



Greetings from Michigan!

I decided today I am ready for spring to arrive although I'm not sure Mother Nature is ready yet. I'm looking forward to sunny days and more daylight during those sunny days.

Another thing I am looking forward to is our next training session coming up next month April 25 and 26 at the Bee Line training center in Bettendorf Iowa. Please see the registration included and make plans to send someone from your staff and take advantage of a great opportunity to stay ahead of the curve. It's important to retrain and remind ourselves of proper repair procedure so bad habits won't form over time.

Did you know if you modify (shorten or lengthen) a truck frame or alter a suspension ( add a lift axle or beef up springs) for a dealer prior to its first purchase, you are required to label the truck as altered as well as be registered with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration NHTSA?

Well you should and you do. In future newsletters we will give you the information you need in order to comply with 49 CFR 567.3 of NHTSA, which defines "alterer" as "a person who alters by addition, substitution or removal of components (other than readily attachable components) a certified vehicle before the first purchase of the vehicle other than resale."

NHTSA certification regulations only apply to new vehicles and not to used vehicles, although all work should be performed as if it were a new vehicle to maintain safety standards.

Look for more articles on this subject next time!

*Bob Razenberg*

Bob Razenberg  
Have a great month!

# CHECK IT OUT!!

## INSIDE:

- *Technician Shortage*
- *Are you a ROWP?*
- *NEW Member Dues Info*

## Technician Shortage

As I spoke to numerous people at our convention last month, two topics continued to come up: A down turn in business and a shortage of young people coming into our industry. A number of TARA shops have made some adjustments to their business plan and are starting to see some results. It seems that some parts of the country have been affected worse by the economic downturn than other areas. Florida and Arizona seem to be effected far worse than here in the Midwest. I've been in this industry almost 30 years and it seems we have this same business cycle: Average business years that are relatively easy to manage, followed by a growth cycle with more trucks to repair than we have room for or technicians to assign them to, followed by an economic down turn with a huge slow down in the number of trucks moving freight across the country. These last two cycles are very hard to manage. The growth cycle has managers and owners scrambling to hire more help and expand inventories and looking for ways to expand their facilities. The economic downturn which we seem to be in now has you scrambling to stay afloat. Staff is reduced, inventories reduced and you may be wondering why just two short years ago you added on to your facilities. My advice is to hang on, and be ready for the next cycle to come thru. As you have made revisions to your day to day operations, you probably have found ways to become more efficient. Now the trick is to continue your efficiency once the new business cycle starts.

The other part of the equation deals with a technician shortage. There is a true shortage of young people coming into this industry. Numerous factors have played into this predicament.

High schools across America have pushed the notion that everyone must go to college in order to get a job in the 21st century. Higher education is a great thing, but not all jobs require a college degree. The service industry needs technically trained people that have a desire to fix things. Another obstacle facing young high school graduates is the funding to attend technical schools. As with all higher education facilities, these costs have sky rocketed in the past decade.

A recent article in Truck Parts and Service highlighted the problem of matching new technicians with scholarship opportunities. Lee Long, Chairman of the Professional Technician Development Committee of the Technology & Maintenance Council (TMC) stated, "Word is not getting out that there are available funds and scholarships that kids can take advantage of in order to enter this industry." We at TARA have noticed this same problem. We have two one thousand dollar scholarships for young people studying in the business area or going to technical school with concentrations in body repair, welding, or heavy equipment with a connection to TARA and we have yet to award these scholarships to anyone. If someone in your business is interested in going to a technical school or college and their area of study pertains to the transportation industry, please have them apply. This application may be obtained thru our administrator, Wayne Reich, or any TARA board member. This isn't just a TARA problem; it's a national problem that needs our attention. If we don't start recruiting young people into our industry there will be no one left to repair the trucks of tomorrow.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

***"For things to change, we must change, for things to get better, we must get better."***

***~Heidi Willis~***

## Are you a ROWP?

Dan Miller, author of the book *48 Days to the Work You Love*, was on a radio talk show the other day and discussed the process of matching employees with their strengths and allowing them the opportunity to be more flexible in their work environment. He asked the host, Dave Ramsey, if his work place was a ROWP or, a Results Oriented Work Place. The new generation of employees has very little interest in the typical 9 to 5, Monday thru Friday routine that our generation has accepted as the norm. Dan said one of the keys to attracting new, young people into the work force and retaining them is to offer them some flexibility in their schedule. To many employers, it really doesn't matter how a project gets done as long as it's done on time and meets all of the criteria.

Companies need to look at the results that are being accomplished rather than looking at what time someone came to work. These young people don't always go by the Vince Lombardi rule of "if your 10 minutes early, you're really 5 minutes late". To them, results are what matters, if you find someone that wants to come to work at 9:00 A.M. and work to 6:00 does that really matter as long as they produce when they are there? Some food for thought in this crazy work environment that we are currently in.

## TARA Member Dues

Our NEW TARA Treasurer is Mark Jayne. His mailing address for sending TARA dues is:

Mark Jayne  
P.O. Box 454  
Marion, Iowa 52302

## Upcoming TARA Events

### April 25th & 26th

TARA Technical Session

Hosted by the Bee-Line Company in Bettendorf, Iowa

Items to be discussed: Frames, Air-Tech steer axles. Hydraulic Pump, and Proper Gauge care. This will be a mixture of class room and hands on sessions.

### October 2008

Plans are being made for our Fall Meeting the "Gateway City" of St. Louis, MO during the first week of October 2008. Tentative dates are October 2nd thru 5th, 2008. Our meeting will be held in conjunction with the National Truck & Heavy Equipment Claims Council. We will be at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown St. Louis.



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