

THE TRACKER

THE PUBLICATION FOR TIRE PROFESSIONALS
FROM WESTERN CANADA TIRE DEALERS



WELL GROUNDED

Old Tires Resurface

PLUS

Training updates • Scholarship last call • Charity golf success •
OK teams with Touchette • The Blimp endures • EV + ICE brake check

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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)...

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**WCTD
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

COMPANY NAME											
ADDRESS											
CITY											
PROV	POSTAL CODE										
PHONE	FAX										
EMAIL											
CATEGORY OF MEMBERSHIP (SEE BELOW)											
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>VOTING MEMBER</td> <td>ASSOCIATE MEMBER, NON-VOTING</td> </tr> <tr> <td>a. Independent Tire Dealer</td> <td>1. Jobber or Distributor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Retreader</td> <td>2. Manufacturer</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>3. Exporter or Mfg. Rep.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>4. Dealer Support Services</td> </tr> </table>		VOTING MEMBER	ASSOCIATE MEMBER, NON-VOTING	a. Independent Tire Dealer	1. Jobber or Distributor	b. Retreader	2. Manufacturer		3. Exporter or Mfg. Rep.		4. Dealer Support Services
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AUTHORIZED BY (PLEASE PRINT)											

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

PLEASE FORWARD TO:

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EDITOR, THE TRACKER

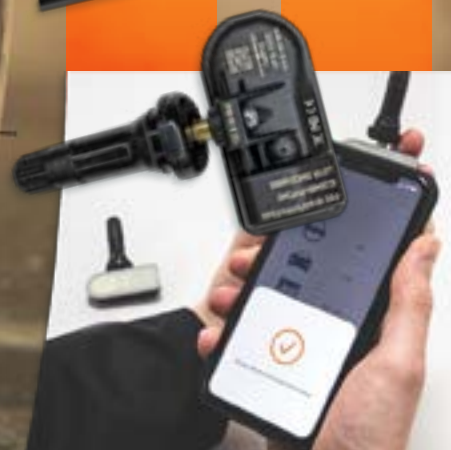
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THE TIRE COMES FULL CIRCLE

SINCE DAY ONE, whenever possible, The Tracker has featured a cover highlighting a specific industry, usually connected in one way or another to our related businesses. This edition shows a Steveston, BC, playground that does precisely this, in that its surfaces are made from recycled scrap tire crumb rubber. The tires that WCTD members sell and service on a daily basis are the very same tires that, once they wear out and are replaced, get picked up and recycled.

Multiple recycling companies in Western Canada perform an excellent job in working to help protect the environment by picking up what we call 'junk tires.' Once collected, they're processed through various methods to be turned into saleable products of every conceivable nature—in this case a shock absorbent surface that's become a crucial playground ingredient. What better end use for those 'junk tires' than have them become such a special safety feature playgrounds enjoyed by our kids and grandkids?

Many, if not most, of those playground installations come about thanks to the involvement of Tire Stewardship British Columbia (TSBC), whose Community Project Grants have been instrumental in funding some 360 projects in 96 communities throughout the province—to the tune of over \$6.5 million so far. The program assists municipalities, registered non-profit community groups or organizations, schools and First Nations and Métis settlements. It aids in building or upgrading their facilities, using recycled tire products. It's all such an important part of working with tires from start to finish, that last phase which we call 'end of life.'

VITAL ROLES

I could talk for hours about the multiple procedures and all the different products produced through these various recycling initiatives and processes because—I'm delighted to say—as well as being president of WCTD I also serve on the board of TSBC. Both organizations are such an important part of the tire industry for so many reasons, from safety and protecting the environment to (in the case of TSBC) creating more jobs in our communities—to mention just a few.

All of those great ideas, even today's all-encompassing recycling programs, originated from relatively humble beginnings, which almost brings me to my next topic. However, before that, it's well worth remembering that it was none other

than the late Don Blythe (former OK Tire President and WCTD Executive Director) who was instrumental in establishing not only BC's tire recycling program (the first on the continent, 30 years ago) but also several others in Canada.

A VISION PAYS OFF

As I write, it's just past the August long weekend. Years ago, a good friend of mine started out on this incredible journey. He had a vision of creating an outdoor concert area where he would invite singers to perform on stage, over a weekend. He originally rented or leased suitable properties to allow him to organize his shows. As the years passed, after a lot of hard work, he was able to find a large acreage that he was eventually able to get rezoned.

In time he moved his concerts from the leased property to the beautiful land he now owns, known as Lake Town, just outside of Lake Cowichan, BC. For



quite some time on the August long weekend he's presented the Sunfest Country Music Festival, a major event that's now world renowned. In fact it's done so well that this year saw Nickelback performing for some 16,000 people! It's all quite incredible, especially when you consider the economic spinoff to all the nearby communities. An amazing story all round.

I'm so proud to have a friend who really has that 'never give up' attitude. We can all learn from others these very important examples that inspire us to always work hard in our own businesses—and, of course, in life as well.

I hope you are enjoying all that late summer has to offer.

Sincerely,

Tim Hollett
President WCTD



Tim Hollett
President, WCTD

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RAY'S REFLECTIONS

THE SUMMER HOLIDAY season is upon us. It's the perfect time, when family and friends get together to enjoy the warm summer days. Let's make sure we all take a little down-time as the busy fall season will be upon us soon.

With what's happening with the US, local travel is on the increase—which is good news for our dealers. More Canadian travel means more money spent locally. Let's make sure we take care of these holiday travellers.

On a personal note, the families from both my and my wife's side have been traveling throughout western Canada every summer. This travel has not been without its challenges, from flat tires and worn-out bearings to overheating and air-conditioning issues, etc. These could well have been very stressful.

Yet, on the bright side, no matter where these breakdowns occur there is always a WCTD member in the area ready and able to look after them. I have plenty of positive feedback from people telling me how Kal Tire, Tirecraft, Integra Tire, OK Tire and other independents looked after them positively and professionally to have them soon on their way again, making their holiday time great.

TRAINING

Critical to the success of your business, good training is vital to keeping your staff safe and technically current. We are very focused in the process of expanding our TIA Training and are now able to offer TIA Earthmover Tire Service Training.

Also, we will be expanding, offering more courses in our Commercial Tire Service Level 300 and Automotive Tire Service Level 300 training. Please refer to the tentative schedule on page 9. Depending on the number of dealers committing to participate we can expand this program even further.

SCHOLARSHIP TIME

WCTD is again giving out four \$2,000.00 scholarships. This scholarship is available to all members owners, managers, and their staff's youth. The application deadline is Aug 24th, 2025. You can find all the scholarship information requirements on page 13, as well as on our website under 'Member Benefits.' Again, if you are having difficulty finding the information please give me a call.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

We held the WCTD golf tournament again this year; as before, it was a great success, raising a substantial amount of money. We will be donating \$5,000.00 to Ronald McDonald House with the remainder going towards the WCTD scholarship program. Find more information on this highly successful annual event on pages 16 and 17 of this issue.



