

TIRE BUSINESS

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LATE NEWS

Shrader, Meekhof buy TCi units in Ohio, Mich.

By Bruce Davis

Tire Business staff

DUNCAN, S.C. — Tire Centers L.L.C. (TCi) has sold commercial tire centers in Ohio and Michigan to Shrader Tire & Oil and Meekhof Tire Sales & Service Inc., respectively, and said its remaining TCi centers in Arizona, California and Colorado now will operate under the Michelin Americas Truck Tires business.

The latest deals — four locations, including one retread plant, in Ohio to Shrader and one outlet in Michigan to Meekhof — reduce the TCi network of commercial stores to 10 locations, according to TCi parent Michelin North America Inc. — five in California, three in Colorado and

See *Michelin* page 22

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Kumho pitches 'better tomorrow' for dealers

By Dave Zielasko

Tire Business staff

CABO SAN LUCAS, Mexico — After a difficult year financially in 2016, Kumho Tire USA Inc. rebounded in 2017 with double-digit growth, and the company is looking to continue that momentum in the year ahead.

Without providing financial figures or percentages regarding the current year's financial performance, Jim Mayfield, executive vice president of sales and marketing, said Kumho is entering 2018 with a new theme, "Imagine a better tomorrow."

Even the location of Kumho's 2017 North American Dealer Meeting — the Auberge Esperanza Resort in Cabo San Lucas — conveyed that approach.

Esperanza means "hope" in Spanish, President Harry Choi said in his opening remarks to the 30 tire dealers and distributors attending Kumho's 2017 North American Dealer Meet-

ing.

But Kumho is doing more than just hoping 2018 will bring increased sales and profits to the Atlanta-based unit of South Korea's Kumho Tire Co. Inc.

The company is following its plan that focuses on being consistent, stable and dependable, Mr. Mayfield said.

And unlike 2017, when Kumho took a breather and did not introduce any new tires, the company will launch three products in 2018 — the Crugen HP71, a CUV/SUV all-season tire that will replace the KL33; Ecsta PA51, a UHP all-season tire, that will replace the Ecsta 4X2 in the first stage of the launch and the Ecsta PA31 in the second stage; and KLP11e, a long-distance, over-the-road commercial drive tire.

"In 2018, one of the things that

See *Kumho*, page 22

Jim Mayfield, executive vice president of sales and marketing for Kumho Tire USA Inc.

Tire Business photo by Dave Zielasko

Driving toward autonomy

AVs offer benefits, challenges to society, industry

By Kathy McCarron

Tire Business staff

LAS VEGAS — Ever since Leonardo DaVinci, people have dreamed of driverless vehicles as a mode of transportation. Now that dream is becoming a reality.

Auto makers and technology companies are in a dead heat to mass produce autonomous vehicles (AVs) as a way to reduce vehicular crashes, cut costs and provide additional mobility.

But AVs also pose several problems that must be addressed, including infringement on personal privacy and security and job displacement, according to Richard Smallwood, president and CEO of Sumitomo Rubber North America Inc., who addressed the Tire Industry Association's Tire Industry Honors Night in Las Vegas, Oct. 30, prior to the SEMA

Show.

Meanwhile, Neal Ganguli, automotive supplier consulting leader for Deloitte Consulting L.L.P., told an audience at the concurrent AAPEX show, Oct. 31, that many of the trends surrounding AV development have existed for years.

"You've been dealing with regulatory pressures. You've been dealing with volume ups and downs. You've been dealing with demographic shifts...the globalization of the vehicle industry. You've been dealing with data analytics lately..." he said.

"However, what do we think is different this time that has transformed the industry?" he asked. "The difference is a number of these (trends) — consumer preferences,

economic preferences, regulatory forces and the advancement of technology — are working together. These trends are converging, and that is what is driving the transformation at a magnitude we haven't seen before.

"What are some of the implications of this? Technology and software content in the vehicle is growing exponentially; shared usage models are proliferating in cities across the world; new types of vehicles are becoming available with advanced technologies and are autonomous, electric and connected; new population segments are becoming mo-

See *Autonomous*, page 8

Richard Smallwood, president and CEO of Sumitomo Rubber North America Inc.

Tire Business photo by Bruce Davis



Leeds West Group to buy 42-store Midas franchisee

By Bruce Davis

Tire Business staff

DENVER — Leeds West Groups (LWG), a leading Big O Tires and Midas International franchisee, is buying Auto Systems Experts (ASE), a Davenport, Iowa-based Midas franchisee with 42 locations.

Financial terms of the deal, still subject to customary closing requirements and regulatory approvals, were not disclosed.

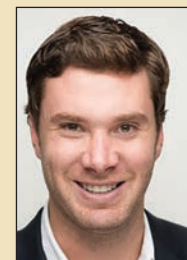
The acquisition will boost Denver-based LWG to 97 locations in 15 states with 850 employees, making it collectively the largest Midas, Big O Tires and Speedee Oil Change & Auto Service automotive group in the nation.

The combined group's sales will be in the \$100 million range, according to their respective 2016 revenues. Both companies are ranked among the 25 largest independent tire dealers in the U.S. by *Tire Business*.

"This acquisition represents a powerful opportunity for LWG to significantly expand our presence in the United States in the franchise aftermarket automotive repair industry," said Judd Shader, CEO, founder and a board member of LWG.

"As one of the premier automotive management companies, Leeds West Groups has clearly demonstrated its ability to apply its considerable resources and expertise to enter and lead in the franchise aftermarket automotive repair marketplace for many years to come."

Founded in 1957, ASE is an employee-owned company headed up by Alan Mahrt, who will continue to oversee the business

See *Acquisition* page 22

Shader



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Trailer maker ventures into intermodal tires, retreads

By Bruce Davis

Tire Business staff

PROVIDENCE, N.J. — Commercial trailer producer CIMC USA Inc. is venturing into the tire and retread business in partnership with China's Zhongce Rubber Group Co. Ltd. (ZC Rubber).

The new venture, Providence-based CIMC Commercial Tire (CIMC-CT), is focused on supplying the intermodal trucking sector with both new tires and retreads, according to Pat Gunn, the venture's CEO.

The company has established a



Gunn

precure retread facility in Providence capable of producing up to 70,000 units per shift, Mr. Gunn said, and is planning to add a pair of facilities in 2018 and open two more in 2019.

Monon, Ind.-based CIMC USA is a subsidiary of China International Marine Containers Ltd., which describes itself as the leading manufacturer of intermodal chassis, trailers and semi-trailers in the world, with annual production capacity exceeding 200,000 units.

The venture sees its primary purpose as producing retreads that meet "rigorous demands" that intermodal operations face.

Among these usage challenges, Mr. Gunn said, are high scrub, lateral sliding and dragging, curbing, inconsistent



operating surface conditions, brake lock and abuse.

In addition, the "chassis rental and pool nature" of the business present ongoing maintenance challenges and life-cycle implications, he added, including shoulder and rib tearing and cutting, tread block cracking, flat spot-

ting due to excessive brake application, uneven and irregular wear, penetration and drilling due to undertread specifications.

To address these issues, Mr. Gunn said CIMC-CT has worked with ZC Rubber to develop a tread compound and design that incorporates optimal tread depth, shoulder design, tread-to-void ratio, irregular wear prevention and hardness of the tread rubber.

CIMC-CT also is working closely with Vipal Rubber of Brazil to provide alternate solutions and offerings that meet customers' expectations.

The plant in Providence uses state-of-the-art technology and equipment from suppliers such as Mattuezzi S.r.l., VMI Epe Holland and Central Marketing Inc., Mr. Gunn said.

The venture estimates demand for retreads from the U.S. intermodal industry at about 1.6 million units a year, based on the number of wheel positions on the ground and the life cycle of the tire.

In addition to retreads, CIMC-CT is offering ZC Rubber's Westlake-brand truck tires.

Mr. Gunn brings 35 years' experience in the tire industry to this project. Prior to being hired to head up CIMC-CT, he was senior director of sales and marketing for the commercial tire group at Giti Tire (USA).

His experience also includes sales and marketing positions with Bridgestone Americas, Fletcher's Cobre Tire, Michelin North America and Michelin's TCi Tire Centers business.

Cooper reorganizes, to lay off 80

Rubber & Plastics News

FINDLAY, Ohio — Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. will lay off 80 workers in North America.

The firm said in an emailed statement it has reorganized certain departments, resulting in the elimination of 60 salaried positions in Findlay, where the company is headquartered. A vast majority of the eliminated positions are corporate roles.

Cooper's tire plant in Texarkana, Ark., will see a majority of the remaining 20 layoffs, but cuts also will be made at the firm's tire plant in Tupelo, Miss. The firm expects to eliminate salaried jobs at both locations.

A company spokeswoman said Cooper Tire would not comment beyond its statement.

Cooper did not specify which departments were reorganized, but it said the move was viewed as a necessary response



to changes in the tire industry, and that it would place the company in the best position for long-term profitable growth.

"While a decision to eliminate positions is very difficult, the reorganization will help our business operate more effectively and efficiently and will align our people to deliver the transformation necessary to execute our strategic plans and drive growth," the firm said in a statement.

The move comes on the heels of Cooper Tire's reporting a 2.3-percent drop in third quarter sales to \$734 million.

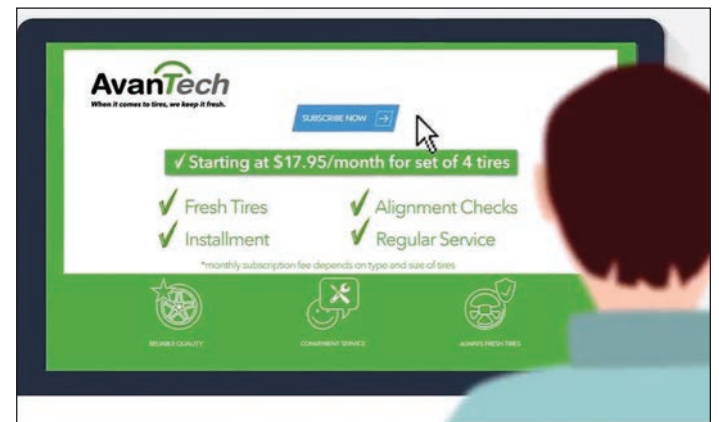
Sales dropped by 7 percent in its Americas Tire Operations to \$625 million, but sales increased 44.8 percent to \$163 million in its International Tire Operations.

