

THE TRACKER

THE PUBLICATION FOR TIRE PROFESSIONALS
FROM WESTERN CANADA TIRE DEALERS



REZA PAGE 8
KAMRANI
Our man from
Federated Insurance

PLUS

Shymko Steps Up • Summer Safety • Meet Your People
Scholarship Deadline • Tire & Water Explained
Taking the Air Out • Embracing Disruption





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Join one of Canada's fastest growing retail tire brands.

TIRECRAFT is a network of 250+ independently owned and operated retail tire and automotive repair businesses across Canada.



National Branding

Digital/Traditional marketing and a nationally recognized brand.



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Access to exclusive tire and parts programs at preferred pricing.



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Southern Alberta

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dray@ntdcanada.com

British Columbia

Gary Kopiak
250-300-1643
gkopiak@ntdcanada.com

Saskatchewan/Manitoba

Dan Johnson
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danjohnson@ntdcanada.com



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THE TRACKER

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We hope you find this issue of The Tracker informative, educational and entertaining. We welcome your feedback and invite you to submit any ideas you have for upcoming issues. Feel free to drop us a line (or two)...

WCTD - The Tracker

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PAST PRESIDENT - PAUL MCALDUFF

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COVER PHOTO: Tim Pawsey, Editor, The Tracker



WCTD MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

COMPANY NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY	
PROV	POSTAL CODE
PHONE	FAX
EMAIL	
CATEGORY OF MEMBERSHIP (SEE BELOW)	
VOTING MEMBER a. Independent Tire Dealer b. Retreader	ASSOCIATE MEMBER, NON-VOTING 1. Jobber or Distributor 2. Manufacturer 3. Exporter or Mfg. Rep. 4. Dealer Support Services
MY BUSINESS IS MADE UP PRIMARILY OF THE SALE OF TIRES AND TIRE RELATED SERVICES	YES NO (CIRCLE ONE)
AUTHORIZED BY (PLEASE PRINT)	

Annual Dues \$120.00 incl. GST per calendar year, per location.

PLEASE FORWARD TO:

WCTD - 65 Woodbine Road, Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4A7

Email: rayg@wctd.ca



Knowing your business matters.

The risks you face as a tire dealer are unique.

Federated Insurance can design specialized and comprehensive programs specific to the needs of you and your dealership.

Call **1.844.628.6800** and speak to a Commercial Insurance Specialist today.

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Recommended insurer of the WCTD

Federated Insurance Company of Canada is the insurer of Federated Insurance policies.
[3706-017 ed01E | 06-2019]

CHANGING TIMES...**Thanks & new opportunities.**

As the years continue to tick by comes change.

Let me introduce myself to those who don't know me. My name is Neal Shymko, and I am honoured to be the new president of the WCTD. I have been a director on the board, representing Alberta, since (2013).

First of all I'd like to recognize Paul Mcalduff, who has stepped down as president but thankfully remains active as past president—and as a representative for British Columbia. Paul has done a wonderful job as president... I would like to extend my extreme gratitude to him on behalf of the entire board.

We have had a few board changes over the past little while as well. Clem Collette has stepped aside after 12 years with the Association, including as president from 2010-12. His valuable leadership, input and services were greatly appreciated and definitely will be missed. Currently we are looking for a representative for Saskatchewan. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a director please reach out to us to ensure your provinces voice is heard.

Why we need you

Getting involved on the board is a great way to get your ideas out there – and talk with like-minded individuals who share a passion for the tire industry.

With such a dynamic nature it's critical that we stay in touch with each other and keep on top of trends and changes. The independent tire dealers is becoming more and more of an endangered species. Big box stores, wholesale clubs, automotive dealers and the latest challenge, on line sales, are all battling for a piece of the tire "pie".

We need to all work together to ensure that the independent tire dealer remains a strong force. As an Association we are here to help make things easier for you. Make sure to check out all of the benefits that you receive by being a member. There are so many great things available to you: don't let them go to waste! We are also becoming a stronger presence online for you. Make sure to like us on Facebook to keep on top of the latest trends and industry news. We must work together and share our best practices ideas to be able to compete and remain a strong, viable option for our customers.

Neal Shymko
President, WCTD



We need to all work together to ensure that the independent tire dealer remains a strong force. As an Association we are here to help make things easier for you. Make sure to check out all of the benefits that you receive by being a member. There are so many great things available to you: don't let them go to waste!

The independent advantage

We must also never forget that the personal, one-on-one interaction is often precisely why our customers enjoy dealing with us. We need to nourish and cultivate those relationships to differentiate ourselves from the impersonal dealings of the big box or online stores. There is no doubt, we need to embrace the online world and have it work for us. But we need to continue to mobilize the customer to us, so that we can interact directly. And also so they can experience more than just an online price quote.

Never underestimate the strengths of the independent tire dealers. They include not only our extensive professional knowledge but also our interpersonal skills and ability to communicate candidly with our customers. We can't ever lose sight of that advantage. Above all, if we are to be strong force moving forward, we must continue to nurture our unique relationships with our customers.

We must also never forget that the personal, one-on-one interaction is often precisely why our customers enjoy dealing with us. We need to nourish and cultivate those relationships to differentiate ourselves from the impersonal dealings of the big box or online stores.



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or visit www.premacanada.ca

PLAN FOR SAFETY – YEAR ROUND!**Summer is finally here!**

Ray Geleta
Executive Director,
WCTD



It's that perfect time when family and friends get together to enjoy the warm days. It's also family holiday season and I know that a lot of people will be traveling to their favourite vacation spot. That means it's imperative for us, the dealers and our professionally trained staff, to make sure that their vehicles are properly prepared to make that journey comfortably and, above all, safely.

For this and many other reasons I'm urging you to think seriously today about who among your staff you are planning to send to WCTD's training programs. We'll be announcing the dates and details shortly, so stay tuned. Aside from the obvious reason, to have the best trained staff possible, as you read this issue of The Tracker you will notice a wealth of useful information from our friends at Federated Insurance.

Let me draw your attention to Reza Kamrani's comments as follows:

"A little while ago the board of directors made the case that tire technician training and certified technician programs should result in lower liability rates for its members. As mentioned on the WCTD website," ...it has been proven that properly trained employees are less likely to experience accidents...". The TIA Training Courses lead to specialization and certification. Naturally the TIA Certification was approved for lower liability rates.'

All of which means that the benefits of enrolling in proper and current training programs extend even beyond that important and critical safety factor.

On the 2020 Roster, to be announced shortly, are the OTR Installer Course, Farm Tire Installer Course and Commercial Train the Trainer Program.

Once again, these sessions are very much the product of the knowledge and professionalism of TIA Director of Service Matt White. If you or your

staff have never attended, I truly recommend you speak to somebody who has. Believe me, you'll wonder why you didn't participate before. They're truly an indispensable part of what we do as an Association.



Matt White,
TIA Director of
Service

Matt believes in a culture of safety—and so do we. Training and safety have to be a priority for everyone's sake. If your staff are unable to attend, as an alternative, please note that I also have a good supply of TIA training kits and work books. These are invaluable and add to up to a good way to receive training materials for less cost.

On the topic of benefits, just a friendly reminder that the deadline for WCTD Scholarship Applications, August 15, is almost here. Please note the information on page 13; and be sure to circulate within your company. These significant bursaries have benefitted many families over the years. Also, the Tire Stewardship BC Don Blythe Scholarship is again offered this year. Please make sure you or your employees' families don't miss out!

A final word, the 2019 Torque Charts are in stock, so please email me if you require any.

Wishing you a happy and safe Summer!

FEDERATED INSURANCE

Service Face to Face



by Reza Kamrana
Account Representative,
Associations, Federated Insurance

Federated insures over 300 WCTD members in western Canada. They range from small rural independents to national brands and buying groups.

Everywhere you turn companies are talking about how good their service is.

One telecom company calls you promising better internet connection speed & once you make the switch you notice more hang time than with the previous carrier.

You call customer service to notify them of the issue and hear the standard, "we are experiencing an unusually high volume of calls. Your expected wait time is..."

You go to buy groceries or something at Canadian Tire and you start your second job as a volunteer cashier at the self-checkout station!

This is the reality of automation and our economy today (artificial intelligence will cause the next wave of disruptions).

My company is different...

Our motto, "knowing your business matters," is not just a phrase; we get to know our customers/prospects the old fashion way, face to face. Our promise to all our customers, is to build Trust through personalized strong relationships, provide ongoing Advice and help to Protect their business by providing tailored insurance solutions...

TRUST ADVISE PROTECT.