Ray Geleta
Executive Director,
WCTD

MONERIS AGREEMENT

WCTD has a truly excellent agreement with Moneris, with rates more than competitive within our industry. If you are not signed up for the Moneris program you may want to contact them and at least make a comparison to your current provider. When talking to Moneris you will need to know the WCTD reference number—which you will find in the wctd.ca member's benefits section. If you need any additional information or can't find the reference number, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you all for your support...

And have a great summer holiday season!

Ray Geleta - WCTD Executive Director
rayg@wctd.ca

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TIRE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION TRAINING UPDATE

WESTERN CANADA TIRE DEALERS will be offering the below Tire Industry Association training sessions for the remainder of 2025 and during 2026.

EARTHMOVER TIRE SERVICE INSTALLER TRAINING.

WCTD now has a trainer available to teach and train the TIA Earthmover Tire Service Installer program. We are currently looking to put this training program on in mid to late September in both Kamloops and Edmonton if we can get enough participants. More information with dates locations and costs will be posted on our website after August 1st. If you are interested in sending someone to this Earthmover Tire Service training, please contact

Ray Geleta 780-554-9259 / rayg@wctd.ca

Rob Labossiere 587-341-5655 / robl@wctd.ca

COMMERCIAL TIRE SERVICE LEVEL 300 TRAINING.

Below are the tentative dates and locations for the TIA Commercial Tire service Level 300 training.

January 13/14/15 / Victoria BC and Brandon MB

January 20/21/22 / Vancouver BC and Regina SK

February 2/ 3/ 4 / Vernon BC

February 9/10/11 / Calgary AB

February 16/17/18 / Edmonton AB

March 10/11/12 / Grande Prairie AB

AUTOMOTIVE TIRE SERVICE LEVEL 300 TRAINING.

Below are the tentative dates and locations for the TIA Automotive Tire service Level 300 training.

February 4/5/6 / Vernon BC

February 11/12/12 / Calgary AB

February 18/19/20 / Edmonton AB

Again, If you are interested in sending someone to this Earthmover Tire Service training, please contact

Ray Geleta 780-554-9259 / rayg@wctd.ca

Rob Labossiere 587-341-5655 / robl@wctd.ca

Tribute SIDNEY "SID" ALBERT HINTON, 1949 - 2025

- COURTESY OF ARMA

The Board and staff of Alberta Recycling Management Authority (ARMA) are deeply saddened by the passing of Sidney "Sid" Albert Hinton on June 21, 2025, near Vermilion, Alberta, at the age of 76.

Sid joined ARMA in January 1999 as a Board Member and was appointed Board Chair in 2001. Over more than 14 years of dedicated service, he helped lead the organization through a time of significant transformation and growth. Under his guidance, ARMA expanded beyond tire recycling to include electronics recycling in 2004 and paint recycling in 2008—two important milestones that continue to benefit the province of Alberta.

Sid was more than a leader; he was a cornerstone of ARMA's evolution. He played a vital role in shaping the organization's direction, always bringing with him a strong sense of fairness, vision, responsibility, and unwavering common sense. His steady guidance was evident in every major challenge, decision, and success.

Sid's legacy is woven into the fabric of ARMA and the broader recycling landscape in Alberta. His commitment to environmental stewardship and public service leaves a lasting impact that will be remembered for years to come.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Sid's family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Sid is survived by his wife of 55 years Julie Hinton; sons Chanse (Kim) Hinton and TJ (Colleen) Hinton; grandchildren Chelsea (Wyatt Brodie), Sydney, Ashlyn, and Trace; sister Shirley (Bob Cheyne) Pedersen; siblings in law Robert (Mona) Hart and Diane Hart; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

2,925 BC RECYCLED TIRES USED TO REVITALIZE STEVESTON PARK PLAYGROUND SURFACE



Reflecting Steveston history (City of Richmond photo)



Kids playing on poured rubber surface (TSBC photo)

– BY TIRE STEWARDSHIP BC

THE CITY OF Richmond has officially opened the renewed Steveston Park Playground. As a recipient of the 2024 TSBC Community Grant Program, the playground renewal project showcases the power of imaginative play, inclusivity, and accessibility. Enhanced by the innovative use of BC recycled car tires for its surfacing, the new playground offers improved durability. It also helps reduce injuries, supports local industries, and is made from locally recycled materials. Additionally, the surface is water-permeable and low-maintenance.

Located in the heart of historic Steveston Village the new playground replaces aging infrastructure originally built in 2003. Much of the original equipment had exceeded its life expectancy and no longer met today's safety or accessibility standards.

A SURFACE BUILT WITH BC RECYCLED TIRES

At the core of the playground's revitalization is the innovative use of **2,925 BC recycled car tires**. These tires collected in BC were processed into durable, **pour-in-place rubber surfacing**. This soft, slip-resistant surface plays a crucial role in ensuring child safety. It also offers exciting new thematic design features such as colourful salmon-shaped mounds, vibrant gradients, and playable rubber stairs.

Tire recycling in BC is made possible through a strong network of participants and partners. One standout example is our partnership with Ocean Legacy Foundation, which operates a recycling facility in Richmond. This collaboration helps divert discarded tires from oceans and waterways. As a result, they are responsibly recycled and transformed into useful products, such as durable rubber surfacing. Beyond tires, Ocean Legacy's cleanup efforts have removed over 3 million pounds of plastic waste from local environments and have helped create 1,200 jobs to date. At their recycling facility, they transform recycled plastics, such as fishing nets and other ocean debris, into innovative new products.

The rubber surfacing is strategically complemented by other materials such as wood fibre and play sand, providing functionality across different play zones. The combination of textures supports sensory development and a richer play experience for children of all ages.

A PLAYGROUND WITH PURPOSE

The reimagined Steveston Park Playground is far more than a play space. Situated prominently at the intersection of No. 1 Road and Moncton Street, it serves as the only city-owned playground within an 800+ metre radius. Thanks to its visibility and centrality, it serves as a gathering place for families, tourists, and residents alike.



Myriad play areas (City of Richmond photo)



Ocean Legacy Richmond recycling plant (TSBC photo)

The new layout features custom signature structures, including a lighthouse and a shipwreck, paying homage to Steveston's maritime roots. Enhanced pathways, boardwalks, and seating areas provide comfort and **accessibility for all visitors**. Because of this, the park is as enjoyable for caregivers as it is for energetic kids.

Inclusivity was a driving force behind the redesign. With early and continuous input from the Richmond Centre for Disability and the Rick Hansen Foundation, the playground was developed to meet diverse needs and mobility levels. The result is a space where children of all abilities can play side by side, supported by thoughtful design elements that prioritize accessibility, inclusivity, and safety.