For the nine months ended Sept. 30, Cooper's sales were down 2 percent overall to about \$2.1 billion. North America sales slid 7.1 percent to \$1.78 billion, but internationally the firm experienced a sales increase of 34.4 percent to \$457 million.

However, Cooper reported double-digit growth in operating and net income for the quarter, improvements the company attributed to lower product liability costs, a non-cash pension settlement charge and other reduced costs, which offset unfavorable raw material costs, lower unit volume and higher manufacturing costs.

Operating income rose 29.6 percent to \$110.4 million, resulting in a 3-point improvement in the operating margin to 13.8 percent.

Net income was up 26.5 percent to \$62 million, or \$1.18 per share.



Sentury testing tire subscription service in Southeast U.S.

Tire Business staff

LAGRANGE, Ga. — Sentury Tire North America L.L.C. is field-testing a subscription service for retailing tires, called Avantech Tires L.L.C., in selected markets throughout the U.S. Southeast.

Sentury Tire, the LaGrange-based subsidiary of China's Qingdao Sentury Tire Co. Ltd., is limiting the service, which bundles new tires with installation, a vehicle alignment check, road-hazard coverage and free inspections for a monthly fee, to its Avantech brand, which was developed specifically for this service.

Sentury said the monthly fees are based on the tire size and the subscriber's annual mileage estimate. The fees start at \$17.95 a month. Once approved, the subscriber schedules an appointment with the nearest convenient service point for the installation.

The initial cost is the first and last month's subscription fee plus tax, Sentury said, with a minimum contract length of four months and an annual mileage limit of 30,000 miles.

The subscription calls for the motorist to schedule service checkups twice a year; "not-so-fresh" tires will be replaced at no extra cost, roadside assistance included, according to the terms of the service.

Sentury has begun building a dealer base in Georgia and Florida, as well as around Auburn, Ala., and Columbia, S.C.

For the launch of the service, Sentury has developed the Avantech GT and Avantech HP lines in 25 sizes, ranging in size from 185/65R15 to 235/45R18.

LaGrange-based Sentury Tire was established in 2016 to oversee the parent company's plans to build a U.S. plant.

The company has secured a 400-acre site in the Callaway South Industrial Park, located south of LaGrange, for the 1.7-million-sq.-ft. plant, which is expected to cost \$530 million and be capable of producing up to 12 million car and light truck tires a year at full capacity.

Sentury initially said it expected the plant to be operational by 2018 but more recently said on its website that ground breaking is scheduled for fall 2018 and a plant opening in 2019.

Avantech is Sentury Tire's second brand. It earlier launched the GroundSpeed brand, expected to be the new factory's initial output.



Mickey Thompson completes move to new headquarters

By Bruce Davis

Tire Business staff

STOW, Ohio — Mickey Thompson Performance Tires & Wheels has completed its move to its new headquarters in Stow, where it has roughly double the warehousing capacity of its previous headquarters located across the street from the new one.

Company executives and local officials — including Stow Mayor Sara Kline — gathered early on Dec. 1 to cut the ceremonial ribbon on the 219,765-sq.-ft. structure in Stow's Prosper Drive Industrial Park.

The building is situated on approximately 15.4 acres and is expandable by 50,000 square feet, according to Freehold, N.J.-based Monmouth Real Estate Investment Corp., which owns the structure.

The building is capable of storing 150,000 tires and 80,000 wheels, according to Tom Gerity, director of operations for the new facility, which has 32-foot-high ceilings, providing room to stack carriers five high.

Mickey Thompson is converting its warehousing to an RF-scanning system, he added, which should yield significant gains in efficiency.

This is the third headquarters Mickey Thompson has had in Stow since its founding in 1963. Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. bought the business in 2003.

The company thus far has not added jobs, but President Dominick Wycoff said it's only a matter of time as the firm's business picks up going into 2018.



Mickey Thompson Performance Tires & Wheels has completed its move to its new headquarters in Stow, Ohio.



Stow, Ohio, Mayor Sara Kline (left) joined Mickey Thompson Tires & Wheels President Dominick Wycoff (holding scissors) in cutting the ribbon on the firm's new headquarters in Stow. Also on hand were Phil Kortokrax, chairman of the Cooper Tire subsidiary (center) Bob Conger, warehouse facility manager and other employees and officials.

NEWS IN BRIEF**Carlstar to increase wheel prices up to 8%**

FRANKLIN, Tenn. — Carlstar Group L.L.C. will increase prices globally on its styled wheel products by up to 8 percent, effective on or before Feb. 1.

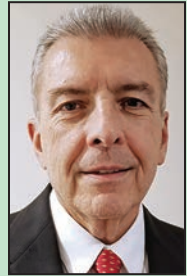
The company said the price hike will impact all wheel products sold under its Cragar, Black Rock and Unique brands.

The prices of steel wheel components also will be increased similarly.

Carlstar cited significant volatility in the prices of steel and aluminum materials due to supply constraints as the primary reason for the increase.

NETSA taps DeSimone as next exec. director

YARMOUTH, Maine — The New England Tire & Service Association (NETSA) has selected its president, Anthony DeSimone, as its next executive director to succeed Dick Cole, who retires Jan. 31.

**DeSimone**

Mr. DeSimone, a longtime NETSA board member, retired in 2015 after more than 40 years in the tire industry.

One of his goals is to encourage more independent tire dealers, especially younger ones, to join the board. NETSA's board currently has 22 directors but there are additional seats open for several more members.

Mr. Cole has been executive director since 2003.

NETSA has more than 580 member locations in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Keith Crain to receive auto industry award

DETROIT — Keith Crain, chairman of Crain Communications Inc.— the parent company of *Tire Business* — and editor-in-chief of Detroit-based *Automotive News*, will receive the Washington Auto Show Lifetime Achievement award on Jan. 25.

His achievements include breaking the news of Lee Iacocca's firing by Ford Motor Co. CEO Henry Ford II in 1978 to a pivotal role in creating the North American International Auto Show in Detroit in 1989.

LKQ buys European auto parts distributor

CHICAGO — Auto parts distributor LKQ Corp. is buying Stahlgruber G.m.b.H. of Poing, Germany, in a deal that will yield a pan-European parts distributor with estimated annual sales of \$5 billion.

The deal, expected to close late in the first quarter or early in the second quarter of 2018, does not include REMA Tip Top A.G., a sister company that specializes in transport belting and tire repair materials and equipment.

The LKQ-Stahlgruber deal is valued at about \$1.75 billion, Chicago-based LKQ said.

Union reiterates opposition to tire imports ruling

NEW YORK — The International Trade Commission's (ITC) decision that Chinese truck and bus tire imports weren't causing material injury to U.S. truck and bus tire manufacturers was flawed on its face, the United Steelworkers (USW) union said in its latest filing with the Court of International Trade (CIT).

The USW filed a reply before the CIT Nov. 28 in response to documents filed by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Cooper Tire & Rubber Co., the China Rubber Industry Association and the China Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals and Chemicals.

Those organizations are the defendants and defendants-intervenors in the complaint the USW filed April 14.

In that complaint, the union sought judicial review of the ITC's vote, which reversed an earlier, preliminary determination of material injury.

In its Nov. 28 reply brief, the

USW said the ITC erroneously relied on a lack of price depression in its negative underselling determination; failed to analyze the domestic tire industry's performance in the context of the industry's business cycle; and relied on the absence of present injury.

It also said various aspects of the agency's determination were not supported by substantial evidence.

"Defendant misconstrues plaintiff's challenge as contesting the determination that there was a moderate-to-high degree of substitutability between domestic tires and subject imports," the reply brief said.

"Instead, plaintiff challenges the majority's decision that, despite this moderate-to-high degree of substitutability, purchasers perceived sufficient differences in features such as quality, warranties, retreadability, service and brand that they would purchase higher-priced domestic tires," it said.

Goodyear, Sandia mark 25 years of collaboration

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The collaboration between Goodyear and the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration's Sandia National Laboratories is celebrating 25 years of working together in creating advanced computational mechanics used in the development of tires.

The results of the partnership, the companies said, are evident in consumer tires, data science breakthroughs and modeling and simulation technology.

Sandia said its work with the tire maker has helped to enhance its software toolkits and improve its capabilities for mission applications while addressing Goodyear's proprietary challenges.

"You might wonder how national defense systems relate to tire engineering," said Susan Seestrom, Sandia's chief research officer. "But a tire is a complex system — one of the most formidable challenges in computational mechanics — and that's something Sandia knows well."

Chris Helsel, Goodyear's chief technology officer, said it's extremely complicated to model and simulate tire performance, particularly under various temperature, pressure and wear conditions.

"Our computational work with Sandia," Mr. Helsel said, "is a continuous source of competitive advantage for Goodyear, helping us design

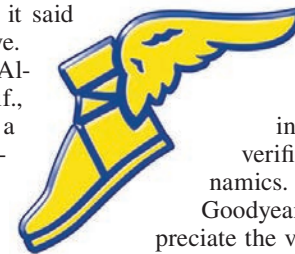


and deliver high-performance products and services in a digital economy."

Goodyear credits its work with Sandia for reducing new product development times, improving manufacturing methods and lowering technical and operational costs, which it said helps keep their products competitive.

Sandia, which has facilities in Albuquerque and Livermore, Calif., and Akron-based Goodyear signed a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) in 1993, when technology transfer from the national labs was in its heyday.

"Tech transfer was an exciting new opportunity for the labs," said Mary Monson, senior manager of technology partnerships at Sandia. "At the same time, Goodyear looked at our advanced computational mechanics software and saw it could be applied to tires. Instead of building and testing three to five prototypes before a tire was ready for manufacture, they could use our computer codes to develop one."



The first success story from the collaboration, the companies said, was the Goodyear Assurance TripleTred, an all-weather tire with a complicated multi-compound tread. Goodyear said it proved to be a commercial success for the tire company, winning numerous design awards. It was brought from concept to market in less than a year, Goodyear said, as a result of the modeling and predictive testing tools developed with Sandia.

Several lab technologies have enhanced the Sandia-Goodyear CRADA, including advanced computational mechanics, sophisticated geometry and meshing, computational simulation and verification, and structural and tire dynamics.

Goodyear said Sandia's work helped it appreciate the value of computer modeling in the early stages of development.

"We showed that modeling and simulation made a difference in developing better products faster," said Ted Blacker, Sandia's manager of simulation modeling sciences. "Our computational tools typically were used late in the process to understand why something broke and how to fix it. Now we use modeling more in the up-front stages, such as in the early design, to reduce testing."

