



FROM THE FRONTLINES:

TruckSCR.com brings you a series of interviews with top industry professionals exploring the impact of SCR technology on their companies, the freight industry, the infrastructure and the general public.

An interview with Don Streuber, President and CEO of Bison Transport

Utilizing specialized equipment, Bison Transport was founded on providing local cartage services to the construction industry and was then awarded the catalogue business for Eaton and Sears. Since incorporated in 1969, Bison has grown from just 18 tractors and 32 employees to over 900 tractors and almost 1,400 full time positions. To complement an extensive fleet of heated trailers, in 2004, Bison launched a refrigerated division to provide transborder transportation services to shippers of meat, beverages, frozen foods and other perishable commodities.

One of the largest truckload carriers in Canada today, Bison Transport serves Canada and the 48 nearby states. The company offers full truckload service, full service logistics, dedicated fleet operations, yard management and warehousing and distribution services.

Bison Transport was one of the first Canadian companies to be awarded the EPA Smart Way designation. It has been recognized as one of Canada's best managed companies for its commitment to safety, leadership and initiative.

Q. What was your key take away from visiting SCR fleets in Europe?

A. I went to Europe to visit the Daimler facility and meet with several customers to understand more about their experience in using SCR technology. I had a basic understanding of the technology. My bigger question was about the infrastructure and how it provided for the needs of large truck fleets. Based on my visit, I am satisfied that European carriers faced the same concerns (as carriers in North America). Today, they have no concerns and the technology is working well.

"European carriers had the same concerns as we have. Today, they have no concerns and the technology is working well."

Q. What role does fuel efficiency play in Bison's business planning?

A. In today's economy, everything is impacted by fuel economy. It is a huge component in our business planning. Bison uses only aerodynamically-designed trucks. Our trucks are equipped with automatic transmission, speed limiters, skirts and fairings, trailer extenders, APUs and low resistance tires. In addition, because fuel economy can be impacted as much as 30% by driving practices, Bison drivers go through extensive training including the use of a simulator.

"Everything is impacted by our fuel efficiency. Fuel economy can't be ignored. It is a top priority in our equipment specification and it is a huge component of our business."

Q. With fuel economy being top priority, how will SCR fit Bison's operations?

A. I'm satisfied that SCR offers strong fuel economy. At a 2% consumption rate, the cost of fuel plus the cost of diesel exhaust fluid will equal a savings advantage – with no (reliability) fear factor. Operationally, the difference of paying a few thousand dollars more in engine cost pales compared to a 1/2 mile per gallon fuel penalty (of non-SCR engines) over the lifetime of the truck, especially when, like Bison, you average 140,000 per truck per year. (Bison turns its truck inventory every 4 years.) This impact will only be amplified as the price of fuel goes up. It can not be ignored. Fuel economy is a top priority in our equipment specification. SCR is proven and we'll take every 3% to 5% advantage we can find. It allows us to give our customers better pricing.

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Q. Operating in Canada, what additional concerns do you have about SCR?

A. We're very interested in the results of the winter tests on SCR. Because of the long stretches we run in the extreme cold, we want to see the results from winter testing under these conditions. With its (diesel exhaust fluid) freezing point at 11° F, and understanding that there will be "in-tank" heaters to thaw it, we want to understand the potential impact of running SCR-equipped trucks under extreme wind chill factors. Running 60 miles per hour at minus 35° F translates into minus 65° F. As a whole, our questions are not about the reliability of technology as much as details related to it under these extremes, such as: how long will it take to thaw the fluid, will that time period meet EPA compliance needs and how will it (thawing) be reflected in the on-board diagnostics. When transporting perishables, you need the answers to these issues. But, that will come. It wasn't a big problem in Europe because of their milder climate.

Q. What is Bison's commitment to "green"?

A. We have consciously participated in "green" technologies and practices. We were the first Canadian carrier to be awarded the EPA Smart Way designation. Much of our environmental commitment is rolled up into our focus on fuel economy and efficiency, like the use of low-resistance tires and aerodynamic trucks. I'm also satisfied that SCR will offer strong fuel economy as well as reduced emissions. Going forward, the only way to dramatically decrease greenhouse gas emissions is to increase ton weight per mile. We've seen drops in fuel expended (and as a result reductions in GHG admissions) of up to 39% under these increased ton weights per mile conditions.