FUTURE OF PLAY

Steveston Park has long been a community anchor. It hosts civic institutions such as the Steveston Public Library, Community Centre, and Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. It's located within walking distance of several elementary schools, including Gilmore, Westwind, and Homma, making it an essential amenity for hundreds of families.

Importantly, the park plays a key role in major public events, including the annual Canada Day in Steveston celebrations. With attractions like the Salmon Festival and Parade drawing more than 80,000 attendees, the newly revitalized playground will now serve as a stunning and functional centrepiece for these community traditions.

For more information on TSBC Community Grant Program and how recycled tires are transforming communities across BC, visit [TSBC.CA](https://tsbc.ca)

4 INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS MADE IN BC FROM RECYCLED TIRE RUBBER

These BC-made items transform the rubber from old tires into new, high-quality products, reducing waste and supporting the circular economy.

- Heavy duty rubber stall mats—high-quality mats that provide a slip-resistant surface and cushioned comfort for large farm animals. Produced by Red Barn®, a brand by North West Rubber, available at Home Hardware, RONA, Buckerfield's, Princess Auto.
- Rubber mulch, used for gardens and landscaping—lasts 10 times longer than wood mulch on average, and stays in place better than wood mulch due to its heavier weight. Manufactured by Liberty Tire, available at Home Depot, Home Hardware, RONA.
- Durable feeding pans for farm animals, made from a recycled rubber/plastic blend, also made by Red Barn®, in multiple sizes. Available at Home Hardware.
- Heavy duty truck mats, also made by Red Barn®, offer a durable, non-slip surface, ideal for protecting truck beds from scratches, dents, and cargo damage. Available online from actiontrucks.com or thetruckoutfitters.com.



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APPLY NOW FOR WCTD ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

IT'S TIME TO submit your application for the WCTD 2025 / 2026 Scholarship program. The deadline for applications is August 25, 2025.

As students head back to school—more than ever—many are seeking ways to subsidize their tuition fees. Did you know that the WCTD Academic Scholarship program is among the most valuable of any of our numerous membership benefits? If you've never considered it there's no time like the present to make your family and employees aware of it.

If you're a member of the association in good standing, don't delay applying on behalf of your eligible family member! We are giving out four \$2,000.00 scholarships again this year.

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, by a company that is a current voting member of the WCTD. And has been a member in good standing for the previous three (3) 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 DETAILS FOR WCTD

As above, the deadline for applications is August 25, 2025.

All applications submitted must include the applicant's Social Insurance Number.

The applicant must submit a résumé, not to exceed three typewritten pages, outlining their education to date, any involvement in extracurricular activities, any academic honors or any community or volunteer work that they may have done. The applicant must also submit reference letters which 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 25th. Transcripts may 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.



Deadline for applications is August 25, 2025.

AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIP

Commencing in September of the year the scholarship is awarded, WCTD will pay the lesser of the total amount of the successful applicant's tuition for two consecutive semesters or the full value of the scholarship, if applicable.

The scholarship will be paid directly to the post-secondary institution in which the successful applicant has enrolled.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The deadline for applications is August 25th, 2025. Applications must be at the Scholarship Committee office on or before this date. No applications will be accepted after that date. Incomplete or illegible applications will not be considered.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND 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.

Mail or email applications to:
WCTD Academic Scholarship Committee
65 Woodbine Rd., Sherwood Park, AB, T8A 4A7
e-mail: rayg@wctd.ca



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NEW NORTHERN SCRAP TIRE PROCESSOR ANNOUNCED

TIRE STEWARDSHIP OF Saskatchewan (TSS) has signed an agreement with Emterra Tire Recycling Ltd. (ETR) to be the northern scrap tire processor. ETR will develop a scrap tire processing facility near Saskatoon to handle scrap tires collected in the northern part of the province.

The northern facility is expected to be open and available to accept scrap tires by mid-2026. ETR, headquartered in Ontario, has a large scrap tire processing facility and other recycling facilities across Canada and into the United States. ETR was a top contender for the contract based on their submission to an RFP issued by TSS in 2024.

"We are excited to have another industry leading processor investing in the province to give the required capacity to process the annual scrap tire volumes generated," said TSS Board Chair Colin Fraser.

"Emterra Tire Recycling, to be located near Saskatoon will eventually focus on higher value crumb production."

"We saw the opportunity and offered to bring our deep recycling experience and expertise to Saskatchewan and we're pleased to be able to move forward with this unique opportunity to enhance the

recovery of valuable tire resources," said Emmie Leung, CEO of Emterra Group. "We look forward to working with TSS and the rest of the industry to develop value products and markets for a thriving local circular economy."

ETR has also signed a contract to handle the primary processing of the scrap tires that are being stored by TSS at Clavet. The Clavet yard served as a temporary relief yard while the northern processor was being finalized. ETR expects to begin processing the tires at Clavet this fall. Once ETR's full facility is up and running, the Clavet yard will be decommissioned.

This announcement follows two other recent developments at TSS: the hiring of a new Executive Director, Michael Solkoski, and the three-year approval of a new product stewardship program, where TSS will continue to oversee Saskatchewan's scrap tire recycling. A new, expanded board of directors will be in place by the fall.



BRIDGESTONE UNVEILS W920 ALL-WEATHER TRUCK TIRE

– TIRE BUSINESS STAFF

BRIDGESTONE AMERICAS INC. has introduced the Bridgestone W920, a tandem-axle radial drive tire designed for all weather conditions.

The W920 features Bridgestone's next-generation Enliten technology, tailored to extend tire life and maximum traction while promoting a focus on enhanced sustainability.

"Weather plays a significant role in every fleet's journey. Our aim with the W920 is to mitigate risks and elements that weather brings to the road and give drivers more confidence in these uncertain conditions," Brad Booth, director, Canadian commercial sales, Bridgestone Americas, said.

"The Bridgestone W920 tire with Enliten technology illustrates our company's passion for bringing products to the market that directly respond to the needs of fleets in different regions."

The Bridgestone W920 is the third Enliten tire for the commercial truck segment to debut so far in 2025.

Through Enliten technologies, the new tire builds upon its

predecessor, the Bridgestone W919, with features including:

- Three-Peak Mountain Snowflake certification, designed to provide drivers with traction in rain and snow;
- 6% longer life, which, on average, is projected to deliver 10,000 more miles, compared to the Michelin XDS 2 tire, according to Bridgestone;
- Non-directional tread pattern to help simplify mounting, rotation and overall management for fleets.
- Enhanced stone rejector platforms, specialized tread compounds and full-depth sipes for additional all-weather performance; and
- Premium casing designed to deliver multiple retread cycles.

Produced at the Warren County Plant in Tennessee, the Bridgestone W920 will initially launch in the 11R22.5 size, with additional sizes coming in 2026.