Natural rubber producers to cut exports to shore up prices

European Rubber Journal

CHIANG MAI, Thailand — Major natural rubber producers Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia have agreed to cut exports in a bid to address low natural rubber prices.

A meeting of senior officials of the International Tripartite Rubber Council (ITRC) member states in Chiang Mai on Nov. 29 decided that immediate measures should be taken to address low natural rubber prices, according to a report by International Rubber Con-

sortium (IRCo), the operational arm of the ITRC.

The measures include the implementation of the Agreed Export Tonnage Scheme (AETS) as of December, which will see the three nations reduce their NR exports.

The council did not specify the size of the cut, but in a similar measure last year, the trio agreed to cut exports by 300,000 metric tons.

The ITRC meeting also took note of the current supply and de-

mand situation of NR, stating that prices were "not reflective of market fundamentals."

This is in view of the fact that the rainy season has started in major rubber producing areas, which

can lead to shortages of supply and, hence, higher prices.

In addition, stocks of NR in major importing countries, including China, have shown a declining trend, the ITRC noted.

USTMA urges NHTSA to dump outdated regs

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association (USTMA) is urging the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to rescind several "outdated, unnecessary or ineffective" regulations that have been on the books for decades.

"Our recommendations are aimed at modernizing regulations that apply to tire performance testing and ratings, some of which are 50 years old," USTMA President and CEO Anne Forristall Luke said in her Dec. 1 comments to NHTSA.

"The tires being manufactured today by USTMA members are far more highly engineered than those of decades ago, and the regulatory framework needs to evolve, too," Ms. Luke said.

The USTMA head made her comments in response to an Oct. 3 call for comments on the U.S. Department of Transportation's regulatory reform initiative.

Among the regulations the USTMA would like to see eliminated are:

- The bead unseating test under Federal Motor Vehicle Standards 109 and 139, which the USTMA calls "an outdated obsolete test method that does not provide a safety benefit for modern tires."
- The "plunger energy" tire strength test under 109 and 139, which the USTMA said was designed in the 1960s to test bias-ply and glass-belted tires, whereas tires today are radial and have steel belts.
- The 109/139 endurance test, which often results in unintended tread chunking that is neither a structural degradation of the tire nor a safety-related condition.
- Uniform Tire Quality Grading Standards, a 40-year-old rule that has several major shortcomings in its testing procedures and has never reached consumers with useful information.
- Sidewall marking requirements such as ply ratings and "Tubeless" and "Radial" designations, which are obsolete or redundant.

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Commerce levies duties in steel wire rod case

By Miles Moore

Senior Washington Reporter

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Commerce has determined that Belarus, Russia and the United Arab Emirates have been dumping carbon- and alloy-steel wire rod in the U.S. and will be subject to elevated duties.

Commerce's decision disregarded arguments from the U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association, which testified at a Nov. 16 hearing that Grade 1080 and higher steel wire rod — which is used to make steel reinforcing wire for tires — should be excluded from any duties.



Domestic steel wire rod suppliers cannot meet the volume and quality needs of the U.S. tire manufacturing industry, Tracey Norberg, USTMA senior vice president and general counsel, testified at a May 24 hearing.

The potential impact of Commerce's decision is yet to be quantified.

Commerce did, however, exempt several other product categories from the duties. The final antidumping margin found for Belarus was 280.02 percent as a Belarus-wide entity, the agency said in its Nov. 21 determination.

For Russia, the margins were 756.93 percent for Abinsk Electric Steel

Works Ltd. and JSC NLMK-Ural, and 436.8 percent for all others.

For the UAE, the margin was 84.1 percent for Emirates Steel Industries PJSC and for all others, the agency said.

The duties for Russia are being enforced retroactively 90 days, to Sept. 5, because Commerce said it also found that "critical circumstances" exist with respect to all Russian exporters/producers.

In announcing the duties, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said, "The United States is dedicated to free, fair and reciprocal trade with these countries, and this case was decided strictly on a full and fair assessment of the facts. The Department of Commerce is committed to protecting U.S. companies being hurt by foreign

manufacturers that refuse to play fair."

Four U.S. steel makers — Gerdaul Ameristeel US Inc., Nucor Corp., Keystone Consolidated Industries Inc. and Charter Manufacturing Co. Inc. (Charter Steel) — petitioned the International Trade Commission March 28, claiming that carbon and alloy steel-wire imports were causing them material injury.

Besides Belarus, Russia and the UAE, the countries the steel makers cited were Italy, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and Ukraine.

The International Trade Commission (ITC) made a preliminary determination of material injury Oct. 2, and held a hearing Nov. 16 allowing both advocates and opponents of the antidumping duties to testify.

With these final determinations, Commerce has instructed U.S. Customs and Border Protection to start collecting antidumping duties from these producers.

Commerce said that Belarus, Russia and the UAE exported 145,842 metric tons of the steel rod types under investigation, with an estimated value of \$49.7 million.

The ITC is scheduled to vote on a final determination of material injury Jan. 5. Commerce decided to extend its consideration of steel wire rod imports from South Africa and Ukraine until Jan. 8, and there may be a further extension, according to an agency spokesman.

Determinations on the remaining five countries is scheduled for March 15, he said.

Korean firm sues U.S. ITC over SR duties

NEW YORK — Kumho Petrochemical Co. Ltd. has filed a lawsuit in the U.S. Court of International Trade, seeking a judicial review of the U.S. International Trade Commission's decision to levy antidumping duties against emulsion styrene-butadiene rubber (ESBR) imports from South Korea.

The ITC voted 2-2 on Aug. 3 to make a final determination that ESBR imports from Korea, Poland, Mexico and Brazil were causing material injury to U.S. ESBR manufacturers through selling their products in the U.S. at less than fair value.

Within the ITC, a tie vote constitutes an affirmative decision.

On July 19, the U.S. Department of Commerce levied antidumping duty rates against ESBR imports from all four countries. In the case of Korea, Commerce set duty rates of 44.3 percent against Kumho and another Korean ESBR producer, Daewoo International Corp.

The agency set a duty rate of 9.66 percent for a third Korean firm, LG Chem. Ltd., and also set 9.66 percent as the general rate for all other Korean ESBR producers.

The ITC erred on several points in finding that Kumho's ESBR exports caused material injury to the U.S. industry, Kumho argued in its Nov. 11 complaint.

"The commission erred in concluding the subject imports were 'significant,'" Kumho said. "Specifically, the commission ignored record evidence that U.S. purchasers bought the subject imports for non-price reasons, including, inter alia, to ensure reliability of supply, availability of supply and quality of supply."

Toward the end of the period of investigation, ESBR imports declined, outpacing the decrease in U.S. consumption, according to Kumho.

"Because imports were drawn into the market by lack of available and reliable supply, and then receded as the domestic industry stabilized, the commission's conclusion that imports were significant is unsupported by substantial evidence and was otherwise not in accordance with law," it said.

Lion Elastomer L.L.C. and the now-bankrupt East West Copolymer L.L.C. petitioned the ITC in July 2016 for relief from ESBR imports.

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ON/OFF ROAD LIGHT TRUCK & SUV TIRE
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HIGH PERFORMANCE SUV TIRE
17 METRIC SIZES

ATREZZO SH406
ALL-SEASON PERFORMANCE TIRE
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Opinion

Ride the wave of the AV future

If industry experts are right — and there's plenty of evidence to support their beliefs — it won't be long until autonomous vehicles (AVs) become as much a part of our everyday lives as death, taxes and inclement weather.

In fact, those days might be closer than you think. Audi A.G. introduced semi-autonomous vehicles earlier this year, while Tesla Inc. expects to offer its AV in 2018. Meanwhile, Volkswagen A.G. may have a vehicle on the market by 2019, and there's evidence others manufacturers will have something available by 2020.

During the recent SEMA and AAPEX shows in Las Vegas, Richard Smallwood, president and CEO of Sumitomo Rubber North America

Inc., and Neal Ganguli, automotive supplier consulting leader for Deloitte Consulting L.L.P., discussed some of the challenges and trends that will occur naturally as AVs become common in our lives.

Both speakers noted while many factors remain a question mark — including acceptance by the public at large — there is no question that AVs will disrupt the transportation industry as much as the introduction of internal combustion engines did to the horse and buggy a century ago.

Mr. Ganguli, speaking at AAPEX, warned that aftermarket officials must figure out ways to re-

position their product portfolios to reduce risk and to innovate services and business models to replace revenue and profit for at-risk segments.

He predicted growth for vehicle content and vehicle production, AV, electric and connected content and software, and aftermarket services.

Mr. Smallwood, meanwhile, laid out a scenario in which fleet operators jump headfirst into AVs, if only to survive. He told an audience at the Tire Industry Association's Tire Industry Honors Night that AVs can eliminate as much as 75 percent of the cost to deliver a package.

Still skeptical about AVs? Consid-

er this: Mr. Ganguli said it costs an average of \$1 per mile to operate a vehicle in the U.S. AVs, meanwhile, can be driven more often and operate under shared usage, dropping the cost to about 67 cents per mile.

However, the biggest takeaway for tire dealers is this: Mr. Smallwood noted that AVs still will need tires.

That's not to say the model won't change: total miles traveled will increase, and tread life and the time between tire replacement might grow as technology monitors vehicle maintenance and repair needs.

As shared usage becomes common — think of you and your friends owning or sharing the costs of a driverless Uber-like vehicle — he predicted tire dealers will be dealing with more fleets than individual vehicle owners. AVs will drive more under this arrangement, perhaps as much as 70,000-75,000 miles a year. That, Mr. Ganguli said, will impact the types of parts, replacement cycles and models for repair and maintenance.

"There are going to be needs that do not exist today," he said. "So...there's going to be opportunities for this industry to capture."

The time for AVs is fast-approaching. Think of them not as a threat, but as an opportunity.

It would behoove everyone in the transportation industry not only to prepare for these days, but also look for ways to stay ahead of it: Monitor industry trends; invest in the latest technology; and consider ways your dealership can leverage the evolution toward AVs to become a hub for the future as opposed to a relic of the past.

TIRE BUSINESS OUR VIEW



FORUM

Maybe it's best to let NAFTA be

By Keith Crain

I have always thought there were flaws in the way the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was put together. It appears to many people in the U.S. and Canada that the treaty favors Mexico greatly.