Federated Insurance is a 100-year-old Canadian direct commercial insurer and the last one of its kind in Canada. A strong attestation to our stability to be here for many years to come... Our wordings are unique to us and are developed in-house for the tire dealer industry. For instance, coverage to re-do work failures caused by faulty material or human error (labour cost and materials included) is industry leading.

A little while ago the board of directors made the case that tire technician training and certified technician programs should result in lower liability rates for its members. As mentioned on the WCTD website,"

...it has been proven that properly trained employees are less likely to experience accidents..." The TIA training courses lead to specialization and certification. Naturally the TIA certification was approved for lower liability rates.

What are you paying for?

At the end of the day, insurance is just a promise to be there if something goes wrong. Once a year you cut a cheque and may wonder what it is I am paying for.

The following is a brief description of what we offer and what differentiates us...

- When you work with Federated, there is no 'middle-man' — our agents are employees and represent exclusively Federated Insurance. They can speak on our behalf and have the authority to make commitments and follow-through.
- With Federated, you're dealing only with one company — for sales, service, billing, underwriting, loss prevention, and claims. It's all managed and coordinated centrally towards a common goal of service excellence, at your fingertips whenever you need us.
- The fact is that we do not write or even quote most businesses. We prefer to be a specialist rather than a generalist. If you have a heart issue, you don't go to your general practitioner physician. You go to a cardiologist. Insurance is no different. At Federated Insurance, we have achieved success by focusing on what we do best and where we have the expertise.
- We insure over 300 WCTD members in western Canada. They range from small rural independents to national brands and buying groups. Our Commercial Insurance

Other insurance companies may work with associations but Federated is unique in that we have a dedicated, focused association team. We are not responsible for selling, underwriting or even adjusting claims. Our key function is to serve exclusively our partner associations and their membership.



Specialists are among the best in the industry. When I applied to join the Federated team, I had seven interviews over 10 weeks and two psychological tests administered by a third party. (My wife still doesn't believe that I passed!)

What else you ask?

Our Risk Management experts work hard to help our clients to reduce their operational risk where possible. They developed a tire industry-specific White Paper on risk management hazards and mitigation for tire dealers to help them with their business. Download our White Paper on Tire Business Risks... <https://www.federated.ca/pdf/Federated-White-Paper-tire-EN.pdf>

Our consultants are also available to visit your location and will provide a tailored, complimentary risk management report on how and where to reduce risk in the day to day operations of your store, to help mitigate a loss and prevent downtime. This includes cyber exposures — a relatively new risk to tire dealers. In addition, they can provide various training courses for fleet drivers, if they determine it to be beneficial for our clients. Risk Services is happy to share advice through articles, co-branded technical papers and presentations. It's not just a sales pitch, they want to help minimize risk and help our clients succeed at their business

A dedicated team

Where does the association team (including myself) come into play? Not only do you have a dedicated agent that takes care of your needs

One satisfied and 'very grateful' customer ...

I'm George Fehr, of Fehr Tirecraft Ltd. which used to be Fehr Tire And Maintenance.

I have to admit that I initially put off meeting with the new insurance salesman in Grande Prairie. When I finally did agree to meet with Kenton Dueck, Commercial Insurance Specialist with Federated Insurance, he completed a thorough review of my existing coverages and made suggestions for what I should consider. There was no comparison between the two and I was convinced to go with Federated Insurance.

Only eighteen days later, we sustained a major shop fire and I am very grateful for having made the switch over. Federated Insurance has consistently stood behind their claims handling promise and the service has been great.

Thank you Kenton.

— George Fehr, Fehr Tirecraft Ltd.



and business; the association team provides an extra layer of protection and support.

Other insurance companies may work with associations but Federated is unique in that we have a dedicated, focused association team. We are not responsible for selling, underwriting or even adjusting claims. Our key function is to serve exclusively our partner associations and their membership.

As a business owner, I think it is a safe bet to say that you have enough on your plate. Consider delegating your insurance needs to a specialized, dedicated member supplier of your industry. Federated insures over 30% of WCTD members and has a 95% retention rate of existing customers. — We must be doing something right!

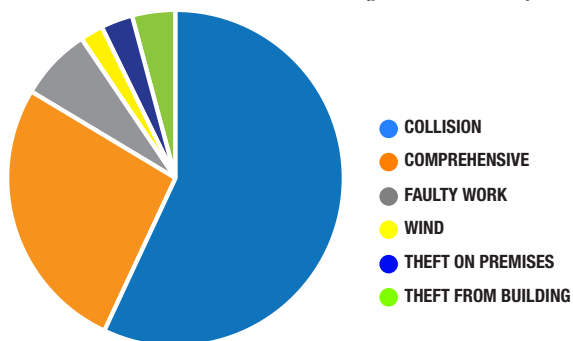
Our commercial insurance specialists will be reaching out to you in the next few months. If you give them the chance, our agents will provide you with a complete, complimentary audit of your current insurance policy: you can compare what you have in place with what Federated can provide.

Half an hour of your time can go a long way in protecting your business.

RezaKamrani@Federated.ca
778.995.8504

Federated: 84% of all claims are vehicle related

Alberta Tire Dealer Claims (past 12 months)



- **56 COLLISIONS CLAIMS** while parking, backing up, rear end, failure to stop at red light/stop sign, failure to yield right of way, vehicle roll over, upset.
- **26 COMPREHENSIVE CLAIMS** client car hit while parked, hail damage, collision with wildlife, client car fell off hoist, employee of insured stole customer vehicle and rolled in a ditch, theft-content of vehicle, theft -entire vehicle, mischief and vandalism, windstorm, hit and run, employee hit another vehicle while parking client car.
- **7 FAULTY WORK CLAIMS** insured changed oil filter & replaced with wrong size filter, insured replaced customer

U-Joints a few months later the drive shaft blew, wheel off after tire installation, rear wheel bearings were put back in incorrectly, insured forgot to put antifreeze during repairs, employee punctured customer tire.

- **2 WIND CLAIMS** windstorm resulted in property damage.
- **3 THEFT ON PREMISES CLAIMS** (vehicles / open lot) tools stolen from employee truck.
- **4 THEFT FROM BUILDING CLAIMS** tires, tools, wheels stolen, trailer.

The data shows that close to 84% of all claims are vehicle related. Federated's Risk Services department can help our clients address this risk.

We have a driving training centre based in Guelph, Ontario. We offer a variety of driving courses and other services to our clients. With enough lead time they can set up the training anywhere in Canada.

Year to date over 500 drivers have enrolled and have received 2200 hours of training.

If you are interested in learning more feel free to reach out and I will provide you with the details. Claims details from other provinces will follow in subsequent issues.

RezaKamrani@Federated.ca 778.995.8504



Knowing your business matters.

A few words about us

We're Federated Insurance, a 100% Canadian-owned direct writing commercial insurance specialist that has been serving Canadian businesses of all sizes for over 90 years. That's nearly a century of building relationships based on trust and integrity. Visit us at www.federated.ca to learn more.

MEET YOUR PEOPLE!



This is first in a couple of articles to introduce our hard-working Board of Directors. We'd like to thank them — and emphasize that they're all volunteers, giving their time selflessly to help make this association and the industry at large even better than it is.

If you have ideas to share, challenges you need help with, want to get involved, or just a good news story to pass on to The Tracker, feel free to connect with them.

Neal Shymko, President



Like many in the industry, I got my start in the family business. I started working part time with my father when I was around 12, at that time mainly recycling weights, cleaning and odd jobs. We had a 5 bay shop on Edmonton's south side that opened back in 1976. We remained in that location for quite a few years and eventually it has brought us to today where I have an eight bay location in west Edmonton and a similar shop located in Sherwood Park.

My original career plans did not include the tire industry at all. I went to college and studied business for a couple of years with the intention of becoming involved in securities trading. When I graduated however, there were some issues at one of our locations so I decided to go help there for a short time and then resume my desired career.

Almost 30 years later, I am still in the tire industry. I do enjoy it and love interacting with the staff and customers so I don't think I'd change a thing even if I was given the choice again. Over the years I truly have been blessed to have met so many wonderful people and experienced so many different things.

I have also had the pleasure and honour of serving on the WCTD board for the last eight years. It is a privilege being active in this wonderful organization—and I look forward to doing all I can to help the independent tire dealer in the future.

James Watt, Director - Alberta

I started out at Kal Tire warehouse in Calgary, then moved on to the OK Tire warehouse after Kal moved to Edmonton. I then moved to Tirecraft where I quickly moved up the latter, starting out as a service advisor before becoming the assistant manager. From there I went on to become the Manager of a Tirecraft in Calgary N.E. until the closure of the Tire craft organization.

