



Provincial Towing Association (Ontario) Inc.

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Fall 2009 Newsletter

As a former tow operator and currently the Executive Director of the PTAO I wish to provide a mini update and make you aware of the many issues and representations I and our Board of Directors have made to the many government bodies. Obviously all of these meetings are attended on your behalf and that of everyone in this industry. The many issues facing this industry that has been tabled with the government includes but not limited to:

- a. a payment guarantee for our services when working for the police
- b. payment for all of the abandoned vehicle issues
- c. move-over laws that include tow trucks
- d. local towing association issues
- e. municipal licensing
- f. hours of service laws
- g. protection from liability while performing our services on the highway
- h. health and safety issues
- i. the cause of predatory pricing
- j. the self-regulation initiative and many other issues that will affect you in the future.

Having attended the many meetings I have at Queens Park and other government facilities I can assure you we have the government's attention but we need to stay the course. I am told the government is now looking to improve "Highway Traffic Incident Management" and will be looking to us to participate in the review. This is proof they now consider us as a valuable asset with a lot to bring to the table.

Further to the above we have negotiated many member discounts for equipment, towing accessories, clothing, fuel and other industry required purchases. (More announcements to be made soon) All these initiatives and more, not to mention the number of complaints from the public and tow operators we receive or the time and effort put into producing a top notch Tow Show and Charity Golf Tournament are all done on your behalf.

A quick look at the economy and how it is affecting the Towing Industry seems to present a different kind of a trend. In my many conversations with tow operators across the province it appears the urban areas have been hit harder than the rural areas. Many operators in the larger cities are reporting up 25 to 30% decline in business while rural operators claim little to no decline in business. Some even claimed a slight increase. What this should tell you is you must continuously monitor your financial results and if necessary "Right Size" your company. Sitting with 25% of your fleet and/or drivers parked is a moral killer and financially damaging. Down sizing or in better words "Right Sizing" is an action any

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company in any industry must take in times like this. Cutting or raising prices, running old equipment or cutting payroll by hiring inexperienced drivers at a lower pay rate is not where you want to go. A little more on this later!

In moving on, here we are again, summers over, kids back to school and getting ready for the onslaught of the cold white stuff. It's time to service the equipment, ensure your instructions to your staff are clear and concise and all systems are ready. I hope you're ready!

Finally, the towing industry has always been controversial and will likely continue to be for some time. In the towing industry compliments for heroic actions are commonplace but seldom do we share them outside of our own little circle of friends. We all hear the complaints, read the negative press and watch the negative news stories on T.V. but seldom do we publicize or receive the good news stories. The tendency is to simply move on with little recognition for those involved. This must stop and we must blow a louder horn when we are so deserving of the positive attention. I am really pleased to share the following good news story with you:

An accident occurred on Highway 400 on Feb. 19/2009, about half way between Hwy 88 and Hwy 89. Many vehicles were involved but the most serious part of the accident was a tractor trailer that crossed the median and broadsided a 4x4 SUV Explorer. The driver of the SUV was very seriously injured and the towing manager of **Trotters Towing Service, Carl Hordyk** was there almost immediately. Carl was joined within two minutes by an off duty OPP officer Constable Kevin Yeoman.

Carl and the Police Officer worked together to stem the massive blood flow at the neck area using a piece of winter clothing. They then kept the driver from moving and thrashing while they waited for more assistance. The entire scene was mayhem and Carl and Constable Yeoman stayed with the injured driver until relieved by the Paramedics. Sergeant Dave Woodford had arrived on scene very shortly after and was instrumental in organizing the arriving emergency personnel.

After being relieved from first aid duty Carl used his years of traffic accident experience to assist ALL emergency teams at the scene, and to help get the public moved away from the accident. These actions cleared the scene of unnecessary cars and people, made way for ambulances, fire trucks and police units. Carl also arranged for the necessary Heavy and Light Towing units to be dispatched to the scene. Carl's actions that day were some of the finest examples of a well trained Towing Professional at work.

I am thrilled to report that the OPP has seen fit to award Mr. Carl Hordyk of Trotters Towing the Commissioners Commendation for assisting the OPP at this accident as well as the St. John's ambulance award for his first aid work. **Well done Carl!!!**

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The ceremony and commendation will be held during a luncheon on Nov 25th at the Glenway Golf and Country Club in Newmarket.

Congratulations to **Carl** for the action he took that day and to John Trotter for establishing and operating a truly professional towing service. Once again we are showing that the Towing Profession is and will continue to be a vital part of Ontario's Highway Incident Management System. The Towing Industry is the only Emergency Service that is not funded by taxpayer's dollars.

In conclusion, if you are aware of any tow operator who went out of their way to effect a rescue or other act of heroism let us know about so we can share the "Good News" stories.

Have a great winter and remember to "Stay Safe".

Regards

Doug Nelson
Executive Director