Just look at where the investment is going. It would seem hard to refute that the treaty has done great things for Mexico at the expense of its northern neighbors.

Whether we are talking about full-



Crain

pledged assembly plants or supplier plants, Mexico is booming with new automotive investment.

Actually, this investment has been going on for well over a decade, ever since the treaty was enacted. The strongest argument for investing in Mexico is simply that it

has high-quality workers who are being paid a fraction of what the same worker would be paid in Canada or the U.S.

Despite this strong imbalance, everyone seems quite adamant that NAFTA should be left alone and that there should be no changes to the treaty.

I must admit, I am a bit confused by this attitude. But I would be the first to agree that the companies impacted the most should have the biggest say in what, if any, changes should be made.

I have no doubt that if the parties walk away from NAFTA, it would not be long before there is some sort of tariff on cars.

NAFTA is less than perfect, but if it is acceptable to the parties involved, then the best policy might simply be to leave it alone.

Mr. Crain is chairman of Crain Communications Inc., parent company of Tire Business, and is editor-in-chief of Detroit-based Automotive News.

Letters to the Editor

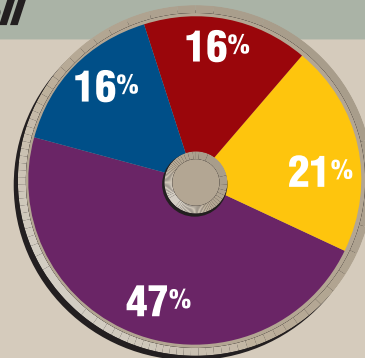
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TIRE BUSINESS Online Poll

Question: How does the holiday season affect business?

- We will be short-staffed with employees taking time off.
- We will push to end the year strong.
- It all depends on the weather.
- All of the above.



Total Votes: 62 Poll dates: Nov. 30 - Dec. 14, 2017

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Officials on hand for the christening of Bridgestone's headquarters in Nashville include (left to right) Gordon Knapp, Bridgestone Americas president and CEO; Masaaki Tsuya, Bridgestone Corp. CEO; Tennessee Gov., Bill Haslam; Nashville Mayor Megan Barry; and Bill Hagerty, U.S. Ambassador to Japan.

Bridgestone christens HQ tower

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Bridgestone Americas Inc. has christened Bridgestone Tower, its \$200 million, 514,000-sq.-ft., 30-story North American headquarters in downtown Nashville.

The building will house more than 1,700 employees.

Among the dignitaries at the grand opening and ribbon-cutting, held Dec. 13, were Masaaki Tsuya, Bridgestone Corp. CEO and representative executive officer.; Gordon Knapp, Bridgestone Americas president and CEO; Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam; Nashville Mayor Megan Barry; and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Bill Hagerty.

Mr. Knapp called it a "historic day," admiring the facility as part of the Nashville skyline.

"This effort was only made possible due to the tremendous support we have from Nashville city leadership and Tennessee state leadership, and the Nashville community," Mr. Knapp said. "Additionally, through the relentless work of our teammates and partners, Bridgestone Tower has come to life."

Bridgestone also celebrated the naming of honorary Bridgestone Drive, the street in front of Bridgestone Tower. The street is located at 4th Avenue South, between Korean Veterans Boulevard and Broadway, marked by six street signs.

During the event, Bridgestone announced a five-year extension to its naming rights agreement for Bridgestone Arena, home of the National Hockey League's Nashville Predators.

Bridgestone has called Nashville its home since 1992, when the company acquired Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. and moved its primary operations from Akron.

In addition to the 1,700 employees at Bridgestone Tower, the company has more than 450 employees and contractors housed at a separate facility in the area, the 77,000-sq.-ft. Bridgestone Operations Center in the city's Antioch area. These employees work primarily in financial shared services, information technology and customer support.

Together, both facilities house more than 2,200 employees, including corporate staff and those working for business units Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations; Bridgestone Retail Operations; Firestone Building Products; Firestone Fibers & Textiles; Firestone Natural Rubber; and Firestone Industrial Products businesses.

That number includes roughly 600 jobs that were relocated to Nashville from Bloomington, Ill., and Indianapolis.

Titan expects earnings improvements in 2018

Tire Business staff

QUINCY, Ill. — Titan International Inc.'s board of directors is expressing its confidence in Titan management's ability to return the company to the black in 2018, saying the company is "well positioned to continue on a positive trend" heading into next year.

The board's support follows improvements in the firm's operations the past few quarters, even though the company was in the red in the quarter and nine months ended Sept. 30.

According to President and CEO Paul Reitz — who was appointed to the company's board at the recent board meeting — Titan projects improvements of 25 to 40 percent in gross profits and 50 to 100 percent in the

EBITDA pre-tax operating income.

"After working hard to manage our way through three years of a cyclical downturn and then post three consecutive quarters of revenue growth this year, it was great to be able to present to our board a 2018 plan that continues to reflect growth across all of our business units," Mr. Reitz said.

Titan also is projecting 2018 revenue growth of 7 to 12 percent over 2017, Mr. Reitz said, building on double-digit sales gains in the third quarter and nine months of 2017.

The company reported losses from operations for the third quarter and nine months of \$5.14 million and \$8.24 million, improvements of 18.5 and 46 percent, respectively, vs. the 2016 periods. Third quarter and nine-



Reitz

month sales jumped 21.2 and 14.1 percent to \$371 million and \$1.09 billion respectively.

Other key elements of the 2018 plan include:

- Reducing the selling, general and administrative/R&D costs to 10 to 10.5 percent of sales while close-

ly monitoring cash management and working capital; and

- Keeping capital spending to \$35 million to \$45 million, or less than depreciation.

Mr. Reitz's appointment brings the number of directors to eight in accordance with the company's by-laws, Titan said. Mr. Reitz's term expires at Titan's 2018 annual shareholders' meeting.

Titan Chairman Maurice Taylor lauded Mr. Reitz's "leadership and vision," and said, "These strengths along with his background and knowledge of our business will make him an excellent board member."

Mr. Reitz, 45, was hired by Titan in 2010 as chief financial officer. He was promoted to president in February 2014 and to CEO in January 2017.

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Autonomous vehicles becoming a reality

Continued from page 1

ble. The trend is not just in consumer transport — definitely in commercial and freight as well,” he said.

Both speakers noted there will be a shift from driving personally owned vehicles to consumers’ riding in AVs owned by several people or a fleet.

The economics of mobility will change significantly. Currently it costs an average of \$1 per mile to operate a personal vehicle in the U.S., Mr. Ganguli told his audience. AVs can be driven more often and operate under shared usage, so the cost drops to about 67 cents per mile while freeing up driver time.

With more time for productive and entertainment consumption in an autonomous and connected environment, the cost drops significantly to about 30 cents per mile, he said.

It is this math that is driving much of the investment in the AV industry, he said, noting unprecedented levels of investment and partnerships in technology development.

“What is driving it is there is a very strong economic sense, coupled with regulatory forces, coupled with available technology and the openness of industry players to advance change, and that is what’s driving the transportation toward mobility,” he said.

“We see urban areas leading adoption...but the question is when and not if. We are seeing the transformation driven by populated urban areas across the world.”

During his address, Mr. Smallwood noted that the idea of getting into a driverless vehicle that pulls up to your house to take you somewhere isn’t a foreign concept.

He half-jokingly pointed out that even attendees at the honors night willingly did what their mothers told them not to do: They got into a strange car (a taxi or Uber service) with a stranger and, not knowing the driver’s qualifications or the condition of the vehicle, paid for the privilege of being transported to their destination.

The day will come soon when that taxi doesn’t even have a human driver. Tech company NuTonomy Inc. plans to launch an autonomous taxi service in Singapore in 2018; Lyft Inc. predicts a majority of its taxi service vehicles will be autonomous by 2021, Mr. Smallwood said.

Timing

Speculation on when AVs will become commonplace changes frequently, Mr. Smallwood said. Audi A.G.’s semi-autonomous vehicle was introduced this year; Tesla Inc. expects to offer its AV by 2018; Volkswagen A.G. may have a vehicle on the market by 2019; and others plan to make vehicles available by 2020, according to Mr. Smallwood.

But there will be a major difference in the rate of adoption of such vehicles between the consumer market and the commercial market, he said.

“On the consumer side you’re going to have slower adaptation,” Mr. Smallwood noted. “Why? It’s the emotion. People are afraid to give up control to a robot. Seventy-eight percent of people surveyed said that they are afraid to ride a fully autonomous car.”

But it’s a different situation with the commercial market, which is driven by economics.

“Businesses are going to be forced to adapt quickly in order to survive.”

“Businesses are going to be forced to adapt quickly in order to survive.”

Richard Smallwood,
President, CEO of Sumitomo Rubber North America Inc.

he said. “When the trucking fleet you compete with starts using autonomous vehicles, what happens to their operating costs? Seventy-five percent of costs for delivering a package on a truck is labor. You just eliminated 75 percent by having a robot doing it.

“Will you have the option of not competing? You can’t. You have to compete,” he added. “This will be driven by dollars and cents.”

Acceptance rates will vary by age groups — older people will be more reluctant to accept AVs than the younger generation, who grew up with online gaming — and by country — a nation such as the U.S. that has a long history with personal vehicles will be more reluctant to give up the car than developing nations, such as India or China.

“It’s not going to be something that happens slowly. I think it’s going to be as we age out and other nations develop, it happens rapidly,” Mr. Smallwood said.

“It’s human adaptation, not technology, that’s going to be the greatest hurdle. Technology will happen. There’s dollars at stake, so technology’s going to happen. But when the emotion of the human blocks it, it’s a different story,” he said.

Impact on society

Nearly 1.3 million people worldwide, including 33,000 in the U.S., die each year in vehicular accidents, he said, noting that human error accounts for 90 percent of those wrecks.

“If we can eliminate the human error, we could reduce the accidents, right? That’s the whole idea behind the autonomous vehicles. Autonomous vehicles, they don’t drink, they don’t get sleepy, they don’t text...they don’t get distracted.”

However, “autonomous vehicles don’t need to be perfect. They just need to be better than us,” he said. But they will be held to a higher standard than humans, and there will be more scrutiny when an AV crash does happen, he said.

Such a scenario presents a new problem: “Who’s responsible when an autonomous vehicle crashes?... Is it the company that designed the software? Is it the vehicle manufacturer? Is it the driver, meaning the passenger — you’re not the driver, you’re the passenger now. Was it the fault of the car’s communications (system)...or do they just go to no-fault insurance?” Mr. Smallwood asked.

