market under nine different brands — TriCan, RTD, WTD, Hercules, Kipling Tire Wholesale, Tireco Wholesale, Kirk's Tire Wholesale, Trail Tire Distributors and Extreme Wheel. The change will be effective Feb. 1.

TriCan's acquisition of Integra Tire puts the 80-plus store Integra retail network under the control of Edmonton-based TriCan. Financial terms were not disclosed.

"The Integra brand will be an excellent addition to the TriCan



portfolio," said Mike Kustra, president of TriCan Tire Distributors. "We strive to offer our customers tools and programs to help them operate as successful tire and service retailers. The Integra program aligns perfectly with our marketing goals."

David Cosco, president and CEO of Integra Tire for the past six years, said joining forces with TriCan "is a very positive step for the Integra brand."

Mr. Cosco has resigned his executive positions with Integra Tire but will continue to operate six retail locations he owns as Integra-affiliated stores.

Integra's other owners were Brad Kirk and Allen Ambrosie, former owners of Kirk's Tire and Trail Tire Distributors Ltd., respectively.

"The national footprint, combined with the resources of this large and growing distributor, will create tremendous opportunities for the business owners participating in the Integra affiliated store program," he said.

Integra Tire **reincorporated** just 15 months ago with Messrs. Kirk and Ambrosie as partners.

Then in July 2014, **ATD bought out** Kirk's Tire and Trail Tire, along with Regional Tire Distributors Inc. of Calgary and Edmonton and Trail Tire's Extreme Wheel Distributors Ltd. affiliate.

TriCan also operates the **TreadQuarters** Tire & Auto Centre retailer marketing program. That program, which encompasses more than 200 retail outlets, and Integra will operate autonomously, a spokesman said.

TriCan said the NTD identity "embraces who NTD is as a company: a collection of strong regional players, servicing their local markets, coming together to form the largest distribution network in Canada."

The company said it believes in the empowerment and flexibility to meet and exceed the distinct and differing needs within the tire industry, wherever the location, whatever the size. Passion for the best brands, the highest level of service and the delivery of relevant programs for tire retailers, from coast-to-coast, will drive every decision taken by NTD.

"The NTD brand effectively takes the best of the value-added tools and services from each of the originating companies' to our large network of tire retailers," Mr. Kustra said. "This new name proudly symbolizes the company's goal of being Canada's leading service provider in the tire distribution segment in all markets served, nationally, regionally and locally."

The corporate support centre of NTD is located in Burlington, Ontario, and is charged with providing resources to NTD regional head offices in Edmonton; St. Laurent, Quebec; Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; and Burlington, Ontario, to service unique geographic needs effectively.

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Toyota, Honda in talks on fuel cell cars



—Bloomberg News Report

Tokyo plans to spend \$385 million on fuel cell vehicle subsidies and hydrogen stations for the 2020 Olympics as part of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's plan to reduce Japan's reliance on nuclear power.

Japan's capital will build 35 stations to fuel hydrogen-based fuel cell vehicles and is in negotiations with Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co. to put 6,000 hydrogen cars on its roads by 2020, said Makoto Fujimoto, who heads the planning team at the metropolitan government's energy department.

Japan is putting resources into hydrogen power after suffering its worst nuclear disaster since World War II in March 2011, when an earthquake and tsunami damaged the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. Spending on hydrogen infrastructure comes as Tokyo's government is under pressure to rein in costs as it prepares to host the quadrennial games.

"The Olympics are a good opportunity to showcase new technologies," said Hiroshi Takahashi, a research fellow at Fujitsu Research Institute. "It's also a significant chance to attract new investment and update the city's transportation system to make it fuel cell friendly."

Last week, Toyota delivered its first Mirai fuel cell model to Mr. Abe. After a short test drive at his official residence, Mr. Abe declared it was "very comfortable" and said he wants "all ministries and agencies to have" the Mirai.

"It's time to introduce a hydrogen era," he told reporters on Jan. 15.

The Mirai — meaning "future" in Japanese — will be sold in California and Europe this year, can travel 300 miles on a single tank of hydrogen and refuel in three to five minutes. In the U.S., the Mirai's sticker price will be \$57,500.

'Hydrogen society'

The national government is planning hydrogen distribution facilities as it supports Toyota, which pioneered hybrid vehicles, to help popularize what the car maker sees as the next generation of auto technology. Abe has said Japan intends to create a "hydrogen society," with cells powered by the element also powering homes and office buildings.

Japan's fuel cell subsidies are bigger than the incentives that China, the U.S. and Europe are offering for electric-vehicle buyers. They are also more than triple the 950,000 yen of incentives Japan offers buyers of



Photo courtesy Toyota / Wikipedia

Mitsubishi Motors Corp.'s all-electric i-MiEV.