As I was helping with the windup of several Tirecrafts and dealing with the assets, I was recruited by Fountain Tire. From there I opened up the Fountain location in the Foothills industrial Park. After two years of managing that location someone bought it out, and we decided to part ways. From there I went back to OK Tire Corp. and became a Regional Territory Manager for five years. I then had an opportunity to become an owner in a store and have been in Strathmore for the last four years. We have recently won National Store of the Year.

When not busy with the store I enjoy golfing and boating.

Tim Hollett, Director - British Columbia



I have worked in the Tire industry for about 45 years and my wife, Faye, and I have owned our own business for approximately 20 years. For many years our company, B & H Tire Ltd., was a member of Excel Tire. As a member I got more involved and was a director on the board and eventually became president of the organization.

We have since aligned with the Tirecraft Group and have been a member for about four years. Over the years of running our business I have also been on the board with the local Chamber of Commerce as well as coached hockey and baseball in our community.

I am currently on three different boards, all which are connected with the tire industry, through recycling to dealer liaison and communications. The three organizations I am involved with are Tire Stewardship B.C., Tirecraft and Western Canada Tire Dealers.

My hobbies are fishing, golfing and gardening but what I am most proud of is my family. My wife and I have three children and five grand kids, who I love very much and love to spend time with—because they are such a big and important part of my life.

Ray Lehman, Director - Alberta



I'm now entering my 30th year in the tire industry. Working in just about every facet of the wholesale business. I started at Remington Tire in 1990, working in the warehouse shipping and receiving.


I then spent the next 8 years on the order desk as a Customer Sales Representative. I believe this is where I really cut my teeth into the business. Working with dealers, solving issues, and creating relationships with many that I still call on today as a Dealer Development Manager for Tirecraft and Integra Tire Northern Alberta.

Working with the group at WCTD has helped me understand that we are all in this together. With today's advancements in vehicles, tires, and wheels, we need proper collaboration to give the everyday tire dealer support and knowledge to help guide them into tomorrow.

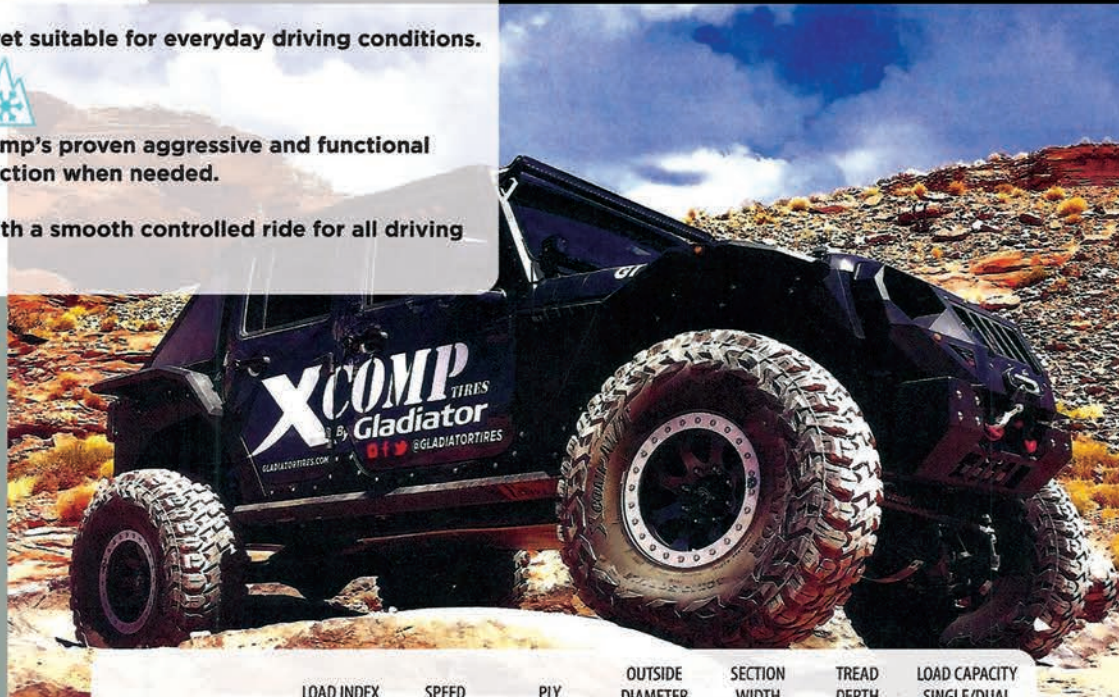
XCOMP TIRES By *Gladiator*

AT

Tire Design & Construction Advantages

- This new cutting edge tire design has all the advantages of the X Comp M/T and ATR, with some very subtle changes.
- The tire casing has two full plies of polyester with full sidewall turn up, to enable a more comfortable ride, yet very strong and durable.
- The tread area is an aggressive design, yet suitable for everyday driving conditions.
- The AT is all season and snowflake rated. 
- The tire shoulder area incorporates X Comp's proven aggressive and functional design, giving drivers protection and traction when needed.
- In summary, this new tire is very quiet with a smooth controlled ride for all driving conditions on and off road.

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TO
PERFECTION®**



TIRE SIZE	LOAD INDEX SINGLE/DUAL	SPEED SYMBOL	PLY RATING	OUTSIDE DIAMETER (INCHES)	SECTION WIDTH (INCHES)	TREAD DEPTH (32NDS)	LOAD CAPACITY SINGLE/DUAL (LBS)
LT285/75R16	126/123	Q	10	32.8	11.3	16	3750/3415
LT285/70R17	121/118	Q	10	32.8	11.5	16	3195/2910
33X12.50R17LT	126	Q	10	32.5	12.5	16	3750
35X12.50R17LT	126	Q	10	34.5	12.5	16	3750
37X13.50R17LT**	131	Q	10	36.5	13.6	16	4300
40X13.50R17LT**	131	Q	10	39.5	13.6	16	4300
LT275/65R18	123/120	Q	10	32.1	11.0	16	3415/3085
33X12.50R18LT	118	Q	10	32.5	12.5	16	2910
35X12.50R18LT	123	Q	10	34.5	12.5	16	3415
P275/55R20 XL	117	T		31.9	11.2	13	2835
LT285/55R20**	122/120	Q	10	32.4	11.7	16	3305/3000
LT285/65R20**	127/124	Q	10	34.6	11.5	16	3860/3525
33X12.50R20LT	114	Q	10	32.5	12.5	16	2600
35X12.50R20LT	121	Q	10	34.5	12.5	16	3195
37X13.50R20LT**	127	Q	10	36.5	13.6	16	3860
40X13.50R20LT**	131	Q	10	39.5	13.6	16	4300
P285/45R22 XL**	114	H		32.1	11.2	13	2601



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WCTD SCHOLARSHIPS



Scholarship deadline fast approaching!

WCTD Academic Scholarships

It's time to submit your application for the WCTD 2019 / 20 Scholarship program. If you're a member of the Association in good standing, don't delay to apply on behalf of your eligible family member!

www.wctd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Scholarships-2018.pdf

TSBC Don Blythe Scholarship

In addition, Tire Stewardship BC (TSBC) has generously added another scholarship to our existing four scholarships. This scholarship is for \$2,000 and is in memory of Don Blythe, for his contribution to Tire Stewardship BC and to the tire industry in general. This scholarship is a separate application process, with different eligibility requirements. For complete details please go to:

www.wctd.ca/tire-stewardship-bc-establishes-don-blythe-scholarship/

WCTD Academic Scholarship Eligibility

- The applicant is the immediate family member (Son, Daughter or Spouse) or legal ward of a person who is a full-time permanent employee, for at least one year, of a company that is a current voting member of the WCTD; and has been a member in good standing for the previous five (5) years.
- The applicant must have been accepted to attend an accredited Canadian post-secondary institution and have registered for classes for the upcoming semester.

Application

- **The deadline for applications is August 15, 2019.**
- All applications submitted must include the applicant's Social Insurance Number.
- The applicant must submit a résumé, not to exceed three (3) typewritten pages, outlining their education to date, any involvement in extra curricular activities, any academic honours or any community or volunteer work that they may have done. The applicant must also submit reference letters that confirm their involvement or achievements. Reference letters cannot be from family members and must speak to the achievements of the applicant.
- The applicant must submit a letter from a WCTD member confirming the current employment of an immediate family member.
- The applicant must have a complete transcript of all courses and grades sent to the Scholarship Committee no later than August 15, 2019. Transcripts must be submitted directly by the educational institution.
- The applicant must submit a confirmation of registration along with a tentative course schedule from an accredited post-secondary institution.

Awarding of Scholarship

Western Canada Tire Dealers is awarding four scholarships up to a value of \$2,000 each. The scholarship will be paid directly to the post-secondary institution at which the successful applicant is enrolled.