AVs will save an estimated \$1.3 trillion per year through accident avoidance and fuel savings, Mr. Smallwood said.

He also noted the average annual cost to own and operate a traditional vehicle, which usually is parked 95 percent of the time, is about \$8,700.

One autonomous vehicle could do the work of two or three household vehicles — the AV takes you to work, the car drives back and picks up your wife, takes her to work, then takes the kids to school or practice or wherever, he said.

AV passengers will be more productive as they can do computer work or read while riding in the AV to their offices.

AVs also will provide mobility to a larger percentage of the population.

“Millions of people who rely on oth-

ers for transportation will gain greater independence,” Mr. Smallwood said, including the disabled, the elderly and even children who need rides to extra-curricular activities.

Concerns

On the downside, AVs pose several problems that must be addressed, including cybersecurity, privacy and individual freedom.

“Hacking is, I think, one of the major issues. It’s going to be a problem. How do you stop it? It will be an open system because, for autonomous vehicles to work optimally, they have to have an open system so they can communicate with other cars and they can communicate with other stuff on the road,” Mr. Smallwood said.

The AV’s computer system also is gathering 4,000 gigabytes of data every day, such as where you went, how long you were there, if someone was with you and what you were talking about, he said. Such data could be sold to marketers, who will cull more information on your personal habits.

“So is society willing to sacrifice even more privacy for the additional safety? That’s a real issue,” he said.

Mr. Smallwood also questioned whether people will fork over decision-making to the computerized car and just be along for the ride.

Other potential questions include:

- Will you have the choice of driving yourself, or is the car always going to drive? (Some cities will demand only AVs operate in certain urban areas.)
- Will you choose the speed, or will the car choose it?
- Will you get to choose the route, or will the car always choose based on efficiency?

Impact on industry

“When it comes to vehicle ownership, the most likely scenario is that private vehicle ownership will drop significantly as AVs increase their presence in the market. It is predicted that new car sales could drop by as much as 40 percent. That is substantial,” Mr. Smallwood said.

Even today, 10 percent of city dwellers say they don’t need to own a car, and some city planners already are creating areas where only AVs are allowed on the roads, he noted.

“Vehicle manufacturers are rapidly changing their business models. They’re moving to be mobility providers, not just vehicle manufacturers. They have already started that pivot in a different direction,” he said.

There also will be the entry of new competitors in the automotive industry and most likely collaboration between technology companies and vehicle manufacturers, he predicted.

As happens with every technological change, there will be disruption and redeployment of the workforce, he predicted.

“If new car sales drop by 40 percent, what happens to the 925,000 (workers) involved in vehicle and parts manufacturing, 1.2 million involved in new car sales, 2 million in parts retail trade,

450,000 automotive repairers, 450,000 in auto body?” he asked.

“What about the 4 million professionals drivers? We’re starting to talk about very real numbers here who will be displaced with this change in technology.”

However, the tire industry likely will weather the storm.

“The good news, honestly, is AVs will still need tires. But the current manufacturing/distribution model will change significantly,” Mr. Smallwood predicted.

Tire consumption will be about the

risk segments.

Mr. Ganguli predicted growth opportunities in three areas: vehicle content and vehicle production; AV, electric and connected content and software; and aftermarket services, “which we see as the biggest driver for growth in this industry going forward.”

As autonomous vehicles take on a more utilitarian function, people will become emotionally removed from the driving experience, and they are likely to lose their passion for the vehicle, Mr. Smallwood predicted.



“There are going to be needs that do not exist today... With the vehicle content and the infrastructure around it changing, there’s going to be opportunities for this industry to capture.”

Neal Ganguli,
Automotive supplier consulting leader
for Deloitte Consulting L.L.P.

same, while total miles traveled actually will climb due to increased use of the AV. Tire tread life and the interval between tire replacement will be extended due to the AV’s constant monitoring of its maintenance and repair needs.

“Tires will become more monetized because if you lose passion for the vehicle and you lose passion for driving it, then it’s nothing more than transportation. Then the tire becomes round and black and holds air,” he said.

Tire dealers will be dealing more with fleets than individual vehicle owners, he predicted, if consumers adopt vehicle-sharing models or use fleet-owned taxis.

“There will be a shift from consumer purchasers to fleet purchasers, because if it goes to a shared model where people no longer own the car...those are fleet items, those aren’t consumers,” Mr. Smallwood said.

“So the buy/sell process changes dramatically. That will force consolidation of distribution and manufacturing. So it has the possibility of impacting the entire chain.”

Mr. Ganguli noted that AVs could drive 70,000-75,000 miles a year under a shared program, a level of usage the will impact the types of parts, replacement cycles and models for repair and maintenance services.

“There are going to be needs that do not exist today,” he said “So the point here is with the vehicle content and the infrastructure around it changing, there’s going to be opportunities for this industry to capture.”

Some content and parts in vehicles are going to be at risk of commoditization or even elimination, while other parts will be driven by technology.

Mr. Ganguli said volume growth is an uncertainty and so is the impact of disruption.

“We see volume increasing in the future. We do see high disruption from vehicle content driven by new entrants, driven by industry peers like yourselves who are not sitting still and who are making moves to get into these technologies,” he told the AAPEX audience.

He said the various automotive aftermarket players will have to figure out ways to reposition their product portfolios to reduce risk and to innovate new services and business models to replace revenue and profit for some of the at-

“So brand differentiation on vehicles becomes pretty different. If you look at it, why have the ultimate driving machine if you aren’t driving it? Are you going to buy a Porsche or BMW if you’re just going to sit in there and let it do whatever it’s going to do?”

“If the driving experience is controlled by the car and its obedience to the law — which it will be — what functional difference is there between a Ford Focus and a Porsche 911?” he asked.

“The driver will eventually lose their emotional connection to the vehicle and the driving experience. The car becomes nothing more than transportation.”

Predictions

Mr. Smallwood predicted several scenarios for the adoption of AVs in the near future:

- Level 5 fully autonomous vehicles will be used for taxis, buses, heavy equipment and long-haul trucking. However, trade unions will be the stumbling block to adoption, he said;
- There will be more rapid adaptation of level 5 AVs in large urban areas, where a majority of the population resides, due to the convenience, cost-savings and even mandates by city planners; and
- There will be gravitation to level 3 or level 4 semi-autonomous vehicles in more rural areas to provide a balance between safety, convenience and pleasure.

Mr. Ganguli predicted several trends for the aftermarket:

- Transformation of in-vehicle content and service infrastructure as the industry evolves toward electric, connected and autonomous drive;
- Higher vehicle utilization in shared mobility will drive more frequent parts maintenance and replacement and vehicle service needs;
- Emergence of new B2B and B2C channels to accommodate new customer groups, accompanied by convergence across channels;
- Increased access to end-consumer triggered partnerships across value chains and OEM direct-to-consumer path; and
- Creation of new business models and revenue streams related to in-vehicle consumption (i.e. media and diagnostics) as well as infrastructure enabling.

Grooming good workers takes time, commitment

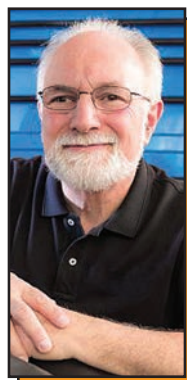
By Dan Marinucci

Savvy management teams commit themselves to the long-term grooming of younger technicians. They recognize that growing their own talent sounds great, but it also requires patience and persistence.

To use a sports analogy, an executive may be fortunate to sign one or more budding superstars — advanced athletes who improve a team immediately.

On the other hand, most rookies have to be coached along the way before they're comfortable competing in the big leagues.

Occasionally, a rookie exceeds expectations with a stellar performance in a pressure-cooker game. But that's the exception, not the rule.



Dan Marinucci is a freelance automotive service writer and former editor of two automotive service magazines.

Unfortunately, some tire dealers and service shop operators behave as if greenhorn techs are supposed to turn labor hours like seasoned veterans of the service bays.

That's an erroneous and counterproductive assumption about younger techs. But the notion seems to endure among many managers.

They whine to me that the younger techs aren't ready for the shop. Then these owners and managers add insult to injury by asserting that vocational schools don't prepare kids for the working world.

Surely, some aspiring technicians are better prepared for life in your service bay than others.

But long-term, the entire management team may have far more influence on that youngster's potential than any factors outside the business. Please consider these proactive steps.

First, I urge bosses to clarify their approach during the hiring process.

Be sure prospective hires understand that they must prove their abilities and knowledge gradually, steadily.

Emphasize that you'll move them along at the pace that suits them — no faster, no slower. Everyone from the service manager and shop foreman to the other technicians will judge their abilities, and therefore, the pace of their growth and the level of their assignments.

Second, tailoring the workload to a younger tech as closely as practically possible is the way to keep that tech on board.

The service manager and shop foreman, for example, should caucus often to discuss the progress of younger techs.

What's more, they should meet with each tech regularly to offer feedback and constructive criticism. Then adjust each tech's workload accordingly.

Younger technicians share something with rookie athletes: They thrive on feedback from their coaches.

The conscientious ones want to suc-

Unfortunately, some tire dealers and service shop operators behave as if greenhorn techs are supposed to turn labor hours like seasoned veterans of the service bays.

ceed so they crave hearing what they're doing well — not to mention how to improve the things they aren't doing well yet.

The death knell for rookies or young techs is indifferent, unresponsive coaches or managers. Insufficient or ineffective feedback breeds discour-

agement, then discontent.

I have met my share of younger techs who either moved to another service facility or else abandoned the auto repair trade because of three problems: Inadequate or ineffective feedback, unreasonably difficult assignments or else boring work.

Some of them have endured, for instance, six months of nothing but oil changes and tire repairs. Others described being upbraided for not producing — whatever "producing" meant because bosses never defined the word.

Third, rookie athletes and greenhorn technicians have another thing in common with each other. That is, ineffective leadership may squander their potential by failing to lead, coach and groom them.

Sometimes the sports analogy seems trite. But make no mistake about this: Many aspiring technicians whom one boss labeled worthless have

developed and thrived at another auto service facility.

Last but not least, a prospective technician who becomes a long-term success at a competitor's service facility may suggest that your leadership style is lacking.

Keep an open mind about your approach; never hesitate to embrace new ideas and different ways to coach and groom younger technicians.

Dan can be reached via e-mail at tirebusiness@crain.com. His previous columns are available at www.tirebusiness.com.

