

# Editorial

BY JASON MORGAN | EDITOR

## Sight beyond sight

*After earning a FMCSA exemption, Stoneridge, Inc. sets out to show the industry the power of mirrorless camera monitor systems*

Evolving truck technology is far easier than evolving industry standards and regulations. What are the rules of the road for automated driving systems? I don't know, but they're here. What are the standards for electric truck charging? I don't know, but those trucks are on the road. What would it take to replace mirrors with cameras? Now that one has an answer, or at least a beginning.

Stoneridge Inc., with its MirrorEye camera monitor system, is setting out to change the minds of the industry toward camera monitor system adoption.

"We have to answer: What's the advantage over mirrors?" said Stephen Fox, vice president of business development with Stoneridge Inc. "MirrorEye provides greater field of view and eliminates blind spots, as well as features like trailer panning, which offers a wider-angle view as you're turning the vehicle, color night vision and the system operates in all weather conditions. But the best thing about MirrorEye is it provides an ability to anticipate danger, because you can clearly see it in the distance. If you can anticipate it, you can prepare to avoid collisions."

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) clearly saw the improvement after experiencing a demo of the MirrorEye system, and in late December of last year, Stoneridge Inc. received its exemption from the FMCSA that allows the MirrorEye camera monitor system to be installed as an alternative to conventional rear-vision mirrors currently required on commercial motor vehicles in the United States—removing mirrors all together. The five-year FMCSA exemption allows MirrorEye-equipped trucks to operate with an integrated system of cameras and digital displays as an alternative to conventional rear-vision mirrors.

Before the exemption, fleets could trial the camera monitor system as long as they still had mirrors on the truck.

"At first, we felt that the big MirrorEye advantage was

increased fuel economy," Fox explained, noting that estimated fuel savings fall within the 2% to 3% range depending on application and operation. "We engaged a CEO of a trucking company and his initial feedback was, 'Yeah, it's all about fuel economy, that's fantastic, that sounds really interesting.' Then he sat in the cab outfitted with the very first prototype we built; he looked me in the eye and said, 'It's all about safety.'"

Fox knows that seeing is believing and that you can talk features and benefits all day, but having a real experience in which the camera monitor technology saves you from having an accident is the kind of gut-reaction experience that will turn fleets into believers.

"Here's a situation we all see so many times—a car is merging onto the highway and wants to beat the truck in the right lane. You see that and you know it's happening. With MirrorEye, the lookdown camera on the passenger side provides a clear view of someone in that blind spot. So, you can start to anticipate the situation.

"We had another situation," Fox continued, "in which we had pulled off the road to take some video. We were about to pull off the shoulder and back onto the road. In the conventional mirror, we couldn't see anything, but in the MirrorEye camera monitor, we saw a red car come flying down the road. If we had relied on the traditional mirrors, we would have thought that it was safe to pull out and merge."

Capturing minds with new technology is easy—the benefits are easy to justify, but building the trust in the technology is another matter entirely. While the new rules and regulations of the road are still up in the air, you have the ability to sit in the cab, demo new technologies and have a real experience, which will trump any spec'ing advice, product pitch or presentation any day. ▀