Application Deadline

The deadline for applications is August 15, 2019. Applications must be at the Scholarship Committee's office on or before this date. No applications will be accepted after that date. Incomplete or illegible applications will not be considered.



NOTICE TO PAST RECIPIENTS

Have you or someone you know ever been the beneficiary of a WCTD Scholarship? Over the years, many young people from members' families have received assistance for their post secondary education—thanks to the WCTD. Now we'd like to find out how they're doing. And how that scholarship might have made a difference—given them a step up or helped them achieve their life goals.

Is there anyone you can think of?
Please put them in touch: timp@wctd.ca

MAIL OR EMAIL APPLICATIONS TO:

**WCTD Academic
Scholarship Committee
65 Woodbine Road
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4A7
Email: rayg@wctd.ca**

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PRIVACY

The information collected in this application is to be used for the sole purpose of assessment and evaluation of the WCTD scholarship and will not be used for any other purposes.

**DEADLINE
AUGUST 15!**

**Passenger
Light Truck
Ultra High Performance**

Get a Grip on every Journey

**WEST LAKE[®]
TIRES**

RP18

- Reliable dry and wet traction
- Steering response and feel
- Ride comfort
- Treadlife



SL369

- On and off road traction
- Comfortable riding tire
- Treadlife
- Value for the lower cost



SA57

- New generation of directional
- Circumferential V-grooves
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INDUSTRY CHALLENGES stubbornly persist decades later

— Dan Marinucci, TIRE BUSINESS EDITORIAL

Solving major industry issues requires more ongoing effort than tire dealers and service shop operators may realize.

Revisiting an earlier commentary served as a cold reminder of how long some challenges have faced the automotive repair industry.

By “challenges,” I mean four issues that never seem to fade, let alone die. These are:

1. Recruiting new technicians;
2. Retaining experienced techs;
3. Upgrading the quality of vocational education; and
4. Improving the auto repair industry’s overall image.

I began reporting on this industry in 1976 and these four issues were hot topics at that time. Four decades later, they’re still big challenges for tire dealers and service shop operators.

Interestingly enough, I often hear owners and managers of auto repair businesses talking as if these topics are new.

I may sound like a cranky, old know-it-all, but history offers valuable lessons. Plus, it’s revealing that bosses are fighting the same battles I observed four decades ago.

While combing through some files, I came across an article I wrote 38 years ago. (I was technical editor of a national trade journal serving the professional auto repair industry.)

The theme of that issue was the future of the automotive aftermarket. Herewith are some excerpts of my reportage in November 1981.

First, I commented that: “The manpower shortage problem is still with us and will remain with us for the foreseeable future. It’s nearly impossible to raise wages and overhaul the image of this entire industry overnight.”

That assessment sounds like something I wrote yesterday.

Second, I predicted an exodus from the auto repair ranks. “Unfortunately, the kids coming out of vo-tech will continue taking jobs at the mill down the street rather than learn carburetors and transmissions at your shop,” I observed.

Sure, carburetors are long extinct. Likely, transmission specialists are the only ones digging deeply into tranny repairs.

But the overall sentiment seems to be current: Younger folks get a taste of auto repair and then leave for other jobs — those that seem to be greener pastures than “wrenching” on cars. (Yes, fewer mills are operating today.)



If everyone does nothing else, diagnose and repair each job correctly the first time. Repeat this success day in, day out. Eventually, this cumulative effort boosts your business’ credibility and customer loyalty.

Third, I said, “If there are any simple, snappy solutions to this problem, we aren’t aware of them. In the long run, though, we’ll need thousands of individual commitments from shop owners, jobbers, WDs and manufacturers. They’ll have to commit themselves to taking advantage of whatever apprenticeship programs are available to them.”

Fourth, I predicted, “No (training / recruitment) program will work without thousands of unheralded, unthanked individual efforts by the good guys in this business.

Make your best effort at keeping an eager young guy in the business — even if you do have to show him everything yourself.”

Now, consider how vital vaccinations have nearly eliminated certain diseases. When I was very young, many of us knew families affected by polio. Consequently, it was a big deal when we kids lined up for the polio vaccine. Today, polio is relatively rare.

Unfortunately, no one’s developed a quick, easy inoculation against the four industry “ailments” I cited. If conquering these challenges was so easy, everyone in the auto repair business would have done so long ago.

During the nearly three decades I have worked this page, I have stressed that changes usually occur slowly, incrementally. It requires solid effort from all service personnel — not just the bosses.

If everyone does nothing else, diagnose and repair each job correctly the first time. Repeat this success day in, day out. Eventually, this cumulative effort boosts your business’ credibility and customer loyalty.

What’s more, these successes help bosses create the work atmosphere that attracts and retains competent, reliable employees — as opposed to auto repair’s proverbial “guns for hire.”

Last but not least, involve yourself in vocational schools’ operation.

If you don’t, then don’t complain about the prospective hires the schools generate.

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MICHELIN, GM TO FORGE AHEAD with airless tire / wheel concept as OE option

— BRUCE DAVIS, Tire Business

Michelin Group, in partnership with General Motors Co., is taking its development of a maintenance-free, non-pneumatic tire to the next level with the “Uptis” prototype that the two companies said could be market ready as an OE fitment by 2024.

Michelin and GM presented the next-generation airless tire/wheel concept during the Movin’On Summit for sustainable mobility, which took place in early June in Montreal.

Uptis — Unique Punctureproof Tire System — is based on the fundamentals of Michelin’s Tweel tire / wheel product, introduced at the 2005 Detroit Auto Show, according to Eric Vinesse, Michelin executive vice-president, research and development.

Like the Tweel, the Uptis uses resin-reinforced fiberglass spokes as load-bearing elements. The wheel hub is integrated and the rubber tread is molded onto the circular platform that attaches to the end of the spokes.

“Uptis represents progress toward Michelin’s vision for tomorrow’s mobility,” Mr. Vinesse said, “and also embodies our commitment to a better, sustainable mobility for all.”

Michelin and GM have entered into a joint research agreement under which the companies intend to further develop and validate the Uptis prototype with the goal of introducing Uptis on passenger models as early as 2024.

Michelin and GM have been testing the prototype on vehicles such as the Chevrolet Bolt EV and disclosed that they intend to initiate real-world testing of Uptis on a test fleet of Bolt EV vehicles in Michigan.

“General Motors is excited about the possibilities that Uptis presents, and we are thrilled to collaborate with Michelin on this breakthrough technology,” Steve Kiefer, GM senior vice president, global purchasing and supply chain, said.

“Uptis is an ideal fit for propelling the automotive industry into the future and a great example of how our customers benefit when we collaborate and innovate with our supplier partners.”



Michelin’s airless tire was presented at the Movin’On event in Montreal.

From GM’s perspective, Uptis represents a maintenance-free product that offers the prospect of essentially no tire/wheel-related breakdowns.

Mr. Kiefer said GM likely would introduce the product on a limited basis, targeting electric vehicles and Zeets, which also could lead to development work on autonomous vehicles. Eventually, though, GM foresees airless tire/wheel composites as compatible with its full range of passenger vehicles, Mr. Kiefer said, declining to comment on the extent of GM’s exclusivity with Michelin on this product.

According to Michelin, the airless aspect of the Uptis means drivers of passenger vehicles feel safer on the road and operators of passenger

“Uptis is an ideal fit for propelling the automotive industry into the future and a great example of how our customers benefit when we collaborate and innovate with our supplier partners.”



Michelin and General Motors have already started testing the Michelin Uptis prototype on the Chevrolet Bolt EV , and this year both companies plan to start real testing of the new solution on the Chevrolet Bolt EV fleet . The tire is expected to appear as equipment for selected car models as early as in 2024.

vehicle Zeets will minimize downtime and improve efficiency.

In addition, society at large should see benefits from “extraordinary” environmental savings through reduced use of raw materials for replacement tire or spare tire production.

Mr. Vinesse said the Uptis tire / wheel assembly weighs about 5% more than a comparable pneumatic tire / wheel assembly, but using an airless tire / wheel product eliminates the need for a spare, resulting in a net weight improvement.

Michelin claims the Uptis prototype represents a major advancement toward achieving its Vision Concept, which debuted at the 2017 Movin’On Summit. The Vision Concept introduced four key pillars of innovation: airless, connected, 3D-printed and 100% sustainable (entirely renewable or biosourced materials).

“Uptis demonstrates that Michelin’s vision for a future of sustainable mobility is clearly an achievable dream,” Michelin Group CEO Florent Menegaux said.

“Through work with strategic partners like GM, who share our ambitions for transforming mobility, we can seize the future today.”