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COMMERCIAL TIRE SERVICE

Reinventing the tire and wheel

Innovative wheel design could revolutionize tire industry

By Peggy J. Fisher

Did you know that the wheel was invented more than 5,000 years ago?

It is uncertain exactly what culture invented the wheel, but it is believed to have been first used in the late Neolithic period (3500 B.C.) in ancient Mesopotamia primarily for spinning pottery.

It wasn't until around 300 years later that someone figured out it would be good to use on wheelbarrows and then chariots.

Since then, technological advancements have been made in the design of wheels, and stone has given way to wood, steel and aluminum since Roman technicians were probably filing numerous workman's comp claims for back injuries every time they had to change a stone wheel.

By comparison, the tire is a relatively new invention.

Just 173 years ago, in 1844, Charles Goodyear invented vulcanization to produce rubber tires, and in 1846 Scottish engineer Robert William Thomson invented and patented his pneumatic tire design.

Unfortunately, his idea was well before its time and not a commercial success. (Everyone thinks that John Boyd Dunlop invented and patented the pneumatic tire in 1887, but in 1891 this patent was invalidated in favor of the earlier Thomson patent.)

In 1888, Michelin Tire Co. was launched in France. In 1890, Dunlop began production of pneumatic tires in Ireland, and in 1898, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. was founded in Akron.

Since then, the pneumatic tire has continued to evolve to the technologically advanced product it is today, but essentially it has remained at its foundation essentially the same: made of vulcanized rubber, pneumatic and black and round.

If you had to design a tire and wheel assembly from scratch today, what would it look like?

Forget rubber. Forget pneumatic tire design. Forget it having to be individual wheel and tire components.

Think outside the box. How would you design a tire/wheel assembly that is capable of carrying heavy loads, operating at high speeds, is long wearing and provides good ride and traction but is totally different from tires that we know today?

Well, if you are stopping to think about it now, it'll be years before you finish reading this article.

Fortunately, someone else with way more smarts and education has taken on this challenge and done the innovative thinking for you and me already, and the idea he has come up with is quite novel and exciting.

In fact, it could revolutionize the whole tire industry as we know it.

In 2011, Zoltan Kemeny patented

his first Air Suspension Wheel (ASW) design, a tire and wheel component that looks nothing even remotely like tires and wheels we ride on today.

Mr. Kemeny has five Ph.D degrees in surveying, architectural, civil, structural and seismic engineering and holds 280 patents in the fields of seismic, mechanical, structural, civil and earthquake engineering, as well as in medical electronics, semiconductors, control systems, green energy, engine technology and optics.

His story is very interesting. He was born and educated in communist Hungary and was educated and taught at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics for 10 years.

He escaped to Spain from communist Hungary in 1981, and in 1983 he was granted political asylum in the U.S., where he now lives in the Phoenix metropolitan area and is president of Global Air Cylinder Wheels.

Unique invention

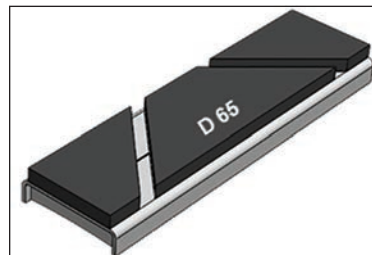
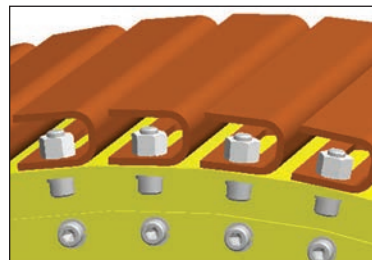
His invention, the air suspension wheel (ASW) has a round, rigid rim made of steel, which houses its own suspension made up of non-radial shock-absorbing air cylinder shocks that are attached to the rim and transfer torque between the hub and rim.

The shocks are pressurized with

provided too.

The sidewall hermetically seals the internal shocks from dust, mud, snow, ice and water. The air cylinders themselves are sealed for life.

The tread is made up of many in-



Two types of gripping bars

dividually replaceable, bolt-on, steel reinforced tread blocks (gripping bars) that are bonded to a hard polyurethane extrusion cover.

ASWs that are driven on hard pavement at elevated speeds for extended periods of time need a polyurethane ribbed layer to protect the road from

affected by the weight of the vehicle. Also winding up the cylinders will affect traction as well.

The weight of an air suspension wheel is close to the same as a pneumatic tire it replaces, so there are no worries about having to reduce loads due to increased vehicle weight. There also is no speed limit to which ASWs must be restricted.

As far as maintenance goes, the nitrogen in the air cylinders should be replaced every five to six years. This is done by removing a sidewall to get to the cylinders.

During this time, the air-cylinder seals and wipers should be checked, and the rod ends should be greased as well. There is no need to worry about inflation pressure or tire balance as is currently required with pneumatic tires since there is no air pressure to maintain and the suspension system automatically balances itself.

There are several additional benefits to this design. The first is reduced rolling resistance.

Replacing a standard tire/wheel assembly with an air suspension wheel can reduce rolling resistance by as much as 30 percent, an improvement that could yield fuel savings of 3 to 12 percent. Softer ASWs save more fuel than harder ones.

ASWs are impervious to sidewall

wheel-loader tire replacement with air-suspension steel wheels (51-, 57- and 63-inch rim sizes, 9-13 feet OD).

On mining trucks, vehicle life is typically 20 years — assuming they are maintained as already noted — as compared with eight months on average for a rubber tire.

Even at a price of three times the cost of a comparable rubber tire's price, the return on investment is terrific.

It is like buying three sets of tires and getting 27 more set for free. On off-the-road equipment, this is a no-brainer,

A prodigious inventor

The original air suspension wheel invented in 2011 originally was designed for agricultural vehicles. However, Mr. Kemeny has not been sitting on his hands or his head for the last six years.

In 2012, he patented the air suspension star wheel and spare wheel for passenger cars. In 2013, he patented the Stealth Security Wheel with run-flat capabilities.

In 2014, he designed an air-suspension wheel for construction equipment and in 2015, a wheel specifically for Caterpillar mining and construction equipment.

This year he is completing an ASW design for drag race cars, in 2018 his design for military vehicles will be completed, in 2019 aircraft landing gear ASWs should be finished and in 2020 his attention will be on Formula 1 race car ASWs that can run at speeds of 175-180 miles per hour.

You may be thinking that ASWs will never see the light of day on commercial trucks and buses. However, technology is rapidly changing in this market, too.

Autonomous vehicle manufacturers are not looking at automatic tire inflation systems and tire pressure monitoring systems for the vehicles they are designing. They are looking at tire/wheel technologies that don't require inflation pressure at all.

There are many scenarios that will demand airless tires/wheels. Imagine a line of six platooning trucks that all come to a complete stop because one tire on one vehicle went flat. That's not going to be acceptable.

Or autonomous trucks that do almost everything by themselves automatically, but the driver still has to babysit his vehicle's tires. I don't think so.

The world slowly advanced from the stone wheel invented 5,000 years ago, and pneumatic tires have made mega technological strides in the last 173 years as advances in technology have sped up.

Now get ready for the next big thing in tire/wheel concepts as constantly evolving technology forces us all to think outside the box to face a brave new world.

Peggy Fisher is president of Tire-Stamp Inc. and is based in Troy, Mich. She can be reached via e-mail at tirebusiness@crain.com. Her previous columns are available at www.tirebusiness.com.



Suspension wheel



ASW sidewall

dry air or nitrogen. The photo above shows an ASW with 12 compressed-gas-type shocks that do not generate heat. The load on the hub uniformly compresses the shocks under the hub as the wheel turns and decompresses the shocks above.

So while the shocks deflect greatly, the rim does not. This suspension replaces the flexing sidewalls of pneumatic tires to provide a comfortable ride even on very rough terrain.

The suspension system in the wheel can be made harder or softer depending on the application simply by adjusting the pressure in the shocks.

The sidewall is bolted on and can be made of steel or armored for military applications. The sidewall material is customizable and can be specifically made for the application, so if a different material is required, it can be

damage, especially if heavy loads are carried. Military vehicles would definitely need polyurethane tread blocks.

Stronger road grip and traction can be achieved using cast-iron gripping bars, which are also available. Treads last three to five years depending on road conditions and use, but the plates can be removed and retreaded with polyurethane and installed back on the wheel.

Retreaders may look forward to having a new product to include in their retread portfolios.

ASW advantages

The ASW suspension provides up to two times the suspension deflection, two times the load-bearing capacity and five times the impact resistance of the rubber tire it replaces.

The traction provided by ASWs is

cuts, gunfire, explosives and knives. Tire fires are a thing of the past, too, since there is nothing that can ignite and feed a fire like rubber does, and it just isn't possible for an ASW to blow out.

There is no need for disposal concerns either since ASWs are 100-percent recyclable, and there is less chance of sinking and skidding on ice, snow, mud and sand with their flow-through tread design.

Finally ASWs roll dirt roads smooth, resulting in less road maintenance.

The big advantage of ASWs is that they last as long as the vehicle and can be amortized over years rather than treated as consumables.

Currently, they are best used on off-road vehicles in mining, construction, agriculture, forestry and in the military. The initial target market for ASWs is giant mining truck and

COMMERCIAL TIRE SERVICE

Atturo adds van, touring tires to growing portfolio

Tire Business staff

LAS VEGAS — Atturo Tire Corp. has expanded its portfolio to include a commercial van tire line, the CV400, and an all-season performance touring tire, the AZ610, in order to service two growing U.S. market segments.

St. Louis-based Atturo is launching the CV400 in 10 C-rated sizes, ranging from 195/70R15C to 235/65R6C and backing it with a 40,000-mile limited treadwear warranty.

The new line is designed for a new generation commercial van segment, which includes vehicles such as the

Ford Transit or Ram Pro Master, Atturo said. These vehicles not only have become popular for urban service and delivery fleets, but they also increasingly are being modified for camping, luxury conversions and group transportation.

Recent industry statistics show that the original equipment tire size for the Ford Transit and Ram Pro Master, 235/65R16, is the No. 3 original equipment light truck tire size in the U.S. In addition, these vehicles tend to be in constant use, resulting in frequent replacement.

The CV400 tread pattern features

broad shoulder blocks with deep sipes for stable handling for high center-of-gravity vehicles. The interlocking chevron center blocks maintain directional tracking, Atturo said, while three center channels improve water dispersion for improved traction and braking.