ANOTHER GOLF SUCCESS

2025 WCTD CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

THE 2025 WCTD Charity golf tournament, held on June 22nd at the Stony Plain Golf Course, was again a great success. It turned out to be a beautiful sunny day that produced lots of laughter and a fun time for the participants. The meal after the round was phenomenal. The silent auction got a lot of attention as the participants kept trying to outmaneuver their rivals by getting in that last bid.

Once more, this year's charity of choice is the Ronald McDonald House

A big thanks to all those who showed up to play, have fun and help make this tournament a success.

A huge 'thank you' to event sponsors

A huge WCTD would like to recognize and thank the event sponsors. Their generous contribution really paved the way for its success.

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FEDERATED INSURANCE HOLE IN ONE

We like to thank Federated Insurance and Chris Leahey for the hole in one sponsorship and the Oilers Mini Jersey raffle which raised an additional \$500.00 plus toward our charity.

We would also like to thank Darrell Budney from Trail Tire For helping to organize and getting the communication out into the field.

We are looking to have an even bigger and better tournament next year.



Isaac Greenwood, Commercial Insurance Specialist, won Raised Federated's draw for a mini Oilers jersey



Ladies longest drive – Sarah Wassink



Most honest team Darrel Bowler, Barry Clay, Troy St Pierre, Angela St Pierre



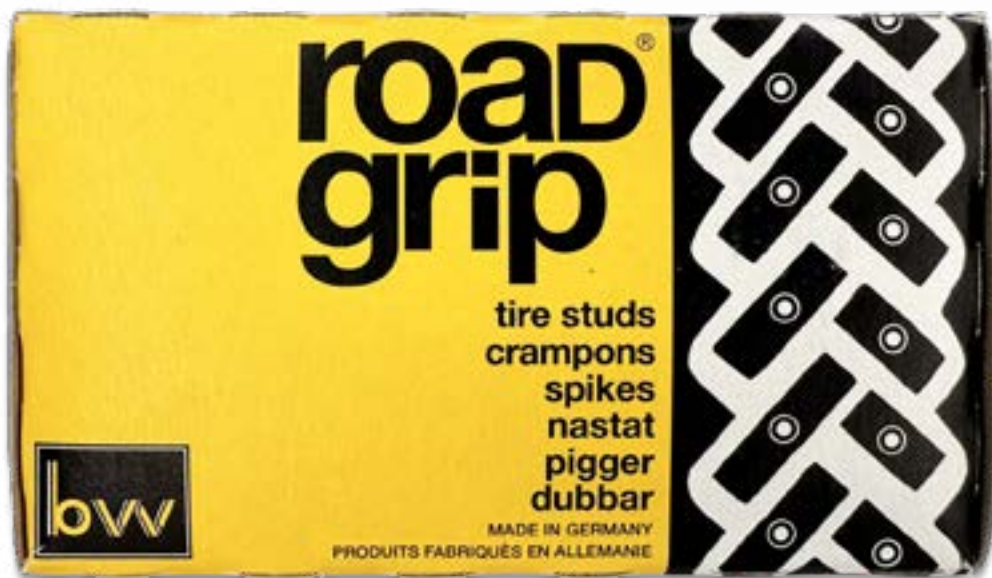
Mens longest drive – Ray Lehman



Longest Putt – Nicole Colman



Golf-Tournament winners James Cashin, Jason Hlus, Shaun Cameron, Chris Evans



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TIRES: A SUCCESSFUL WASTE DIVERSION STORY

— BY SAMANTHA MILLETTE, LAURIE GIROUX & MARIA KELLEHER, WASTE & RECYCLING MAGAZINE (EDITED)

IN 1991, BRITISH Columbia (B.C.) became the first province in Canada (and North America) to launch a used tire management program to incentivize scrap rubber processors and others to recycle old tires and keep them out of landfill.

Fast-forward 34 years and nearly every Canadian province as well as one territory has followed suit, developing province-wide regulated programs to manage end-of-life tires. Most programs include passenger and light-truck (PLT) tires as well as medium truck (MT) tires, and some programs also include off-the-road (OTR) tires.

CURRENT TIRE PROGRAMS IN CANADA

Seven of Canada's eleven tire recycling programs are run by government, or a delegated agency or crown corporation on behalf of government (Alberta, Yukon, Quebec, and all four of the Atlantic

provincial programs). These programs follow a user fee model where fees on new tires are charged to consumers at point of sale and are used to fund collection, transportation and recycling costs for the tire management programs. The other four tire programs (British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario) are operated using an extended producer responsibility (EPR) program model where industry is obligated by law to manage tires at end of life.

All tire programs across Canada currently include passenger and light truck tires, as well as medium truck and bus tires. Approximately half of the provinces include agricultural, while more than half include industrial tires of different types and some off-the-road tires.

TIRE RECYCLING END-MARKETS

Crumb rubber is re-manufactured into new products such as coloured landscaping mulch, athletic tracks and synthetic turf fields, playground rubber bases to cushion from falls, and flooring and mats for agricultural and industrial use.

BRIDGESTONE TO REVITALIZE FIRESTONE AS MARKET EVOLVE

— BY BRUCE DAVIS, TIRE BUSINESS (EDITED)

BRIDGESTONE AMERICAS INC. is crafting plans to "revitalize" the Firestone brand in the Americas in part to take advantage of market forces that are driving consumers toward lower-tier tires.

The plan coincides with the 125th anniversary of the founding of Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. by Harvey Firestone as well as the 100th anniversary of the opening of the first company-owned retail stores, now known as Firestone Complete Auto Care.

Among the elements of the company's strategy — disclosed in a recent Bridgestone Corp. strategy review — are efforts to:

- "Reinforce product power" with the launch of new products such as the Affinity AS all-season touring tire.
- Re-energize the Firestone brand name with consumers by collaborating with the IndyCar Series, where Firestone-brand race tires have been used exclusively since 2000 and will continue in that role through 2030; and
- Build the "family channel" retail distribution network, including expansion and enhancement of the auto service offerings at the Firestone Complete Auto Care captive retail store network.

These initiatives overlap with efforts by Bridgestone to "grow with quality," a strategy that includes expanding/enhancing the firm's manufacturing capacities in the Americas, in part to deal with the unpredictable nature of global tariff policies.



In tire-derived products (TDP), the steel is extracted from tires and is recycled, and the fibre is directed to a cement kiln for energy recovery, if available and allowed.

Tire-Derived Aggregate (TDA) is produced in many tire programs across the country and is typically used in construction and engineering projects as a substitute for gravel. It can be used as a durable and frost inhibiting material in the construction of roads, as light-weight fill for highway embankments and retaining walls, as a drainage material in a wide variety of public works and municipal infrastructure projects.

Tire-derived fuel (TDF) is used in cement kilns, pulp and paper mills, and electric utilities. The production of TDF displaces the use of fossil fuels such as coal or natural gas, which are significant contributors to GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESS STORY

With an average diversion rate of 98%, tire recycling in Canada is an environmental success story that others can aspire to and learn from. Key elements of success involve good regulations with clear goals, targets, responsibilities and governance requirements, and providing market incentives to encourage innovation and contribute to a circular economy.