Mr. Vinesse stressed that developing a product like Uptis could help Michelin generate “extraordinary” environmental savings by cutting into the approximately 200 million tires worldwide that are scrapped prematurely every year as a result of punctures, damage from road hazards or improper air pressure that causes uneven wear.

Mr. Vinesse also acknowledged an airless tire / wheel product like Uptis could lead to a resurgence in retreading of consumer tires, although retreading in this sense likely would involve 3D printing of new treads.

“It’s a puncture-proof tire, capable of aligning the same performance as any other conventional tire without the worry of safety - it’s also an environmental gain because, thanks to this airless structure, it there will be no need to change the tires as often, “ promises Eric Vinesse, Director of Research and Development at Michelin.



AIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW?

— TIRE BUSINESS

Group Michelin's recent announcement that a maintenance-free, non-pneumatic tire/wheel system could be market-ready as an original equipment fitment option as soon as 2024 for General Motors Co. should come as no surprise to most industry observers.

Ever since the first viable pneumatic tires were produced in the late 1880s, it seems as if tire manufacturers everywhere have been trying to develop technology that takes a non-pneumatic tire to the mainstream.

In fact, the technology that Michelin and GM heralded during the recent Movin'On event in Montreal — the Uptis, or "Unique Punctureproof Tire System" — is based on the fundamentals of Michelin's Tweel tire / wheel product that was first introduced 14 years ago, at the 2005 Detroit Auto Show, according to Eric Vinesse, Michelin executive vice president, research and development.

It's taken that long — some might argue that the process has been fast-tracked given the level of complexity of the product — for the technology to expand beyond low-speed applications on vehicles like lawn tractors or skid-steers that currently use the Tweel.

While the Uptis uses resin-reinforced fiberglass spokes as load-bearing elements like the Tweel, the materials, production process and architecture of the Uptis spoke design are new, according to Michelin. The spokes are molded onto an aluminum cylinder, and the rubber tread is molded onto the circular platform that attaches to the end of the spokes. This assembly is then bolted to an aluminum wheel cover/mounting plate that contains the wheel hub.

Michelin and GM have entered into a joint research agreement calling for the companies to develop and validate the Uptis prototype further. The goal is to introduce Uptis on passenger models as early as 2024.

Consider that for a second. Auto makers already are starting to roll out their 2020 models. That means the airless tire could be part of the passenger tire market in less than 48 months.

Michelin and GM have been testing the prototype on vehicles such as the Chevrolet Bolt EV. They will initiate testing of Uptis on a fleet of Bolt EV vehicles in Michigan.



THE MICHELIN 'TWEEL' TIRES WERE DISPLAYED ON THE SEGWAY CONCEPT CENTAUR AT THE 2005 NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN. THE 'TWEEL' OPERATES WITHOUT THE USE OF ANY AIR.

The companies have been granted permission to test vehicles with the Uptis tire / wheel on public roads in South Carolina and are seeking permission from other states as well, including Michigan, California, Georgia and North Carolina. Permission is necessary since Uptis is not yet considered a legal road-going product.

According to Michelin, the airless aspect of the Uptis means drivers of passenger vehicles feel safer on the road, and operators of passenger vehicle fleets will see minimized downtime and improved efficiency. Michelin also pointed out that the technology won't be exclusive to GM products, leaving the possibility that other car makers, both domestic and foreign, could embrace the concept.

The mainstream media picked up the announcement, introducing the concept to the broader consumer base. Chances are, customers have asked you about it in your dealership.

What does this mean for tire dealers? Could this radicalize the industry, as the radial tire did decades ago? Or could it be a niche product, as the Tweel is today?

OUR ADVICE: Don't throw away your tire gauges just yet.

ADVANCED VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY

impacting tire design, abilities

— MILES MOORE, Tire Business

Advanced vehicle technology is coming fast, and it will have a major impact on tire technology as well, according to speakers at the 35th Clemson University Global Tire Industry Conference held recently at Hilton Head, S.C.

Keynote speaker Chris Helsel, chief technology officer at Goodyear, said vehicle technology has undergone radical changes periodically throughout history.

“In the 1950s, automatic transmissions eliminated the clutch,” Helsel said. “That was a big change, but I think you’ll agree it turned out OK.”



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
CHRIS HELSEL, CHIEF
TECHNOLOGY OFFICER
AT GOODYEAR, SAID
VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY
HAS UNDERGONE RADICAL
CHANGES PERIODICALLY
THROUGHOUT HISTORY.

New trends in mobility, with changing consumer habits and original equipment manufacturer expectations, are in turn presenting new challenges to tire manufacturers, according to Helsel.

“We’ve been dealing with change all along,” he said. Goodyear uses the acronym FACE — fleets, autonomous vehicles, connected vehicles and electric vehicles — to describe the forces driving change in mobility.

“Long-established companies are now in danger of not being leaders or even survivors,” Helsel said.

To remain a leader, Goodyear has established cooperative projects with advanced mobility pioneer Tesloop and exhibited non-pneumatic tires on an Olli autonomous shuttle bus at the most recent Geneva Auto Show, Helsel said.

“Synergies will create more disruptions in the next 10 years than in the last 50,” he said.

Jason Barr, team leader for digital twin and software engineering at Bridgestone Americas, said his company, like other tire makers, has to find new ways to bring value to its customers.

“Vehicles are now computers on wheels,” Barr said. “With this comes new apps, new services and new business models.”

Tires of course will remain an important component of a vehicle, but the patterns of use will change with automated vehicles and ride-sharing, according to Barr.

“The cost per mile will go down, largely through increased utilization,” he said. “But vehicle maintenance will remain static as a vehicle expense, because it will be a larger focus.”

With the coming of connected and autonomous vehicles, “reinventing the wheel” has become a necessity, according to Barr.



To remain a leader, Goodyear has established cooperative projects with advanced mobility pioneer Tesloop and exhibited non-pneumatic tires on an Olli autonomous shuttle bus at the most recent Geneva Auto Show

“How a ride feels will go away with AVs,” he said. The emphasis going forward for tires, according to Barr, will be on reducing downtime and having sufficient strength for continuous mobility.

Bridgestone’s Digital Tire Twin concept offers customers a combination of advantages through the capture of data, according to Barr.

“You can capture data, but you have to do something with it,” he said. What the Digital Tire Twin system does with data includes tire usage optimization, predictive and prescriptive maintenance, system performance optimization and uptime maximization.

The Digital Tire Twin system can predict and optimize tire wear life, traction performance and the fuel economy contribution from rolling resistance, Barr said. This makes it particularly useful for fleet management.

Bruce Lambillotte, vice president, technical consulting for Smithers Rapra Inc., said the growth of the global electric vehicle market will have a major impact on tire development.

Smithers released a study in late 2018 on EVs and their influence on tire technology that focused on battery-electric vehicles, which run exclusively on onboard batteries, Lambillotte said.

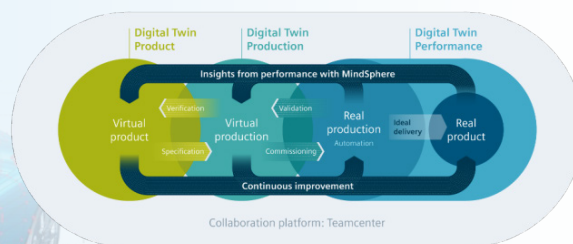
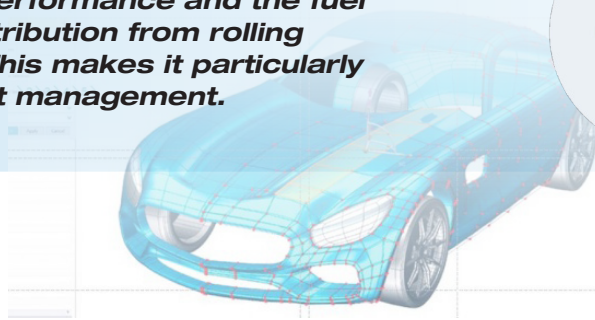
China is the world’s largest market for EVs, and “BEVs and hybrids are

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Bridgestone’s Digital Tire Twin system can predict and optimize tire wear life, traction performance and the fuel economy contribution from rolling resistance... This makes it particularly useful for fleet management.



the only EVs in their market,” he said.

The EV market is growing rapidly throughout the world, though starting from extremely small preliminary numbers, Lambillotte said.

Despite a high compound annual growth rate, the EV market will be limited through 2028, except in China, he said.

“EVs are starting to get over the hump of having enough charging stations, especially in China and to a lesser extent in Europe,” he said.

Reducing urban pollution and dependence on imported oil is spurring EV growth in China, Lambillotte said.

Electrics accounted for more than 30 percent of new bus sales in China in 2016, and more than 3 million low-speed, two-passenger EVs are on the roads in China now, he said.