The CV400 size range is certified for international markets as well, Atturo said.

The AZ610 is designed for the current generation of SUVs and crossovers in North America, offering a smooth, quiet ride with all-season performance qualities, Atturo said,

noting that the crossover and small SUV segment is the fastest growing area of the vehicle market.

The AZ610 features a stylish side-

wall designed to match the angular design trends seen more and more in these vehicles. A variable-pitch tread pattern is optimized for a smooth and quiet ride.

Atturo is backing the AZ610 with a 60,000-mile limited treadwear warranty, the longest in the private-brand company's history.

The new ranges continue Atturo's manufacturing arrangement with Taiwan's Federal Corp.

Atturo also disclosed at the recent SEMA Show 10 new sizes for its Trail Blade Boss M/T line in 17-, 18-, 20-, 22- and 24-inch rim diameters.



Atturo-CV-400



Saskatchewan raises per-axle payload limits

Tire Business staff

REGINA, Saskatchewan — The province of Saskatchewan has increased the payload per-axle limit to 8,500 kilograms from 7,700, paving the way for truckers to use wide-base single heavy-duty truck tires.

Saskatchewan becomes the fourth Canadian province to adopt the increased payloads, which Michelin North America (Canada) Inc. argues allows the trucking industry to increase hauling and payload capacity, while reducing its carbon footprint.

The other provinces with the higher payload limits are Manitoba, Quebec and Ontario, although Manitoba's revised regulations pertain to trucks traveling provincial highways that meet national load ratings, according to Michelin.

Freight transportation is one of the biggest greenhouse gas challenges — and opportunities — responsible for 7 percent of Canada's overall emissions, Michelin said.

Switching to the wide-base singles from duals yields an estimated greenhouse gas (GHG) impact equivalent to removing 1.8 cars off the road for every heavy truck, Michelin claimed.

"...We are particularly encouraged to see that Saskatchewan is implementing an environmentally friendly approach to commercial mobility, which also helps the trucking sector improve its competitiveness," said Jeff MacLean, president, Michelin North America (Canada).

"Accelerating the adoption of... wide-base single tires is one important way that government and industry can use innovative technologies to help drive Canada's clean-growth agenda."

Michelin singled out the leaders of the government of Saskatchewan, the province's Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure and the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, who worked collaboratively on enacting the regulations.



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Super Tire Inc.
4769A Eastpark Drive, Houston, Texas 77028
Tel: 713-670-0218
Fax: 713-670-0682
Email: admin@super-tire.com
Web: www.super-tire.com

Brands: Dakota [P,HP,LTR]; Royalback [P,HP,LTR,MTR]; Super A [STR,STB,LTB,MTB,F/I,OTR,IND]

Sutong China Tire Resources Inc.
33402 Highway 290, Hockley, Texas 77447
Tel: 713-690-5500
Fax: 713-690-5501
Email: mikem@sutongctr.com
Web: www.sutongctr.com

Brands: Hemisphere [P,LTR,MTR]; Hi-Run [ATV,LTB,ST]; Lande [F/I,IND,OTR]; Long March [MTR]; Pinnacle [P,LTR]; Super Cargo [MTR,STR]; Super Strong [F/I,IND,OTR]; Synergy [P,LTR,MTR]

Taray International/Ozka Americas
(Represents Özka Lastik ve Kauçuk, Turkey),
112 N. Collier Blvd., Marco Island, Fla. 34145
Tel: 800-526-0049
Email: sales@ozkausa.com
Web: www.ozkausa.com
Brand: Ozka [F/I, IND]

TBC Corp.*
(Represents Sumitomo Rubber Industries Ltd., Japan, and Qingdao Sailun Tire Co. Ltd., China),
4300 TBC Way, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. 33410
Tel: 866-822-4968
Fax: 800-467-4638
Web: www.tbcbands.com
Brands: Sailun [P,HP,LTR,STR,MTR]; Sumitomo [P,HP,LTR,MTR]

Tireco Inc.*
(Represents Nankang Rubber Tire Corp. Ltd. and Hangzhou Zhongce Rubber Co.),
500 W. 190th St., Suite 600, Gardena, Calif. 90248
Tel: 310-767-7990
Fax: 310-217-9267
Email: sales@tireco.com
Web: www.tireco.com
Brands: Nankang [P,HP,LTR]; Westlake [P,HP,LTR]

TP Commercial Solutions L.L.C.
(Subsidiary of Prometeon Tyre Group, Italy/China),
12707 High Bluff Drive, San Diego, Calif. 92190
Tel: 800-747-3554
Fax: 706-368-5888
Web: www.prometeon.com
Brands: Pirelli [MTR]; Formula [MTR]

Tri-Ace Wheel & Tire Corp.
(Subsidiary of Hong Kong Tri-Ace Tire Corp. Ltd., China),
606 Greens Road, Suite 100, Houston, Texas 77032
Tel: 844-887-4223
Email: jack.bidding@tri-acetireusa.com
Brands: Mark-Ma [P,LTR]; Tri-Ace [P,LTR,MTR]

Triangle Tires USA L.L.C.
(Subsidiary of Triangle Tyre Group Co. Ltd., China)
117 Seaboard Lane, Suite F100, Franklin, Tenn. 37067
Tel: 888-847-3745
Email: customerservice@triangletireus.com
Web: www.triangletireus.com
Brand: Triangle [P,LTR,STR,MTR,OTR]

Tube & Solid Tire Ltd.
(Subsidiary of Covencaucho Industrias S.A. of Venezuela),
5100 Kaepa Court, San Antonio, Texas 78218
Tel: 210-599-1222

Fax: 210-599-8997
Email: sales@tubeandsolidtire.com
Web: www.tubeandsolidtire.com
Brands: Dobermann [IND-Solid]; K9 [ATV,IND-Solid,F/I,OTR,STB]

Tyre Export Inc.
(Represents Petlas Tire Industry and Trade Co., Turkey),
9840 SW 77th Ave., PH 301, Miami, Fla. 33156
Tel: 786-573-0757
Fax: 786-573-0762
Email: info@tyreexport.com
Web: www.tyreexport.com
Brands: Achilles [P,HP]; Constasy [P,LTR,MTR]; Grenlander; Headway [P,LTR,MTR]; Horizon [P,LTR,MTR]; Land Golden; Pearl River; Petlas [P,F/I,IND,OTR]; Starmax [P,SUV,LTR,LTB,MTR,MTB,F/I,OTR]

Tyres International Inc.
(Represents Ceat Ltd., India),
4637 Allen Road, Stow, Ohio 44224
Tel: 330-374-1000
Fax: 330-374-0038
Email: mbez@tyres1.com
Web: www.tyresinternational.com
Brands: Altura [MTB,F/I,IND,OTR]; Ceat [MTR,MTB,F/I,IND,OTR]; MRF [OTR]; Tiber [F/I,IND,OTR]; Westlake [STR,MTR]

U.S. Tirex Inc.
(Represents J.S.C. Southern Rubber Industry, Vietnam),
3310 S. Archer Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60608
Tel: 888-349-5618
Fax: 888-589-2749
Email: info@ustirex.com
Web: www.ustirex.com
Brand: Casumina [MTR]

Unicorn Tire Corp.*
4660 Distriplex Drive West, Memphis, Tenn. 38818
Tel: 901-547-5866

Fax: 901-547-5860
Email: info@unicortire.com
Web: www.unicortire.com
Brands: Comforser [P,LTR,SUV]; Durun [P,HP,MTR]; Onyx [MTR]

Vee Rubber America Inc.
(Represents Vee Rubber International Co. Ltd., Thailand),
3602 Browns Mill Road SE, Atlanta, Ga. 30354
Tel: 404-305-9394
Fax: 404-305-9397
Email: info@veetire.com
Web: www.veerubberusa.com
Brands: Nika [P,LTR]; Vee [P,LTR,LTB,MTR,MTB,ATV,M/C]; Veento; [P]

Western Tires Inc.
(Represents JK Tyres & Industries Ltd., India),
222 Pennbright Drive, Suite 105, Houston, Texas 77090
Tel: 281-919-1944 or 877-755-8973
Brands: JK [P,LTR,MTR]; Tornel [P,LTR]

Winland International Inc.— See Super Tire Inc.

Winway Industries Inc.
(Represents Wanda Group, China),
10863 Jersey Blvd., Unit 102, Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. 91730
Tel: 909-527-3773
Fax: 909-527-3695
Email: info@winwaytire.com
Web: www.winwaytire.com
Brands: Boto Tire [MTR]; Sinotire [MTR]

World Wide Distribution Inc.
460 Coit St., Irvington, N.J. 07111
Tel: 800-869-1689
Fax: 973-373-8383
Email: info@wwdtires.com
Web: www.wwdtires.com
Brands: Road Pioneer [STB]; Solidmax [F/I,OTR]; Vitour [P,LTR,STR]; Windpower

[MTR]; Zeta [MTR]

YC Rubber Co. (North America) L.L.C.
(Subsidiary of Shaanxi Yanchang Petroleum Group Rubber Co. Ltd., China),
150 S. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, Calif. 91101
Tel: 626-513-8989
Web: www.duraturntires.com
Brand: Duraturn [P,HP,LTR,STR,MTR]

Zafco International L.L.C.*
3200 NW 67th Ave., Building 2, Suite 260, Miami, Fla. 33122
Tel: 305-406-3811
Fax: 305-406-9811
Email: giovanni.arrigone@zafco.com
Web: www.zafco.com; www.acceleratire.com; www.zeetex.com; www.forceumtire.com
Brands: Accelera [P,HP,LTR]; Forceum [P,HP,LTR]

ZC Rubber America Inc.
(Subsidiary of Hangzhou Zhongce Rubber Co. Ltd., China),
663 Brea Canyon Road, Suite 4, Walnut, Calif. 91789
Tel: 562-404-8383
Fax: 562-404-8998
Email: info@zcrubberamerica.com
Web: www.zc-rubber.com
Brand: Arisun [STR,STB,MTR]

Brand Keys
P= Passenger; HP= High-performance radial; R= Radial; B= Bias; LTR= Light truck radial; LTB=Light truck bias; STB= Specialty trailer bias; STR= Specialty trailer radial; MTR= Medium truck radial; MTB= Medium truck bias; MC= Motorcycle; F/I-R= Farm/Implement radial; F/I-B= Farm/Implement bias; ATV=All terrain vehicle; IND= Industrial; OTR= Off-road; N.A. Not available (Unless otherwise indicated, all passenger tires are radials.)