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OK TIRE, GROUPE TOUCHETTE TEAM UP TO COVER CANADA COAST-TO-COAST

— BY SHANE HOOVER - TIRE BUSINESS (EDITED)

CANADA'S LARGEST TIRE retail franchisor is joining forces with the biggest Canada-owned tire distributor, setting the stage for both companies to expand in their domestic market.

OK Tire Stores Inc. and Groupe Touchette Inc. have forged a coast-to-coast "strategic partnership" that makes Touchette the official distributor for the 325-plus franchised OK Tire stores.

The companies, both long-time players in the Canadian tire industry, will operate as independent entities after the partnership takes effect June 9. They said customers can expect better product availability and faster delivery, along with continued support from trusted, local experts.

MORE AGILE, RESILIENT

It has taken a lot of work and many meetings to get to this point, OK Tire CFO Christian Gehres said.

Founded in 1953, Surrey-based OK Tire works with independently owned and operated franchise stores across Canada — retail and commercial — and wants to grow.

But the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath spotlighted supply-chain disruptions in the tire and auto service industry, Gehres said, making clear that "a more agile, more resilient supply-chain network is critical.

"We recognize that there is a need for us to evolve and future-proof our operations, which is something that multiple players are doing right now in the market, us being one of them," Gehres said.

Enter Groupe Touchette, which operates a network of 40-plus distribution centers across Canada, allowing it to ensure delivery within three hours to 90 of the 100 largest Canadian cities, according to its website.

Founded in 1979 and headquartered in Montreal, the company has more than 1,800 employees.

Groupe Touchette services car makers, car dealers and independent tire retailers through its TireLink and DT Tire banners, while also offering retail-support programs under various banners. Although OK Tire and Groupe Touchette were competitors, there always was a high degree of respect between the companies, Gehres said. Groupe Touchette is a best-in-class distributor; OK Tire has the strength of its independent dealers. The partnership allows each company to focus on those assets.

"It just seemed a right fit and partnership that, you know, there's an opportunity to support each other and to continue the growth and, in the end, provide an excellent service for our customers and



consumers," said Paul Hyshka, Groupe Touchette's associate vice-president sales, independent and commercial.

MARKET CHALLENGES

In many ways the Canadian market is defined and divided by its immense size. The country covers more than 3.8 million square miles and each province and territory is essentially its own market, with tire inventories determined by local industry and seasonality.

While a dealer in coastal Vancouver is focused on passenger and light truck tires, including those for EVs, a dealer in Edmonton will need agricultural tires and a dealer in northern Ontario will have demand for winter tires and OTR tires for mining vehicles.

GROWING TOGETHER

OK Tire has franchises in every province, from British Columbia on the Pacific Coast to Newfoundland and Labrador on the Atlantic Coast. For comparison, Canadian retailers Kal Tire and Fountain Tire have 270-plus and 167 company-owned stores, respectively, according to Tire Business research.

The partnership with Groupe Touchette keeps OK Tire fully independent and Canadian-owned and poised for substantial growth, Gehres said.

"There is a massive opportunity in Canada right now," he said. "There are a lot of independently owned stores out there that are currently non-bannered, that are doing their own thing, and that's where we do believe, together, we can add significant value with our model that we're proposing."

Having Groupe Touchette's support is a big part of OK Tire's expansion strategy.



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PERFORMING A REGULAR tire rim inspection is crucial to the safe operation of your vehicle. A bent, cracked or otherwise faulty rim can lead to incidents that are not only expensive but dangerous. A faulty rim can pinch or pop a tire, leading to a blowout. It can also lead to mechanical issues and problems controlling the vehicle, which creates a very dangerous situation.

It's also important for staff to follow proper precautions and procedures for a tire rim inspection. If you perform an improper rim inspection, you may leave faulty parts on the vehicle or cause serious injury or death to the inspector themselves.

Below are some general safety guidelines for a rim inspection. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. To ensure rim inspection protocols are thoroughly followed, investigate and obey any training requirements enforced by law in your jurisdiction.

- Ensure that staff participating in rim inspections are thoroughly trained and completely understand all related safety information.
- Deflate tires before loosening assembly nuts. Disassembly of an inflated wheel can cause serious injury or death.
- Guarantee staff are wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) during inspection.
- Ensure tools and parts used in inspection and/or rim replacement are in good condition. Damaged parts could fail during tire inflation, during handling or while in service on the vehicle.

It's also important for staff to follow proper precautions and procedures for a tire rim inspection.

- Clear dirt or corrosion. Buildup can prevent rim components from seating properly or cause a bead hang-up (improperly seated tire bead). Assembling components in this manner could lead to explosive separation.
- Inspect rims every time wheels have been removed from the vehicle in an outdoor area and each time wheels are fully disassembled.
- Compare rims against similar wheels, independent of any official criteria, for any sign of unusual wear patterns or special damage as a best practice.



Scrap rims for any of the following reasons:

- There is any sized crack in any area.
- There is any bent component in any area.
- The inner or outer rim is out-of-round, regardless of the degree.
- The rim has been subjected to high heat or direct fire.
- There are stripped threaded holes.
- There is leaking due to causes other than O-ring, valve, incorrect assembly.

In some cases, these issues may be caused by a major mechanical defect, in which case an OOS (out of service) notice should be issued for the vehicle.

Utilize a rim inspection sign-off sheet, identifying important information such as the last date the rim has been inspected and why it has been inspected.

Ensure all rims that have been deemed scrap are clearly identified as such and that all staff involved in tire and rim installation have access to a go/no go chart that clearly demonstrates which rims are good to use.

Ensuring that all staff are properly trained, using the correct safety precautions and scrapping rims that can no longer be used are critical in minimizing risks in both the rim inspection process and in future operations of your vehicles.

RIGHT TO REPAIR GRANTED? JOHN DEERE LAUNCHES DIGITAL SELF-REPAIR TOOL FOR \$195 PER TRACTOR

THE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER HAS RESPONDED TO CLAIMS IT RESTRICTS EQUIPMENT OWNER AND INDEPENDENT SERVICE TECHNICIAN ACCESS TO SOFTWARE CODES AND DIAGNOSTIC CAPABILITIES WITH THE RELEASE OF A NEW OPERATIONS CENTER PRO SERVICE TOOL.

– BY MATTHEW J. GRASSI - AGWEB

IN WHAT APPEARS to be a direct response to anti-competition claims raised in the ongoing FCC v. John Deere Right to Repair lawsuit, the equipment manufacturer has released an updated digital service tool to enable equipment owners to maintain, diagnose, repair and protect farm equipment.

The new Operations Center PRO Service tool is available now in John Deere's Operation Center app to equipment owners in the U.S. and Canada.

John Deere says it will charge farmers an annual license starting at \$195 per machine for the tool. The company is charging independent service professionals \$5,995.00 per year, which includes up to 10 local downloads.