The country is paying 10 billion yen a day to buy natural gas after the reactor meltdown forced the shutdown of all of its nuclear plants, Mr. Fujimoto said.

Under the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's plan, the city is targeting to have 100,000 hydrogen passenger vehicles, 100 hydrogen buses and 80 refueling stations by 2025. Buyers of fuel cell vehicles in Tokyo will be entitled to about 1 million yen of subsidies, on top of the 2 million yen provided by the central government, he said.

Government subsidies

More than 80 percent of the costs of building hydrogen stations will be subsidized by the Tokyo government, capping the costs for operators at 100 million yen, or about the same as building a gasoline station, according to Mr. Fujimoto. The government may cover the costs entirely for small-business owners, he said.

Toyota President Akio Toyoda told reporters last week that the auto maker was considering increasing production after receiving about 1,500 Mirai orders — 60 percent of which are from government offices and corporate fleets — in the first month, compared with its target of 400 by the end of 2015.

Fuel cells are considered environmentally friendly because they convert hydrogen to electricity, leaving water vapor as a byproduct.

A Look at Canada's Possible Price Transparency Act



This article by TRAC president Glenn Maidment is republished from the Tire & Rubber Association of Canada January 2015 newsletter.

The Honourable Industry Minister James Moore introduced new legislation called the *Price Transparency Act*, which will amend the Competition Act to empower the Commissioner of Competition to investigate price discrepancies on consumer goods and, where warranted, call manufacturers and distributors to explain and justify their Canadian pricing.

and tires – though the topic is pretty much mute with an eighty-cent dollar.

It's at times like this we are reminded of a marketing quote from Sy Syms, a men's clothing retailer back in the day, who said, "An educated consumer is our best customer." These days there is no excuse



This is all in an attempt to eliminate the practice of geographic price discrimination, otherwise known as "country pricing."

In his remarks, Minister Moore made clear this was not an attempt to regulate prices, and he conceded some pricing differential may be reasonable given exchange rates, customs and tariffs and other factors. But, he said, Canadian consumers are feeling "ripped off" and this legislation is one way to address their concerns.

In 2013 the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance reported their findings after many months of hearings, concluding the causes of the price gap on consumer goods between Canada and the United States were varied and complex. Volatile exchange rates was one of the key items mentioned in their report, which manufacturers are now seeing played out in front of our eyes.

The Price Transparency Act is particularly difficult for a trade manufacturing association to comment on because member product pricing is just one of those topics you cannot discuss for fear of running afoul of the Competition Act. The topic is perhaps even more froth with danger for TRAC because up until very recently any story about pricing differentials between the U.S. and Canada invariably mentioned books

whatsoever for not being an educated consumer. Just a few minutes online will tell you what size of tire is best for your vehicle and a plethora of tire brands, pricing and retailers near you. There are also websites that compare brands and features to help consumers narrow their choice.