Low rolling resistance for fuel efficiency and increased service range are crucial for EV tires, as are noise and vibration reduction, good traction, wear resistance and load carrying capacity, Lambillotte said.

“If you think we have a proliferation of sizes now, just wait,” he said. “EV tires don’t need to be radial or steel-reinforced, or offer ride comfort. The two important things are cost and durability.”

BRIDGESTONE INTRODUCES FUEL-EFFICIENT ECOPIA TRUCK TRAILER TIRE

— TIRE BUSINESS



Bridgestone Ecopia tires are designed with features that reduce fuel consumption, and they are engineered to be fit for retreading later on, making them a smart, sustainable business choice for fleets on a number of levels.

Bridgestone Americas Inc. has introduced the Bridgestone R123 Ecopia tire, a SmartWay-verified trailer tire engineered for low rolling resistance and extended wear in long-haul and regional service applications.

The low-rolling-resistance design enables the Bridgestone R123 Ecopia tire to deliver nearly \$400 in fuel savings over 100,000 miles when compared with the Bridgestone Ecopia R197 tire (based on R123 tires in all eight trailer tire positions, \$3/gallon fuel cost and 80,000 lbs. total vehicle weight), the company said.

“Bridgestone Ecopia tires are designed with features that reduce fuel consumption, and they are engineered to be fit for retreading later on, making them a smart, sustainable business choice for fleets on a number of levels,” said Kyle Chen, brand manager, truck and bus radial tires, U.S. and Canada, Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations. “Fuel-efficient tires that also deliver big on performance are a demonstration of our dedication to help lower the total cost of tire ownership and drive efficient mobility for all fleets.”

The Bridgestone R123 Ecopia tire features an IntelliShape sidewall, designed to reduce the overall tire weight and minimize rolling resistance, and patented NanoPro-Tech polymer technology to limit energy loss and help improve fuel economy.

Other features include:

- **A fuel-efficient tread design to lower rolling resistance and improve fuel economy;**

- **A tread pattern designed to increase traction and grip on wet roads, as well as absorption of tread edge stress to promote long, even wear;**
- **An optimized tread volume for long removal mileage; and**
- **A specialized defense groove structure to help establish even pressure at the tire shoulder and minimize tread edge wear.**

The R123 can be retreaded with Bandag FuelTech retreads to capitalize on tire performance potential, drive down fuel costs and make mobility more efficient for fleets, Bridgestone said.

Ohio's Unsafe Used Tire Law Now in Effect



— TIRE REVIEW

A new law that prevents the installation of unsafe used tires took effect this month in Ohio.

According to the Tire Industry Association (TIA), the new law, which was endorsed by U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association (USTMA) and the Ohio Tire and Automotive Association, adds an additional layer of consumer protections by penalizing retailers that knowingly install unsafe used tires. Ohio law already allows law enforcement to ticket motorists who drive on tires exhibiting specific unsafe conditions.

The enactment of this law makes Ohio the third state to prohibit the installation of unsafe used tires with specific criteria, including tires with:

- **Less than 2/32-in. tread depth**
- **Damage exposing the reinforcing plies of the tire, including cuts, cracks, punctures or scrapes**

- **Damage not repaired to industry standards**
- **Damage to the inner liner or indication of internal separation, such as bulges or local areas of irregular tread wear indicating possible tread or belt separation.**

According to the TIA, maintaining proper tire pressure, periodically rotating and balancing tires according to the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations (typically every 5,000-7,500 miles) and regularly inspecting tires can help prevent irregular and premature tire wear and keep consumer safe, especially during the summer travel season.

BMW GOING ALL IN ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES

— MARK VAUGHN, Autoweek



BMW electric vehicles, the Vision DC Roadster and the Vision M Next at #NEXTGen 2019

BMW A.G. has moved up the timetable for a previously announced electrification plan by two years, according to company officials at the car maker's #NEXTGen 2019 gathering in Munich, who said BMW will have 25 electrified vehicles on the market by 2023 instead of 2025.

Starting with the 2020-model iX3, BMW will launch an onslaught of electric and plug-in hybrid cars, crossovers and motorcycles unprecedented in company history.

The list of coming EVs and PHEVs will include 12 hybrids and 13 pure battery electric cars, the company announced at its #NEXTGen 2019 technopalooza press event in Munich recently. Exactly how many of those will make it to the U.S. market was not part of the announcement.

"We are moving up a gear in the transformation toward sustainable mobility, thereby making our company fit for the future," said Harald Krueger, chairman of the board of management of BMW.

"Over the past two years, we have consistently taken numerous decisions that we are now bringing to the roads. By 2021, we will have doubled our sales of electrified vehicles compared with 2019. We will offer 25 electrified vehicles already in 2023—two years earlier than originally planned. We expect to see a steep growth curve towards 2025: Sales of our electrified vehicles should increase by an average of 30 percent every year."

The plan is to use new architectures for cars and crossovers that can accept battery electrics, plug-in hybrid electrics and traditional gasoline or even diesel powertrains. The electric powertrain hinges on a new electric drive unit, officially labeled at #NEXTGen 2019 as the "Highly Integrated Electric Powertrain Unit of the Fifth Generation." Not exactly a marketing-friendly phrase.

Development of The Unit, as we'll call it, benefited greatly from BMW's participation in Formula E racing, according to engineers present at the

The company plans to have more than half a million EVs and PHEVs on the road worldwide by year-end. Within two years, it will offer five fully electric vehicles: the i3, which is already in production; the Mini EV, which will start production later this year; the iX3 produced in China in 2020; the iNEXT; and the i4, the latter two also in 2021.

show. Compared with the electric motor in the i3, for instance, the Formula E motor is half the weight, one-third the size and puts out twice the power. Thus, the Fifth-Gen Power Unit displayed at the show looked about the size of a large microwave oven and included the motor, gearbox and powertrain electronics in that space, all engineered without the use of rare-earth metals. Output was listed at 730 hp.

On the stand with the powertrain unit display was a BMW 5-Series that had two independently operating

motors in back, one for each rear wheel, and one motor up front. BMW claims that setup would be good for 0-62 mph in 2.8 seconds.

"The independent rear motors allow for some very dynamic driving," said one of the engineers present.

BMW also revealed two electrified concepts at #NEXTGen 2019—the Vision M Next hybrid sports car and the all-electric Motorrad Vision DC Roadster motorcycle. A camouflaged Mini Electric was briefly driven past an audience of journalists, too. An i4 all-electric sedan and iNext crossover are both due in 2021.

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BMW reminded attendees at #NEXTGen 2019 that it currently produces plug-in hybrid versions of several of its vehicles.



Tire industry should embrace

DISRUPTION, INNOVATION

— MILES MOORE, Tire Business

Disruption is now almost a daily event in the tire industry, according to Dave Zielasko, publisher of Tire Business. But disruption is good for business as long as you're prepared to face it, Mr. Zielasko said in his presentation at the 35th Clemson University Global Tire Industry Conference, held April 10-12, 2019 in Hilton Head Island.

INNOVATION

DISRUPTION



“Disruption can be an opportunity,” he said. “You need to embrace innovation and the turbulence that comes with it.”

Part of the opportunity comes from not being afraid to work with your competitors, according to Mr. Zielasko. In the past year, Goodyear and Bridgestone Americas formed TireHub from their company-owned wholesale operations, while Michelin North America and Sumitomo Corp. of America / TBC Corp. merged their wholesale operations to create National Tire Wholesale.

This didn't just mean the coming-together of two major wholesale operations to ensure the availability of tires, he said.

“Because of disruption, there was a real opportunity for regional wholesalers to gain additional business.”

There was also disruption caused by changing consumer vehicle preferences and resulting shifts in car manufacturers' product mixes.

In 2018, light truck sales in the U.S. rose 7.7 percent to just shy of

12 million units, a level passenger car sales never achieved, he said. Simultaneously, car sales fell 12 percent to 5.4 million units, the lowest since 1958.

Anticipating this change, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles shifted its focus to its Jeep and Ram models, and Ford Motor Co. announced it would stop selling sedans in North America. General Motors Co. phased out six models — including the Cruze, Volt and Impala — and closed five plants.

For tire dealers, however, these changes mean the opportunity to sell higher-value tires, Mr. Zielasko said, although it also means doing analytic work in local selling and servicing statistics to understand the potential.

Understanding the electric vehicle market is also critical to success down the road. In 2018 alone, EV sales nearly tripled over 2017, he said.

“It took five years to sell the first million electric vehicles, but it took just six months to sell the last million,” he said.

Over the next five years, auto makers will introduce 158 new battery-powered vehicles, Mr. Zielasko said, citing data from Paul Eichenberg Strategic Consulting.