The increased functionality of the new service tool replaces John Deere's previous digital service iteration, known as Customer Service ADVISOR. John Deere representatives confirm ADVISOR will be phased out over the next year.

WHAT FARMERS NEED TO KNOW

John Deere says the new Operations Center PRO Service "delivers digital repair content filtered by year and model number and provides users with additional relevant machine information to help troubleshoot, diagnose and repair Deere equipment. It's designed to be intuitive and deliver support in real time."

Here are the new service and repair capabilities within the tool:

- Machine health insights and diagnostic trouble codes
- PIN-specific machine content, including manuals
- Software reprogramming for John Deere controllers
- Diagnostic Readings
- Diagnostic Recordings
- Interactive diagnostic tests
- Calibrations

QUICK ANALYSIS

If you've been following the FCC v. John Deere Right to Repair lawsuit, you may recall FCC's legal team asking the equipment manufacturer to release a full digital repair and diagnosis tool for farmers and independent service technicians as part of its filed request for injunctive relief.

Right to Repair advocates and antitrust attorney James Kovac, along with the FCC's legal team, at the time were critical of the Customer Service ADVISOR, calling it an incomplete diagnostic tool. Kovacs himself says "independent repair pros and the farmers

have access to (the tool), but (it) doesn't give them the full suite of options to repair all the needs of their farming equipment."

WHAT JOHN DEERE IS SAYING ABOUT THE NEW TOOL

"Our development of these tools reaffirms John Deere's support of customer self-repair," says Denver Caldwell, vice president of aftermarket and customer support with John Deere. "We view continuously enhancing self-repair as consistent with our mission to ensure John Deere customers have the best machine ownership experience possible."

WHAT ABOUT INDEPENDENT REPAIR TECHNICIANS?

In addition to equipment owners, a local service provider can also use Operations Center PRO Service, John Deere says. With a John Deere equipment owner's permission, independent technicians can gain access to diagnostic and repair information to support the equipment owner's needs.

On the John Deere online store, it currently lists a Operations Center PRO Service annual license for a "Service Business" as costing \$5,995.00. The license provides for 10 local downloads of the PRO Service application, the listing says.

"Our message to our customers is clear," Caldwell continues. "Whether you want the support of your professionally trained and trusted John Deere dealer, to work with another local service provider or to fix your machine yourself, we've created additional capabilities for you to choose the option that best fits your needs."

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Equipment owners must access Operations Center PRO Service through the John Deere Operations Center. Once connected to the platform, owners will add their equipment into their account using the machine's serial number. Use of an electronic data link might be required for more advanced features within Operations Center PRO Service, including software reprogramming. Certain interactive tests, calibrations and reprogramming limitations will exist at initial release.

John Deere says it will deliver additional capabilities in future updates. See JohnDeere.com/PROService for further details.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Operations Center PRO Service is available today. For more information on how to access all of the digital support tools offered by John Deere, JohnDeere.com/RunItYourWay or see your local John Deere dealer.

EV AND ICE BRAKE SYSTEMS ARE MORE ALIKE THAN YOU THINK

FROM THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF FRICTION BRAKING TO ADVANCED SAFETY FEATURES LIKE ABS, BOTH VEHICLE TYPES RELY ON SIMILAR TECHNOLOGIES AND DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS.

– THE BUZZ STAFF WRITERS – BABCOX MEDIA

HERE IN THE Bendpak Garage Studio at Babcox Media, we've talked a lot about EVs—from maintenance to repairs to understanding EV components. However, when it comes to EV brake system service, many of the same repair procedures from internal combustion vehicles (ICE) still apply. You've already handled most of these jobs before. Consider EV and ICE brake systems—they share more similarities than you might expect. From the basic principles of friction braking to advanced safety features like ABS, both vehicle types rely on similar technologies and design fundamentals.

Of course, the major difference lies in the use of regenerative braking in EVs. This system complements—rather than replaces—traditional friction brakes. It helps improve energy efficiency and reduce wear, but it doesn't change the essential braking mechanism. EVs and ICE vehicles both rely heavily on friction brakes. This shared foundation is arguably the most important similarity in brake system design.

CORE COMPONENTS IN EV BRAKE SYSTEM SERVICE

Let's break down the parts. Both types of vehicles still use brake rotors, calipers, and pads. They also typically rely on hydraulic systems. The master cylinder still pushes brake fluid to the calipers when you press the pedal. That action requires clean fluid and sealed brake lines. So yes, you'll still need to inspect, service, and repair these components just like you always have.

ABS AND DIAGNOSTICS REMAIN FAMILIAR

Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) represent another area where ICE and EV brake systems align. This safety technology remains a standard feature across both platforms. You'll find the same components in EVs that you've worked on for years—speed sensors, control modules, hydraulic valves, and more. These parts still require your usual repair knowledge and diagnostic skills.

BRAKE MAINTENANCE: WHAT EVS CHANGE—AND WHAT THEY DON'T

EVs and ICE vehicles do differ in maintenance cycles, mainly because regenerative braking reduces wear on friction brakes. EVs often experience extended brake pad and rotor life and require brake fluid service less frequently due to lower heat buildup. Still, these differences don't make EV brake system service any simpler. It's just another system you already understand.

It's time to take a “brake” from thinking EVs are unfamiliar territory. The more you explore their brake systems, the more you'll realize you've been ready for this all along.

For more detail, watch the Bendpak video at

<https://www.thebuzzevnews.com/ev-brake-system-service/>



EV SALES HIT 9.1M GLOBALLY IN H1 2025, BUT THE US JUST HIT THE BRAKES

– BY MICHELLE LEWIS – ELECTREK (EDITED)

THE GLOBAL EV market is still charging ahead. According to new numbers from global research firm Rho Motion, 9.1 million EVs were sold worldwide in the first half of 2025, up 28% compared to the same period last year. But not every region is accelerating at the same pace.

CHINA AND EUROPE ARE DOING THE HEAVY LIFTING

More than half of the world's EVs this year have been bought in China. That market hit 5.5 million sales in the first six months of 2025 – a 32% jump year-over-year. Around half of new cars bought in China are now electric. In Europe, 2 million EVs were sold in the first half of the year, up 26%. Battery electric vehicle (BEV) sales also rose 26%.

NORTH AMERICA IS STUCK IN THE SLOW LANE

EV sales in the US, Canada, and Mexico are up just 3% so far this year.

Mexico is the one bright spot, with a 20% boost. The US is up 6%. But Canada is down a whopping 23%.

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HANKOOK LAUNCHES ION HT FOR EV LIGHT-DUTY TRUCKS

HANKOOK TIRE & TECHNOLOGY (Hankook Tire) has unveiled a highway-terrain tire engineered specifically for electric light-duty trucks. Hankook says the tire 'provides all-season versatility, lower rolling resistance, exceptional ride comfort, and enhanced durability to support the unique demands of electric light-duty trucks.'

