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TRANSPORTATION SPECIALISTS

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Transportation *Reauthorization*

9/15/11 - The U.S. Senate approved a six-month funding extension for Surface Transportation programs, including highway construction, bridge repair, mass transit, and other infrastructure. This will allow programs to be funded and operational at present levels through March 31, 2012. The latest extension marks the 8th since SAFETEA-LU expired in September 2009.

With a troubled economic situation that has crippled the country's confidence, increased the country's debt and unemployment, it is more important than ever for legislators to get the numbers right, but the divide between the parties is huge.

According to Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (TIC) Chairman John Mica, In 2010 the Highway

Trust Fund, which is the source of funding for surface transportation projects, brought in \$35 billion in revenue, but was authorized for \$50 billion in spending. Additionally, Congress has had to transfer approximately \$35 billion from the General Fund into the Highway Trust Fund over the past three years to keep it solvent. In response to these numbers, the TIC presented a six-year, \$230 billion reauthorization proposal that slashes spending to a "spend no more than you earn" level. The TIC justifies its proposal claiming that the Trust Fund cannot support a two-year bill (see below) at current spending levels or extend funding at current levels for even one year as it would jeopardize the solvency of the Fund.

The Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee claims that the TIC's \$230 billion proposal would result in a loss of 630,000 jobs in highways and transit in 2012. Instead, they offered a two-year \$109 billion plan titled "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century".

The Senate's approach is to maintain current funding instead of the deep cuts proposed by the House. However, funding for the plan is not readily apparent.

Earlier this year, the Obama administration released its six-year \$556 billion plan which is a healthy 66% increase over 2010 levels. Notably, the Budget proposes a \$50 billion up-front "boost" said to target projects that will create jobs and \$32 billion in innovation incentives. The plan also dedicates \$4.9 billion to provide stronger oversight, higher standards, and tougher enforcement for trucks and buses. However, funding for the program remains an issue.

Taxes from fuel, heavy equipment, tires and the annual heavy vehicle use tax make up the Highway Trust Fund. Being that it is very unpopular to raise taxes in the current economy, our representatives have a tough road ahead.

Bi-Partisan



Partisan



Nighttime Driving Tips

Driving at night can be risky business for a trucker, especially if you're not used to night driving, haven't slept well or have been awake all day.

The body has a built-in rhythm that is difficult to change and favors sleep during nighttime hours. As the clock ticks closer to midnight, your chances of driving drowsy increase as do your chances of encountering a drunk driver.

Drowsy driving is dangerous as sleep can quickly overcome you. If you find

yourself opening windows, turning on the air or turning up the radio to keep yourself alert, it could be a sign that you're already too tired to drive and should pull over and rest. Periodic breaks can be extremely helpful in reducing fatigue.

Due to the reduction in light, a person's depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision are compromised during evening hours. And, the older we get, the more our vision tends to be affected. To counter these effects, make sure your lights are working properly and the lenses are clean, drive slower and increase your following distance, get proper sleep and maintain a healthy diet. Drive safe!



Braking On A Grade

In a recent interview with Loss Prevention Specialist Jeff Rodriguez, Jeff revealed some very interesting do's and don'ts for braking on a steep grade. First, Jeff says that before you begin your descent, you should already be driving the speed you want to maintain down the hill. Don't wait to reduce your speed. He states that it's much easier and safer to downshift at the top of the hill than at a higher rate of speed somewhere in the middle. The key here, he maintains, is not to cause excessive wear on your brakes. Too much braking at high speeds with heavy loads can cause the brakes to glaze and potentially fail. Finally, any braking you do down the grade should be enough to slow your rig at least 5 mph; you don't want to continuously tap the brakes as this will heat them up to a point that could lead to a reduction in braking power.

Fuel Updates

The Energy Information Association (EIA) expects world crude oil and liquid fuels consumption will continue growing in the fourth quarter of 2011 and into 2012, but with less robust than previous forecasted. The lowered forecast is due to less optimism about global economic growth. This is expected to relieve some market tightness by allowing markets to draw upon current inventories to meet demand which should stabilize pricing. In the U.S., regular gasoline prices are projected to fall to an average \$3.47 per gallon in the fourth quarter 2011 after refiners switch production from summer-grade gasoline to lower-cost winter-grade gasoline. Additionally, the possibility remains that Libya may be able to ramp up oil production and exports sooner than anticipated which would restore some of their 360 thousand bbl/d decline and reduce world oil prices.

9/19/11
\$3.833
National O-H
Diesel Avg

9/19/11
\$3.601
National
Gasoline Avg

On-highway Diesel Fuel Prices

Region	9/19/11	8/22/11	9/20/10
East Coast	3.853	3.844	2.949
New England	3.983	3.994	2.997
Central Atlantic	3.968	3.944	3.041
Lower Atlantic	3.792	3.788	2.905
Midwest	3.799	3.789	2.944
Gulf Coast	3.765	3.772	2.890
Rocky Mtns	3.892	3.815	3.037
West Coast	3.977	3.855	3.120
California	4.062	3.928	3.150

Prices listed above are diesel averages in dollars per gallon.

Up-to-date statistics are available from the Department of Energy at www.eia.doe.gov.

U.S. To Reopen Borders To Mexican Truckers Despite Safety Concerns

A recent report from Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) states that Mexican drug trafficking groups are gaining ground in the marijuana and cocaine trade. The report summarizes that the resolution of the Mexican-U.S. trucking program could create conditions for a turf war among drug cartels and truck drivers could be put in direct competition with the criminal groups. Statistics listed on the website of Texas Governor Rick Perry show that in the first eight months of fiscal year 2008, Border Patrol agents in Texas intercepted 423 tractor trailers resulting in the detainment of more than 1,800 undocumented immigrants and more than 112,000 pounds of illegal drugs. Both THE RCMP and the Texas governor cite increased pressure on truck drivers to transport the contraband across borders.