“Tire dealers will have to know how to service these vehicles,” he said, “which otherwise will go to franchised dealers — which also are in the tire business.”

“You have to promote that you're in this (EV / hybrid) business,” he said.

Tire retailers and distributors have been dealing for some time with disruptions such as the soaring

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.”

**— Henry Ford,
Founder of Ford Motors**





Online tire sales are vitally important, Mr. Zielasko said. Yet the research firm Treadhunter Inc., surveying more than 20,000 independent tire dealerships, found that 90 percent had inadequate e-commerce websites and 30 percent had no websites at all, he said.



“Baby Boomers prefer face-to-face communication, while Millennials prefer communicating online. A dealership’s communications need to cater to both.” Convenience matters, and smart dealers will make it as easy as possible for customers to do business with them, according to Mr. Zielasko.

number of SKUs, the proliferation of online tire sales and the imposition of tariffs and duties on imported tires, according to Mr. Zielasko.

He quoted the U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association (USTMA) as saying that commercial tire imports are forecast to decline 6.8 percent this year, largely due to the anticipated drop in tire imports from China because of the tariffs.

Online tire sales are vitally important, Mr. Zielasko said. Yet the research firm Treadhunter Inc., surveying more than 20,000 independent tire dealerships, found that 90 percent had inadequate e-commerce websites and 30 percent had no websites at all, he said.

“All of it is a different way of communicating with customers,” he said.

“Today, there are two major types of retail customers: Millennials and Baby Boomers. Each communicates differently,” he said.

“Baby Boomers prefer face-to-face communication, while Millennials

prefer communicating online. A dealership’s communications need to cater to both.”

Convenience matters, and smart dealers will make it as easy as possible for customers to do business with them, according to Mr. Zielasko.

Goodyear’s “Roll by” concept, which it is testing in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, is a current example of putting customer convenience first, he said.

Aimed at time-starved customers, the Roll-by stores are placed in upscale areas of a city, according to Mr. Zielasko. Customers purchase tires via iPad in the store and then arrange to have the tires installed while they shop, via valet or mobile service at no extra charge, he said.

Dozens of independent tire dealers nationwide are also providing mobile service, according to Mr. Zielasko. “If the customer wants it, that’s what they’re going to demand,” he said.

Goodyear’s “Roll by” concept, which it is testing in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, is a current example of putting customer convenience first, he said.



Throughout their history, independent tire dealers have been resilient, and their market share has remained remarkably steady, according to Mr. Zielasko. He noted that their share of the replacement passenger tire market was 68 percent in 2018, compared with 67 percent in 2008 and 64 percent in 1995.

“In a 24-year period, they have actually gained market share,” he said. “Never forget: tire dealers continue to reign supreme in tire retailing.”

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SOME CLEAN ADVICE for aluminum wheels

— PEGGY FISHER, Tire Business

The transportation industry is certainly in a state of transition. Trucks, buses, tractors and trailers are all being designed for improved fuel economy, automation and range.

As a result, tires are being designed specifically for the types of operations and vehicles they are destined for as well as improved fuel economy, and wheels are produced with fuel economy, loads-carrying capacity, maintenance and appearance in mind.

Since the push for greater fuel economy is one of the main forces driving the trucking industry, commercial fleets have been transitioning to aluminum wheels because they are lighter (about 1,200 pounds on an 18-wheeler) than steel wheels.

Lighter vehicles improve rolling resistance and reduce fuel consumption. Since the 1980s when freight carriers first started using aluminum wheels, their adoption has grown. By 2000, aluminum wheels accounted for 50 percent of the market.

Today, their share has grown to about 65 percent. This growth will continue as electric vehicles — which require lighter components in order to increase their range on a single charge — and diesel- and other alternate fuel-powered vehicles strive for better fuel economy.

Since aluminum wheels also improve the aesthetics of vehicles and help make them look shiny and bright, they are a factor that attracts and retains drivers in an industry suffering from a driver shortage.

So in all likelihood, you are going to have a growing customer base looking for help in making these wheels look good.

Aluminum wheels do require maintenance. They oxidize, experience rim flange wear and can be damaged by heat from dragging brakes, frozen bearings and from running on flat tires.

Their shiny surfaces can become dull due to road dirt and other contaminants, and they must be polished frequently to keep them glistening. Since their appearance is a big attraction for many truck operators but constant maintenance is not, aluminum wheel manufacturers have developed coatings for these wheels that eliminate the need to polish them.

These wheels never should be polished since that will effectively

Since aluminum wheels also improve the aesthetics of vehicles and help make them look shiny and bright, they are a factor that attracts and retains drivers in an industry suffering from a driver shortage.

remove the coating. Therefore, it is important to first know the difference between a polished aluminum wheel and a coated aluminum wheel, and second, the procedures for properly cleaning them.

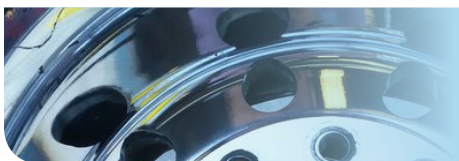
The first thing to do is locate the manufacturer identifying marks on the wheel. If these marks are not legible, the wheel should be removed from service since they are required by Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 120 to be on all wheels operating on U.S. roads. These marks are usually found on or near the DOT stamp on the wheel.

If these nomenclatures are not found, the wheel is a polished wheel. Then inspect the wheel thoroughly for any damage or out-of-service conditions.

Some aluminum wheels come with a heat sticker installed on them. If the heat sticker indicates the wheel has experienced excessive heat or the wheel shows other signs such as discoloration, charring, cracking, brittle or distorted areas in the bead seat area, the wheel should be placed out of service.

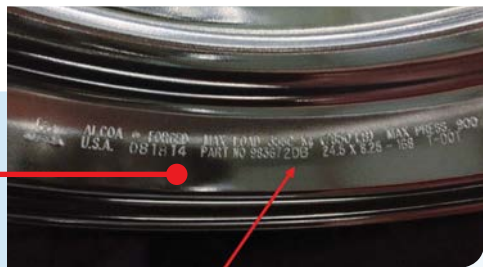
If the tire is removed from the wheel, check the rim flange area for wear with a rim flange wear gauge. Any wheel that is rejected should be marked and tagged unserviceable and scrapped.

Next, no matter what type of aluminum wheel you are working with, it



Aluminum wheels do require maintenance. They oxidize, experience rim flange wear and can be damaged by heat from dragging brakes, frozen bearings and from running on flat tires.

SOME CLEAN ADVICE for aluminum wheels



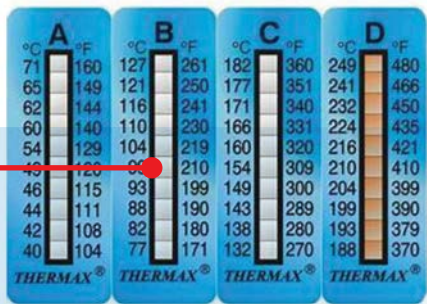
ALCOA WHEEL WITH DB INDICATED

Arconic Inc. (formerly Alcoa Inc.) applies a Dura-Bright decal on coated rims and puts its wheel part number followed by DB (for Dura-Bright) to indicate the wheel is coated.



ACCURIDE WHEEL WITH SPC INDICATED

Accuride Corp.'s coating is called Accu-Shield. Wheels with this coating are identified by Accu-Shield decals on the rims and the stamped manufacturer information that is followed by SPC (Standard Polish and Coating) or XPC (Extra Polish and Coating) in a triangular shield pattern.



AFTERMARKET WHEEL HEAT INDICATORS

Some aluminum wheels come with a heat sticker installed on them.



BOLT HOLE WASHOUT

Check the wheel's non-polished side to see if bolt holes or hand holes are washed out or wallowed out.

needs to be cool to the touch (95° F / 35°C) before you do a pre-wash. So let the wheels sit and cool off if they are on a vehicle that just drove in to your shop.

Then rinse the wheels with a hose or a pressure washer to spray the surface of the wheels and around the stud holes. If the tire is still mounted on the wheel, exercise caution when using a pressure washer to prevent tire damage with an excessively strong stream of water.

Pre-washing polished aluminum wheels

After a wheel has been rinsed off and the big chunks of loose dirt and debris have been removed, use one of the many aluminum wheel cleaners on the market that loosen dirt, grease, grime and brake dust that has collected on the wheels.

Do not use strong detergents, alkaline or acidic cleaners to clean an aluminum wheel. These solutions can etch the surface of the aluminum and leave dull areas. Prior to applying cleaning chemicals verify the wheel is at ambient temperature.

