



Owner-Operator's Business
Association of Canada
Association professionnelle des
routiers autonomes du Canada

...from the
director's chair

Need truck parking? Try teamwork

So, the province of Ontario is about to hire a consultant to do a bunch of research and produce a report with recommendations for improving Southern Ontario rest areas, a companion piece to another project that includes a rest area demand assessment in the northern part of the province.

We've been after governments for years to take a serious look at the appalling lack of safe parking and rest areas for truck drivers, so why am I not jumping for joy when a provincial government puts truck parking on the agenda and proposes another study? Hello, Ontario. It's already been done.

The lack of adequate truck parking in North America has been the subject of research, studies, and analysis by a wide variety of organizations and levels of government for close to two decades, so we know the problem inside out. What we need is a solution, not another study.

We thought we were making headway in 2009 when Transport Canada, given its role in commercial vehicle and highway safety, agreed to take a leadership role in getting all the stakeholders together – federal, provincial/territorial, and local governments, as well as parking suppliers, commercial vehicle drivers, and the motor carrier industry – with a view to working towards solutions.

First of all, we asked drivers themselves to tell us where they experience the greatest difficulty finding suitable parking, and also to identify the basic requirements of truck stopping areas with respect to sleep and personal hygiene, the safety of themselves and their equipment, and compliance with hours-of-service.

The results of that survey provided invaluable insight into the problem, and also pro-

posed a number of thoughtful and imaginative ideas about what a good parking experience would look like. Those good ideas have been largely ignored, and the problem has only worsened.

Regulators who put legislation in place that governs the work and rest activity of truck drivers have a responsibility to ensure drivers have safe places to comply with that legislation. Not only that, every workplace in Canada is required by either the federal or provincial/territorial governments to meet certain occupational health legislation. If the cab of a truck is deemed to be a workplace for purposes of 'no smoking' regulations, why isn't the lack of bathroom facilities, drinking water, or places to ward off fatigue with a 15-minute nap taken seriously?

No one is suggesting that governments start building truck stops across the country. But the powers that be need to follow through with the plan to get all the players at the table again, to work collaboratively towards a solution to this chronic problem. Amazing things can happen when diverse groups come together for a common purpose. Bear with me while I switch from a parking rant to the Salute to Women Behind the Wheel that took place recently at the Atlantic Truck Show, as an example of what teamwork can do.

A small but committed group has been working their butts off to bring the Women in Trucking (WIT) Salute, held each year at the Mid-America Trucking Show in Louisville, to Canada. Encouraged by the success of a toe-testing-the-water Salute at Truck World in Toronto last year, we held



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the second Canadian Salute in Moncton in June. The event celebrates female drivers and gives us an opportunity to thank them, but it's so much more than that. The impact of seeing a group female drivers together in the iconic red Salute T-shirts has a powerful impact on others. In Moncton, 16 enthusiastic drivers with a total of 300 years of experience took part in the Salute, a potent reminder that women have been behind the wheel for decades, outnumbered by their male colleagues to be sure, but no less skilled and resilient. It's also an opportunity to encourage other women to consider the wide variety of career options in the trucking industry.

What I find remarkable is how a diverse group of organizations and individuals who share a common goal came together to make the Salute happen. Check out the event partners and sponsors on our website and you'll see what I mean – carrier and driver associations working side by side with trucking companies, equipment suppliers, trucking schools, even convoy events and a radio show – because they understood the importance of the Salute itself and its wider significance. So, what's this got to do with addressing the truck parking problem? Teamwork, guys, teamwork.

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