On July 8, 2011, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced its intentions to renew a cross-border, long-haul trucking pilot program between the U.S. and Mexico. Simply by implementing the program, the U.S. immediately removes an estimated \$2.5 billion in annual tariffs imposed by Mexico for the loss of business resulting from the lack of U.S. compliance of NAFTA. Supporters of the agreement say it will ultimately create thousands of jobs and spur trade between the two nations.

Immediately following the announcement of the program, a petition for review was filed with the U.S. Court of Appeals by the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA). The OOIDA claims Mexico hasn't implemented or conducted enforcement programs similar to those in the U.S. and cites that there would be no relevant corresponding reciprocity for U.S. truckers. The DOT states that the new program puts safety first and paves the way for Mexico to lift tariffs it imposed more than two years ago.

Before the program can proceed, the DOT must now submit a report to Congress detailing actions to be taken to address each of the issues raised by an audit conducted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG). That report to Congress detailed a long list of shortcomings of the program. The report states that "FMCSA has not identified the specific process it will use to comply with five requirements for conducting 50 percent of the pre-authority safety audits and compliance

reviews onsite in Mexico." Additionally, the report states that FMCSA has not yet addressed certain issues for implementing the pilot program e.g., FMCSA has not (1) issued site-specific plans for checking drivers and trucks at the border, (2) established a system

to verify driver and truck eligibility for the pilot program, (3) issued an implementation plan nor acquired electronic monitoring devices for use in the pilot program and (4) conducted pilot program training for inspection personnel at the border and within the United States.

Proper Wheel Care

Proper maintenance of your wheels is key to getting the most out of your investment and operating safe on the roads. Listed below are some tips to follow when removing and replacing your wheels.

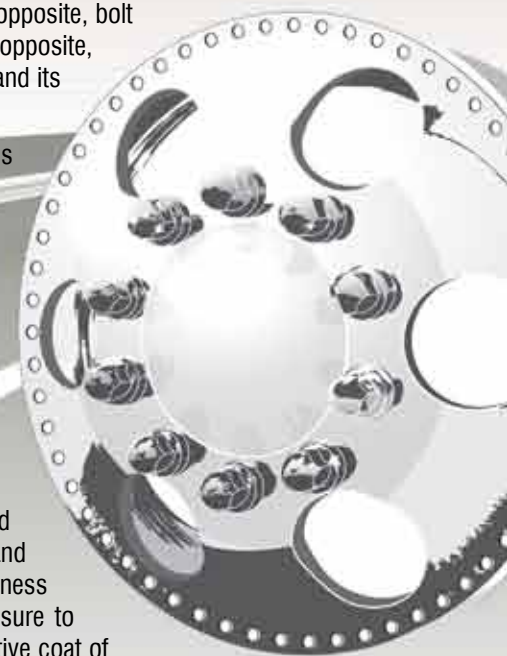
When installing a new tire and wheel assembly, it's important to recheck the torque level after 5 to 100 miles. According to the Technology & Maintenance Council, there is a period of time where the nuts and stud threads shift due to paint, dirt, dust, etc. This "settling in" period can reduce clamping strength which could cause loose wheels. Wheels should then be checked every 10,000 miles.

Due to stress put on truck tires from the weight of the vehicle, its payload and road conditions, proper torquing of the wheels on your equipment is essential to safe operation. Overtorquing can stretch the studs and threads which could lead to a loss of tension or a broken stud. Check with your manufacturer for proper torque values. When replacing the bolts, tighten them in a sequence that allows for even tension on all sides e.g., on a 10-lug wheel, tighten bolt 1 and its direct opposite, bolt 3 and its direct opposite, bolt 5 and its direct opposite, bolt 2 and its direct opposite and finally bolt 4 and its direct opposite.

Always clean around bolt holes and studs whenever you remove a tire. Be sure to check the wheels and studs for corrosion and debris such as burrs and grime and clean as necessary. Pay particular attention to painted wheels. When painted wheels are repainted, the thickness of the paint can cause unevenness in tension on the studs which could cause loosening over time. Before repainting your wheels, be sure to first scrape down the paint around the bolt holes.

Finally, rust on a steel wheel needs to be attended to immediately. Rust eats away at the steel and weakens it. This will eventually lead to unevenness in clamping strength and a loose wheel. Be sure to remove rust whenever visible and add a protective coat of paint.

It's always a good idea to check your wheel bearings for proper condition and lubrication when the tire is removed.





New Standards For Commercial Vehicles

FUEL Efficiency

8/9/2011 - President Obama announced new fuel efficiency standards for commercial vehicles beginning with those built in 2014. The joint Department of Transportation/Environmental Protection Agency program will include a range of targets which are specific to the vehicle types and purposes.

Vehicles are divided into three major categories: combination tractors (semi-trucks), heavy-duty pickup trucks and vans, and vocational vehicles (like transit buses and refuse trucks). Within each of those categories, even more specific targets are laid out based on the design and purpose of the vehicle. For example, there are nine sub-categories of combination tractors based on three attributes: weight class, cab type and roof height. These final standards are expected to achieve from 9%-23% reduction in emissions and fuel consumption from affected tractors over 2010 baselines. The joint standards cover not only engines but all components of the vehicle.

EPA and DOT estimate that the program will cost the affected industry about \$8 billion while reducing oil consumption by 530 million barrels and greenhouse gases by approximately 270 million metric tons. The new standards expect to yield a savings of approximately \$50 billion in fuel costs over the life of the program.

Source: www.epa.gov

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- Controlling Truck Industry Recalls
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- Safety Ideas
- Regulations and Deregulations
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