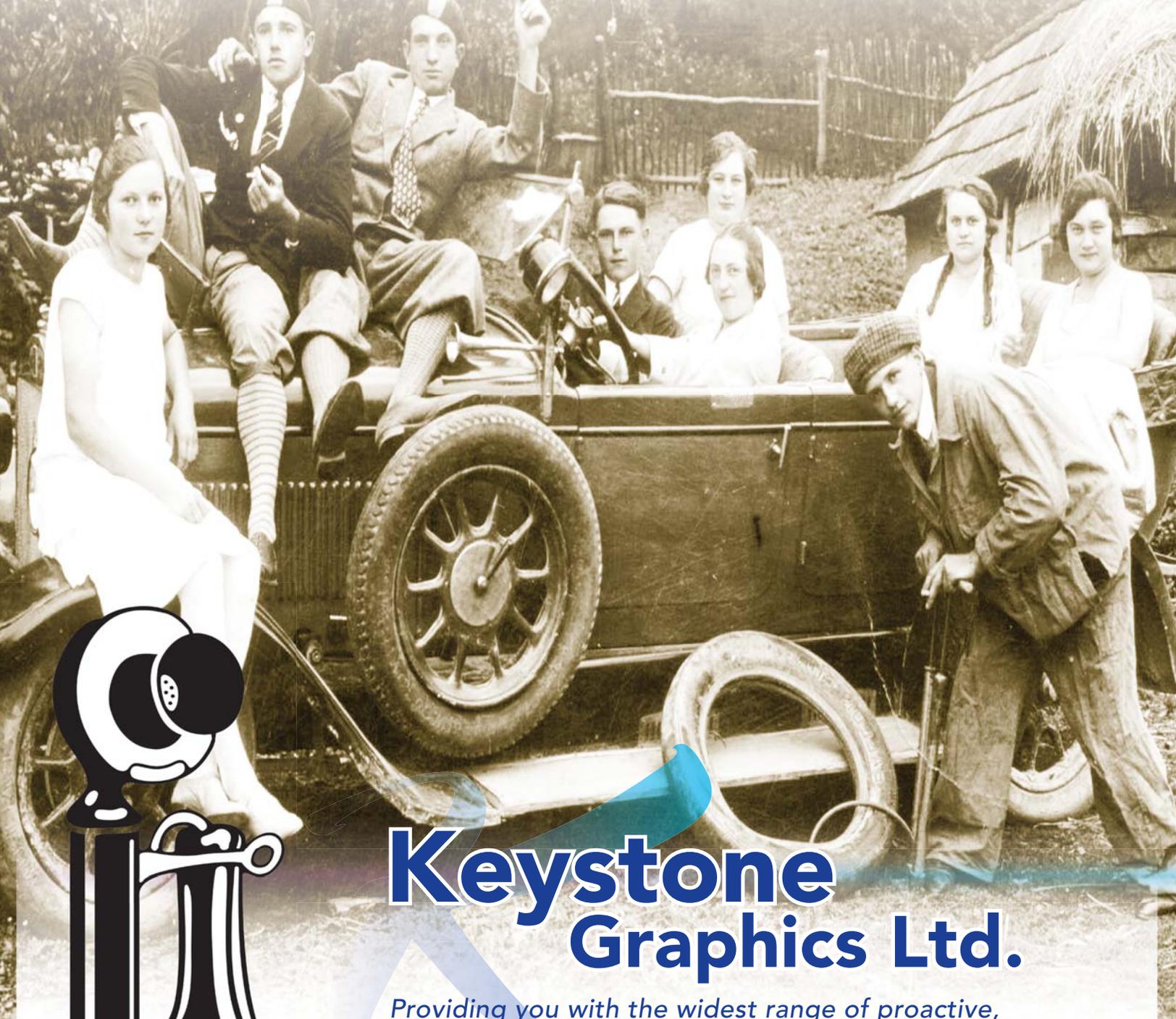
Speaking of choice, in mid-2014, and for an entirely different reason, TRAC commissioned a field study to determine the number of discrete tire brands being sold in the passenger tire market in Canada. For the record, TRAC has 14 tire company members, many of which may have one or two associate brands to ensure they cover a wide audience from a pricing perspective.

The field survey identified almost 100 brands of passenger vehicle tire brands! Personally, we cannot think of another industry where consumers have more choice of products from which to choose. It seems to us that ultimately having a competitive market with lots of choice and readily available product information is the best way to ensure consumers are protected.

Whether the *Price Transparency Act* is successful or not remains to be seen, but for the tire sector, the free market is alive and well.

Source: Tire Review

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Where You Should be Focusing Your Social Media Efforts



By: Frank J. Kenny

- First, hang out where your target market hangs out. Don't jump right in. Start out by listening and discerning pain points, wants and needs. Know your target market backwards and forwards. At some point that feels right, start engaging. Don't sell. Don't be pushy. Offer advice, input, insights, feedback. You are creating awareness here, not trying to get on third base.
- Study what your competitors are doing to engage your target market. If they have been doing this longer, they probably have some of this figured out. They know what the target market responds to, where they hang out.
- Focus on relationship building. It doesn't help to have everyone know you if they dislike you. It is much better to cultivate a few true friendships than manage dozens of loose connections.
- Build community. One of the most powerful things you can do is create a community online, whether through Facebook Groups, LinkedIn Groups, or some third-party community site, where your target market starts hanging out and gaining value. If you get some traction here (it won't be easy), focus hard on that. A vibrant tribe will create a lot of action in your target market, bringing people into your funnel as if by magnet. The mid-funnel relationship building and "know, like and trust" will go much easier if you are the "leader" of the community. A little tip though: Don't necessarily act like the leader or some big shot. You are there to be of service to them. The moment

they think all you want to do is sell them something, they will be looking for a new community.

- Read. As quickly as things are moving, you will never be able to understand and execute on all the things you need to know by learning on a trial-and-error model. Learn from others' mistakes. Leap-frog your competition by learning what works today.
- Don't spread yourself too thin. Focus on one or two platforms until you get the hang of them. Then add something new if your target market is there. If your target market isn't there, don't waste your time. Quality over quantity. And don't just abandon something that didn't work — a Twitter account, for instance. If you are not going to use it, delete it. It looks bad when people come across abandoned projects.
- One last thing. With enough effort and persistence, all the major social media sites will produce fruit for you. Without enough effort and persistence, none of them will.

Excerpted from *Dispelling the Myths and Overcoming the Barriers* by Frank J. Kenny

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