Apply cleaner over the surface of the wheels, inside the hand holes and around the stud holes. Agitate the cleaner with a soft-bristle brush (not a wire brush) periodically while applying water. Scrub the surface of the wheels inside the hand holes and stud holes.

If the tire is removed, scrub the wheel drop center with all-purpose cleaner and a stiff-bristle brush. Then rinse the wheels with a hose or a pressure washer. Repeat this process if necessary.

Failure to perform this cleaning step may have a negative effect on polishing performance and the wheel's final appearance since rubbing debris against the surface of the wheel can scratch the wheel.

Polishing non-coated aluminum wheels

There are several ways that aluminum wheels can be polished.

THE FIRST IS BY HAND

After the wheel has been pre-washed and has dried, use a non-abrasive aluminum polish on the wheel. This can be applied by hand and requires a lot of rubbing with a soft, clean, microfiber towel.

Be sure to follow the instructions on the polish. Most should not be

Like the trucking industry, the truck wheel industry is also transitioning. Aluminum wheel polishing and cleaning eventually will eclipse steel wheel refurbishing as aluminum wheels continue to take over the market.

Use this opportunity to offer polishing and cleaning services to your commercial fleet customers that will provide a new revenue stream for your business if you haven't already done so.



allowed to dry on the wheel. To prevent the polish from drying, polish one section of the wheel at a time. It can take 20 to 30 minutes to polish one wheel this way.

THE SECOND IS USING POWER TOOLS

After the wheel has been pre-washed, use a non-abrasive aluminum polish on the wheel and a soft bristled wheel pad to polish the wheel. This cuts polishing time in half.

There is also a portable wheel-polishing machine available on the market that you can roll right up to the truck and have the machine polish the wheel which takes about 15 minutes. It polishes the wheel but does not remove any oxidation on it.

THE THIRD IS TO MACHINE-POLISH ALUMINUM WHEELS

If you already are refinishing steel wheels in your retread plant or service facility, you may want to consider getting a robotic, aluminum wheel-polishing cell as well if you haven't done so already.

Tires do not have to be demounted before putting wheels into these machines. But if they are, aluminum wheels are completely refurbished and restored. Oxidation is sanded off and the wheels are buffed to a shiny finish in 30-60 minutes. There is very little operator involvement required.

During high-speed polishing, wheels can experience bolt-hole washout. This condition can be seen on the polished side of the wheel.

Check the wheel's non-polished side to see if bolt holes or hand holes are washed out or wallowed out. This condition is not an out-of-service condition that requires the wheel to be removed from service, but it isn't pretty.

Accuride recommends that once wheels are polished, carnauba wax be used to protect the polished wheel surfaces, help prevent corrosion and pitting caused by natural environmental contamination and to make future cleaning and polishing easier.

Otherwise it warns the polished surface will be susceptible to water spotting and / or pitting from environmental contaminants. If you do apply carnauba wax, use a clean, dry, cotton cloth to remove any excess wax.

Cleaning protective coated aluminum wheels

While aluminum wheels with protective coatings are not to be polished, it may still be necessary to clean them in order to restore their shine.

To clean coated wheels after they have cooled to the touch (95° F), use a hose or a power washer to rinse them thoroughly to remove as much loose, visible dirt, sand and other debris as possible. This helps prevent scratching and abrasion during the cleaning process.

Once again, if the tire is still mounted on the wheel, exercise caution when using a pressure washer to prevent tire damage with an excessively strong stream of water.

Then generously apply a mild detergent such as automotive car wash soap or common dish detergent to the wheel surface with either a spray applicator, a 100-percent cotton cloth or a clean soft bristled brush or sponge.

To prevent etching or staining of aluminum due to the use of improper cleaning solution, use only a non-corrosive, aluminum-appropriate, clear coat, safe cleaning solution. Never use cleaning products containing hydrofluoric acid or abrasive tools and scouring pads (such as 3M Scotch-Brite) since they will remove the protective coating. Do not allow the soap to dry on the surface of the wheel.

Finally, rinse the wheel thoroughly with clean water to remove all remaining soap and dirt. If you want to dry the wheel, be sure to use a soft, clean cloth.

Do not use polishes or wax on coated aluminum wheels. Their finishes will maintain a bright and shiny surface for many years without the need for special polishes.

After polishing or cleaning any aluminum wheel, inspect the DOT stamp again to ensure it is legible. If the heat sticker is removed from the wheel, you can replace it with aftermarket heat indicators that turn colours when wheel temperatures rise above 250 degrees.

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Michelin explains: grip on wet surfaces

The eternal struggle between tire and water.

The tire's grip on wet surfaces is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that involves two mechanisms: grip and hydroplaning.

First grip. The rubber's contact with the road enables grip, even on wet roads.

Grip on a wet road is generated by the micro-slide between the rubber and the road. With its viscoelastic properties, the rubber will change its shape on the road's bumps and generate forces that enable a vehicle to brake, accelerate or take a corner, even when the road is wet and covered by a thin layer of water. When the road is dry, another mechanism, adhesion, increases grip. Molecular connections exist between the rubber and the road, generating more force. Water's first effect is to prevent adhesion and reduce available grip.

Secondly, hydroplaning can occur when a vehicle drives too fast on a wet surface.

The hydroplaning phenomenon is well known, particularly in sports like water skiing. This phenomenon occurs when, beyond a certain critical speed, the water pressure is enough for the skier to glide over its surface.

Water exerts the same lift force on the tire and therefore progressively reduces the contact area between the tire and the road.

Hydroplaning is often considered to be a binary process. That's not true! Hydroplaning is a progressive phenomenon that, depending on the level of the water and the speed, gradually reduces the tire area in contact with the road. Often, hydroplaning does not occur on wet roads or only in low proportions.

The main factors that influence grip on wet roads are the road itself, the quality of the tire, weather conditions and speed. The road helps evacuate the water and thanks to the presence of micro rough patches, it helps the tire stick to the road through grip. When it rains, a worn road will therefore be more slippery than a new road.

The tire's architecture and tread design also play a major role in evacuating the water between the tire and the road, offering the tire the



best possible contact area with the road. The materials and tread making up this contact area enable the tire to stick to the road and generate grip.

Should we be worried about hydroplaning?

Based on VUFO* data, hydroplaning causes very few accidents (but quite a lot of concern!). Only 0.6% of wet road accidents are caused by hydroplaning. The two main scenarios to remember are the following:

When the road's surface is wet, there is no hydroplaning whatever the speed, even if the grip decreases compared to a dry road.

On a wet road (water level > 0 mm), hydroplaning occurs and its percentage increases with the speed of the vehicle and the water level. In situations with high water levels on the roads, most drivers adapt their speed. The most unfavorable conditions for hydroplaning are:

- **High water level (1 mm and above)**
- **High speed**
- **Low tire pressure**
- **Worn tires**

A design choice

For tires to perform well on wet surfaces, they must be able to generate a maximum amount of grip and evacuate a maximum amount of water to get the largest contact area possible with the road.

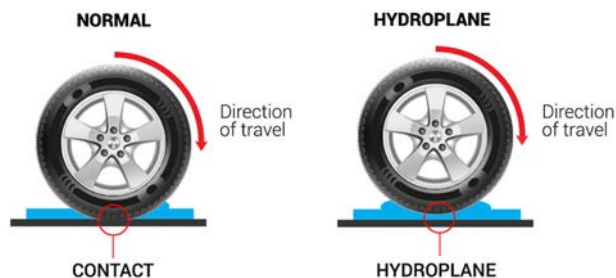
Tire performance results from the manufacturer's design choices particularly for materials, tread and the shape of the contact area. The main technical challenge is to design a tire that guarantees a high level of performance, particularly in wet conditions, throughout its service life.

How can I prevent or reduce hydroplaning?

Start by checking the condition and pressure of your tires. Low tire pressure greatly increases the risk of hydroplaning. If your tire pressure is 30% below the recommended pressure, there is a real increase in the risk of hydroplaning. Finally, always adapt your speed to the weather and road conditions.

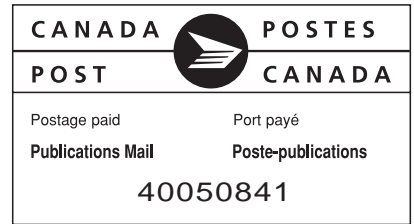
*Since 1999 VUFO has been collecting accident data as part of the GIDAS project. Accidents involving personal injury are investigated and thoroughly documented, with average 3,400 individual items of data being recorded. The data are collected by four-strong teams consisting of two technicians, one physician and a coordinator. This ensures that all relevant data are included, from the conditions prevailing at the scene to the equipment of and damage to the vehicles. The teams collect additional data by questioning those involved and by conducting a detailed survey of the accident scene.

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