'Featuring an "XL" load designation, the iON HT is specially engineered to provide extra strength and rigidity to accommodate additional cargo with regular light-truck usage, and the heavy battery packs inherent to electric platforms.'

"Electric vehicles, especially in the emerging light-duty truck and full-size SUV categories, bring new challenges and place unique demands on their tires," said Rob Williams, President, Hankook Tire America Corp. "The iON HT is built from the ground up to deliver exceptional EV performance and perfectly embodies the kind of innovation our iON line has come to represent for the industry."

The iON HT joins Hankook's iON lineup of all-season, summer, and winter EV tires. Now available, five initial sizes range from 18 to 22 inches, with UTQG ratings of 900/A/A and speed ratings of T or H.



TRUMP TARIFFS TAKE \$1 BILLION BITE OUT OF GM EARNINGS

– BY NORA ECKERT & NATHAN GOMES – REUTERS (EDITED)

GENERAL MOTORS SECOND-QUARTER earnings took a \$1.1-billion hit from tariffs but the automaker still beat analyst expectations for the period on Tuesday, supported by strong sales of its core gasoline trucks and SUVs.

The largest U.S. automaker by sales said it expects the tariff impact to worsen in the third quarter and stuck to a previous estimate that trade headwinds threaten to hit the bottom line by \$4 billion to \$5 billion this year. GM said it could take steps to mitigate at least 30% of that impact.

Shares fell 8%.

The automaker's revenue in the quarter ended June 30 fell nearly 2% to about \$47 billion from a year ago. Its quarterly adjusted earnings per share fell to \$2.53 compared with \$3.06 a year earlier. Analysts on average expected adjusted profit of \$2.44 per share, according to data compiled by LSEG. Its adjusted earnings before

interest and taxes fell 32% to \$3 billion.

GM was among corporations that revised annual guidance due to the impact from U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs.

Beyond tariffs, GM's underlying business in the quarter was solid. Sales in the U.S. market – its main source of profit – rose 7%, while the company continued to command strong pricing on its pickup trucks and SUVs. GM swung back to a small profit in China, after losing money there a year earlier.

Analysts said GM may need to cut investment in future projects or find other ways to trim spending to offset the effect of tariffs. The automaker is so far keeping pricing consistent and absorbing added tariff costs rather than passing them on to customers.

Jeep-maker Stellantis warned that tariffs would significantly affect results in the second half of 2025, and said tariffs cost it about 300 million euros in the first half of the year.

CHINESE MARKET BOOSTS GLOBAL EV TIRE INNOVATION

– BY SHANE HOOVER, TIRE BUSINESS (EDITED)

CHINA IS THE world leader in electric vehicles (EVs), a fact that makes it an important force in tire development, not just in Asia, but around the world. No other country buys more EVs, or makes more EVs, than the world's second-biggest economy and second-most populous nation.

Of the more than 17 million electric cars sold globally last year, more than 11 million were purchased in China — far surpassing sales in Europe (3 million) and the U.S. (1.6 million).

Boosted by government incentives, one out of every 10 cars on Chinese roads is an EV, and the number is expected to climb, with the International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasting EV sales in China to top 14 million in 2025.

Most of those EVs likely will be made in Chinese factories that already account for 70% of the world's EV production, according to the IEA.

That means the Chinese market has become a significant force in tire research and development.

"As the largest EV market in the world, China not only sets the pace for global EV adoption but also drives innovation in design, efficiency and smart manufacturing," Jack McClure, manager, segment P/LT, Sailun Tire Americas (STA) product development, said.

EV TIRE NEEDS

EVs spur tire innovation because they place different demands on tires than do traditional vehicles with internal combustion engines (ICE).

A hefty battery and other hardware make EVs heavier than ICE vehicles of the same size, and their electric motors produce nearly instant torque. That means EV tires need to be built to carry heavier loads, with more durable compounds that won't wear as quickly, and won't shed as many tire particles into the environment.

"Extending tire life by reducing tread wear is a critical aspect of EV tire design," said Josh Guillems, vice president of consultancy with Smithers, the Akron, Ohio-based multinational product-testing and consulting firm.

EV range, limited by the battery, is another important issue. To maximize efficiency and get the most out of each charge, engineers look for ways to lower a tire's rolling resistance.

"Increased use of silica in tread compounds has helped to contribute to better rolling resistance performance," Guillems said, although Smithers' initial tests indicate rolling resistance is challenged in cold temperatures that already reduce battery range, opening another area for innovation.

Then there's the noise problem. Without the rumble, or even purr, of internal combustion, tire noise is more noticeable in an EV. Tire makers deploy different strategies, including foam inserts and specific tread patterns, for a more quiet ride.

And while they're chasing durability, efficiency and quiet, engineers are still trying to design a tire with good handling and traction on a variety of surfaces.

"That's a tall order for any tire, as individual design changes to construction or materials can have profound effects on performance in any given area," Guillems said.

"For example, large improvements in rolling resistance can negatively impact grip in certain driving scenarios. Improvements to grip, via specialized compounds, can increase the rate of tread wear. Tire designers and compounders must balance these trade-offs when developing tires specific to EVs."

MARKET RESPONSE

Many of the top 20 tire manufacturers are developing solutions for EVs due to their proximity to the key markets in China and Europe, and those innovations in tread compound and tire design influence other tires in markets around the world, given the industry's global nature, Guillems said.

Sailun Group, headquartered in Dongying City, China, is deeply involved in the Chinese EV market. The company is an OE supplier to BYD, Xioami SU7, Nio, Geely, Changan, Chery and BAIC, along with Vietnamese EV maker VinFast, and several startup EV manufacturers coming to the market in 2026 and beyond.

"Sailun benefits directly from this innovation ecosystem and is able to bring innovative products, such as the ERange EV tire, to the USA and Canadian markets," STA's McClure said.

Along with Asia, North America and Europe are influential markets, not just for their EV adoption rates, but also "strong regulatory support, rapidly evolving infrastructure, and consumer



demand for performance and sustainability — key factors that guide tire development," McClure said.

Rather than develop a dedicated EV tire line, Milan, Italy-based Pirelli uses "Elect" marking to indicate which of its tires meet EV performance criteria.

Following its "perfect fit" philosophy, Pirelli offers tailored OE solutions to auto makers for electric sedans, SUVs, sports cars and all-terrain vehicles, as well as products for replacement market consumers looking for tires optimized for EV performance, Coke said.

"The EV segment is one of the fastest-growing areas for Pirelli," he said. "Globally, over 50% of Pirelli's homologations for new car models in 2024 were for electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles, reflecting our strong positioning in this market."

While acknowledging China's importance, Coke said the North American market is spurring innovation of its own. For example, Pirelli is expanding EV-specific offerings in the all-terrain segment, such as the Scorpion XTM, meeting demand for versatility and durability.

