

Transport Topics

Keeping an Eye on Truck Parts and Safety

Published by Transport Topics on January 25, 2019 2:00PM by Fran Matso

The new year has arrived, and so has this first-quarter 2019 issue of Equipment & Maintenance Update. The two cover stories of this E&MU reflect in-depth features on timely issues and news developments that likely are to be of interest to those operating in the realm of trucking equipment and maintenance.

As everyone in trucking knows, last year was stellar for this industry. North American orders for Class 8 trucks reached a record 490,100 in 2018 — smashing the previous high of 390,000 in 2004, Transport Topics reported Jan. 4. Long term, more trucks on the road bring increased demand for aftermarket parts, which is creating supply challenges, as the front page story of this E&MU reports.

For at least one fleet executive, the challenge of finding parts is daunting.

“The amount of time we hear the part is on national backorder is incredible these days,” says Dan Carrano, director of fleet maintenance for West Chester, Pa.-based A. Duie Pyle. “How can you sell a vehicle and not be able to support it without parts and service? You can’t do that.”

Safety is another key issue for the industry, and regular readers of E&MU know that we keep a keen eye on what may lie ahead when it comes to the industry’s efforts to improve safety through technology. Last summer, Phil Romba, a regular columnist (whose column appears on P. A12 in this issue) wrote a piece expressing his opinion that Class 8 trucks should use high-tech cameras instead of the mirrors found on today’s tractors. I thought this topic was worth exploring further, and what resulted is the other cover story in this issue.

Interestingly, the story was finished in December and not long after news broke about the technology: The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration on Dec. 26 announced it issued a five-year exemption to Stoneridge Inc. to allow its aftermarket MirrorEye mirrorless digital camera and sensor system to be installed on trucks and motorcoaches as an alternative to traditional mirrors, TT reported.

In the November-December 2018 issue of E&MU, I devoted this space to discussing advancements in technology in everyday applications that positively impact society. However, I also wrote that there can be instances in which some things can be tinkered with so much to the point that they become too “techy.”

Let's hope this will not be the case for camera monitoring systems for trucks.

In the meantime, here's to 2019. This publication will continue to keep you up-to-date with in-depth explorations on the latest developments in trucking equipment, maintenance and beyond.

<https://www.ttnews.com/articles/keeping-eye-truck-parts-and-safety>