"The U.S. market, in particular, is critical, with growing consumer demand, major investments in domestic EV production and a unique vehicle mix that includes larger SUVs and trucks," Coke said.

"This regional diversity influences how we design tires to meet specific needs, especially in terms of range, performance and durability."

THE ROAD AHEAD

The IEA forecasts global electric car sales will exceed 20 million in 2025, or a quarter of all cars sold. Most of the growth will be in China.

Sales in Europe are predicted to hit 4 million EVs, while sales in the U.S. are expected to be around 1.8 million, but changes in government policy regarding emissions standards and EV incentives make the latter outlook uncertain.

"While the future growth of EVs is debated amongst some in the industry, we believe the number of EVs on the road will continue to grow," Drew Dayton, Yokohama Tire Corp.'s (YTC) senior product planning manager, consumer, said.

All Yokohama tires are and will be suitable for both EVs and ICE vehicles, and the company will keep developing tires depending on the specific performance requirements for each segment, Dayton said.

Last year, seeing an underserved market, Yokohama launched the Advan Sport EV All-Season tire. Wear was a primary target during the Sport EV's development, and the tire carries a 55,000-mile treadwear warranty, as well as the company's new E+ badge signifying its compatibility with EVs, he said.

The next developments for EV tires will continue to be in response to the challenges of heavier loads, higher torque, rolling resistance, cabin noise and handling, he said.

"They are not going away, so that's what we're busy working

on," Dayton said. "We think we're uniquely qualified to meet those challenges and exceed consumer needs today and in the future."

Guilliams, of Smithers, said sensors and devices to control inflation could be a significant innovation that better informs drivers, while optimizing fuel efficiency and safety. But given the critical role tires play in safety, innovation tends to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

"From intelligent tires to airless tires to new materials, there are a lot of ongoing research areas," he said, "making it difficult to pinpoint one big innovation coming over the horizon."

But chances are good it will come out of the Chinese market.

NEW MICHELIN X MULTI Z2 DESIGNED FOR REGIONAL FLEETS

— TIRE BUSINESS STAFF

MICHELIN NORTH AMERICA Inc. has unveiled the Michelin X Multi Z2, a regional all-position tire that offers durability and traction in challenging weather.

"In the high-stakes world of delivery and logistics, your schedule is only as reliable as your tires. The Michelin X Multi Z2 tire is designed to help regional fleets achieve promised deliveries," Pierluigi Cumo, vice president of B2B marketing at Michelin North America, said.

The Smartway-verified all-position tire provides 20% more mileage and 17% lower rolling resistance than the Michelin XZE2 tire, the tire maker said.

These improvements were achieved using Michelin's Regenion technology, which allowed for a more efficient tread design providing not only mileage and rolling resistance gains, but also traction performance throughout the life of the tire. The tire will be available in sizes 11R22.5 and 295/75R22.5.



HOW EXACTLY DOES A BLIMP SELL TIRES?

– BY DON DETORE – TIRE BUSINESS (EDITED)

IT IS A question 100 years in the making: How does the Blimp sell tires?

After all, Goodyear, the company that operates the venerable airship program across the U.S., has one main objective – to sell tires.

From the inaugural flight of the first Goodyear-branded Blimp, the Pilgrim, on June 3, 1925, the Blimp has served as a public relations vehicle to drive brand awareness.

As Goodyear maintains on its website, the Blimp "remains as one of the most lasting and iconic corporate brand assets in the world."

Reports say that Goodyear spends upwards of \$25 million a year (or more) to operate its three U.S.-based Blimps – in Akron; Pompano Beach, Fla.; and Carson, Calif.

Goodyear leases a fourth Blimp from the manufacturer, Zeppelin GmbH, based in Essen, Germany. Goodyear organizes its event schedule, while Zeppelin performs operations.

There is no doubt the U.S.-based crew of approximately 60 technicians and 11 pilots (including two in training) know that they, too, represent that same objective everywhere they go.

Even at home.

"We all know when it comes to tires, we make the best tires in the world," said Jorge Reyes-Moreira, a longtime crew chief who is headquartered in Florida.

"I'm not saying that just because I work from here, but I use Goodyear tires on my car, my wife's car, my kids' car. We all have Goodyear tires when they go on a trip. I'm confident they're going to make it through anything."

Reyes-Moreira said he has a young driver in his house that he has tried to educate on the importance of tires.

"So when I'm away from (home), I have peace of mind," he said. "I know those tires are going to get her where she needs to be safely."

Reyes-Moreira oversaw a crew of about 20 that accompanied the Blimp on a recent four-day trip to the Dayton Air Show in Vandalia.

Scores of air show attendees swarmed the Blimp, particularly on the first day. Crew members surrounded the airship, engaging with onlookers, answering a variety of questions.

Some even asked about tires.

"That's the really special part about the Blimps: they get their foot in the door in a lot of places," said Michael "Doc" Dougherty, an Akron-based pilot who joined the Blimp program in 2007.



Tire Business photo by Don Detore

Tire Business took a four-day trip on the Goodyear Blimp to the 2025 Dayton Air Show, held at the Dayton International Airport.

"Just the fact we can reach people in kind of a more personal way, with the airships, with their own individual, unique personalities, that opens the door for us to be able to tell that story about Goodyear tires," he said.

"So I really do think the airships do a good job of that. And although it might be a little bit tough sometimes to make that connection back and forth, I think we're doing a really good job of drawing that line for people right."

It was a little more than a year ago when the Goodyear Blimp launched a social media campaign that features the slogan "Blimps are cool. Buy tires."

The five words are emblazoned across dark blue t-shirts, selling for \$25 each on thegoodyearstore.com, alongside other Blimp merchandise such as keychains, coffee mugs, magnets, airship crew polos, blimp stress relievers and miniature inflatable blimps.

Last year alone, the Goodyear Blimp Instagram account amassed 20 million views. The entity has about 116,000 followers and is growing daily. The Blimp also has accounts on Facebook and X.

Andrea Deyling, another veteran pilot, said she keeps the marketing aspect of the Goodyear brand top of mind as she pilots the airship above homes and businesses.

"We fly at an altitude where everyone can see the airship and see that it is the Goodyear Blimp," she said.

"And we sometimes don't even fly along the highway ... just so that more people get to see it."

"We take great care of (the vehicles), keeping them clean and shining, because when people see that, they will equate that with quality," he said. "Having a vehicle that represents the company in a good way translates into all the other stuff, the quality of the tires, the fact our people take pride in what they do. Hopefully, that's what we try to project."

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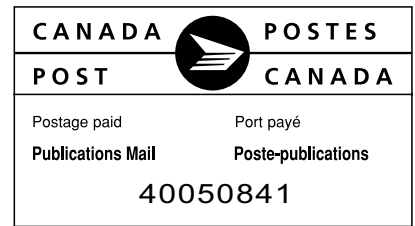
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