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Tel: 800-808-1268
Email: orderdesk@amerityre.com
Web: www.amerityre.com
Brand: **Amerityre** [IND]
-
- Bridgestone Americas Inc.**
(Subsidiary of Bridgestone Corp., Japan)
535 Marriott Drive, Nashville, Tenn. 37214
Tel: 615-937-1000
Fax: 615-493-0098
Web: www.bridgestoneamericas.com
Brands: **Bridgestone** [P,HP,SUV,LTR]; **Firestone** [P,HP,SUV,LTR]; **Fuzion** [P,HP,SUV]; **LeMans** [P,HP,SUV] (*LeMans brand distributed exclusively through Bridgestone's Tire Wholesale Warehouse subsidiary.*)
-
- Bridgestone Commercial Tire Solutions Group**
(Subsidiary of Bridgestone Corp., Japan)
535 Marriott Drive, Nashville, Tenn. 37214
Tel: 615-937-1000
Email: bcsmedia@bfusa.com
Web: commercial.bridgestone.com
Brands: **Bridgestone** [MTR,OTR]; **Dayton** [MTR]; **Firestone** [F/I,MTR,OTR]
-
- Camso Inc.**
(Formerly Camoplast Solideal)
2633 Rue MacPherson, Magog, Quebec, Canada J1X 0E6
Tel: 819-868-1500
Web: <https://camso.co>
Brands: **Camso** [IND,OTR]; **Solideal** [IND,OTR]
(U.S. contact: 306 Forsyth Hall Drive, Charlotte, N.C. 28273; 800-258-4731; Fax: 704-945-0803)
-
- Carlstar Group L.L.C.**
725 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 500, Franklin, Tenn. 37067
Tel: 615-503-0220
Fax: 615-503-0228
Email: customer.care@carlstargroup.com
Web: www.carlstargroup.com
Brands: **Carlisle** [ATV,IND,F/I,OTR,STR]; **ITP** [ATV]; **Marastar** [IND,STR]
-
- Continental Tire the Americas L.L.C.,**
(Subsidiary of Continental A.G., Germany)
1830 MacMillan Park Drive, Fort Mill, S.C. 29707
Tel: 704-583-8829
Fax: 704-583-8607
Web: www.continentaltire.com
Brands: **Barum** [P]; **Continental** [P,HP,LTR,MTR,IND]; **General** [P,HP,LTR,MTR]; **Semperit** [P-winter]; **Viking** [P-winter]
-
- Cooper Tire & Rubber Co.**
701 Lima Ave., Findlay, Ohio 45840
Tel: 419-423-1321
Fax: 419-424-4108
Email: cooperinfo@coopertire.com
Web: www.coopertire.com
Brands: **Cooper** [P,HP,LTR]; **Mastercraft** [P,LTR]; **Roadmaster** [MTR]; **Starfire** [P,HP,LTR]
• **Max-Trac Tire Co. Inc.** (*d.b.a. Mickey Thompson Performance Tires & Wheels—subsidiary of Cooper Tire & Rubber Co.*)
4651 Prosper Drive, Stow, Ohio 44224
Tel: 800-222-9092
Fax: 330-928-0503
Email: sales@mickeythompstontires.com
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-
- Web:** www.mickeythompstontires.com; www.dickcepek.com; www.avonmoto.com
Brands: **Avon** [MC]; **Dick Cepek** [LTR]; **Mickey Thompson** [P,HP,LTR,racing]
-
- GITI Tire (USA) Ltd.**
(Subsidiary of Giti Tire Group, Singapore)
10404 Sixth St. Rancho Cucamonga Calif. 91730
Tel: 866-488-4737
Fax: 909-476-4028
Web: www.gitiusa.com
Brands: **Dextero** [P,LTR - distributed by Walmart Inc.]; **Giti** [P,HP,LTR]; **GT Radial** [P,HP,LTR,STR,MTR]; **Primewell** [P,LTR]
-
- Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.**
200 Innovation Way, Akron, Ohio 44316
Tel: 330-796-2121
Web: www.goodyear.com; www.dunlop-tires.com; www.kellytires.com
Brands: **Dunlop**^ [P,HP,LTR,MTR]; **Goodyear**# [P,HP,LTR,MTR,OTR]; **Kelly** [P,HP,LTR,MTR]
-
- Hankook Tire America Corp.**
(Subsidiary of Hankook Tire Co. Ltd., South Korea)
333 Commerce St., Suite 600, Nashville, Tenn. 37201
Tel: 615-432-0700
Fax: 615-242-8709
Email: marketing@hankooktireusa.com
Web: www.hankooktireusa.com
Brands: **Aurora** [MTR]; **Hankook** [P,HP,LTR,MTR]; **Laufenn** [P,HP,LTR]
-
- Hoosier Racing Tire Corp.**
(Subsidiary of Continental Tire the Americas)
65465 U.S. 31, Lakeville, Ind. 46536
Tel: 574-784-3152
Fax: 574-784-2385
Web: www.hoosiertire.com
Brands: **Continental** [racing]; **Hoosier** [HP,racing]
-
- Kumho Tire USA Inc.**
(Subsidiary of Kumho Tire Co. Inc., South Korea)
133 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30303
Tel: 800-445-8646
Fax: 800-525-8646
Web: www.kumhotireusa.com
Brand: **Kumho** [P,HP,LTR,STR,STB,MTR]
-
- Michelin North America Inc.**
Subsidiary of Group Michelin, France
P.O. Box 19001, Greenville, S.C. 29602
Tel: 864-458-5000
Fax: 864-458-4191
Web: www.michelin.com
Brands: **BFGoodrich** [P,HP,LTR,MTR]; **Medalist** [P,LTR]; **Michelin** [P,HP,LTR,MTR,F/I,OTR]; **Riken** [P,LTR]; **Uniroyal** [P,HP,LTR,MTR]
-
- Mitas Tires North America Inc.**
(Subsidiary of Trelleborg A.B., Sweden)
1200 Rove Ave., Charles City, Iowa 50616
Tel: 704-542-3422
Fax: 704-542-3474
Email: info@mitas-tires.com
Web: www.mitasag.com
Brands: **Cultor** [F/I]; **Mitas** [F/I,OTR]
-
- Mitchell Industrial Tire Co. Inc. (MITCO)**
2915 Eighth Ave., Chattanooga, Tenn. 37407
Tel: 800-251-7226
-
- Fax:** 423-697-7143
Web: www.mitco.com
Brands: **Solid Solver** [IND (pneumatic-solid)]; **Super Solid** [IND (solid press-on)]
-
- Pirelli Tire L.L.C.**
(Subsidiary of Pirelli & C. S.p.A., Italy)
100 Pirelli Drive, Rome, Ga. 30161
Tel: 800-747-3554
Fax: 706-368-5888
Web: www.pirelli.com/tire/en-us/
Brands: **Metzeler** [MC]; **Pirelli** [P,HP,LTR, MC]
-
- Specialty Tires of America Inc.**
1600 Washington St., Indiana, Pa. 15701
Tel: 724-349-9010
Fax: 724-349-8192
Email: info@stausaonline.com
Web: www.stausaonline.com
Brands: **American Carrier** [OTR]; **American Contractor** [IND]; **American Farmer** [F/I]; **American Logger** [F/I]; **American Racer** [racing]; **American XD Traxion** [OTR]; **STA** [LTB,P-B]
-
- Sumitomo Rubber North America L.L.C.,**
(Subsidiary of Sumitomo Rubber Industries Ltd., Japan)
8656 Haven Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. 91730
Tel: 800-723-2553
Fax: 800-950-2561
Web: www.falkentire.com
Brands: **Dunlop**^ [MC]; **Falken** [P,HP,LTR,MTR]; **Ohtsu** [P,HP,LTR]
-
- Titan International Inc.**
2345 E. Market St., Des Moines, Iowa 50317
Tel: 515-265-9200
Fax: 515-265-9301
Email: sales@titan-intl.com
Web: www.titan-intl.com
Brands: **Goodyear**# [F/I,ATV]; **Titan** [F/I,IND,OTR,ATV]
-
- Toyo Tire U.S.A. Corp.**
(Business unit of Toyo Tire Holdings of Americas Inc.)
5665 Plaza Drive, Suite 200, Cypress, Calif. 90630
Tel: 800-678-3250
Fax: 714-229-6184
Email: contactus@toyotires.com
Web: www.toyotires.com
Brand: **Toyo** [P,HP,LTR,MTR]
• **Nitto Tire U.S.A. Inc.**
Business unit of Toyo Tire Holdings of Americas Inc.
5665 Plaza Drive, Suite 250, Cypress, Calif. 90630
Tel: 714-252-0007
Fax: 714-252-0008
Email: nittomarketing@nittotire.com
Web: www.nittotire.com
Brand: **Nitto** [P,HP,LTR]
-
- Trelleborg Wheel Systems Americas Inc.—Industrial Division**
(Subsidiary of Trelleborg Wheel Systems)
107 Audubon Road, Building 2, Suite 205, Wakefield, Mass. 01880
Tel: 800-548-8473
Email: info@trelleborg.com
Web: www.trelleborg.com/wheels
Brands: **Bergougnan** [IND]; **Brawler** [OTR]; **ITL** [IND]; **Maine Tire** [IND]; **MITL** [IND]; **Monarch** [IND]; **Orca** [IND]; **Trelleborg** [IND]
-
- Yokohama Tire Corp.**
(Subsidiary of Yokohama Rubber Co. Ltd., Japan)
1 MacArthur Place, Suite 800, Santa Ana, Calif. 92707
Tel: 800-423-4544
Web: www.yokohamatire.com
Brands: **Yokohama** [P,HP,LTR,MTR,IND,OTR]; **Alliance** [F/I,OTR]

^ = In North America, Goodyear owns exclusive rights to sell Dunlop-brand passenger, light truck and medium truck tires in the U.S., Canada and Mexico in the replacement market and to non-Japanese auto manufacturers as OE fitments; Sumitomo Rubber has an exclusive license to develop, manufacture and sell Dunlop-brand consumer OE tires for Japanese-owned vehicle manufacturers in North America and motorcycle tires for all markets.
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Continued from page 16

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Hefei Wanli Tire Co. Ltd. (Subsidiary of Guangzhou Fengli Tire Co.)

Hihero Co. Ltd., 408/6364 Phaholyothin Place Bldg. 15th Fl., Phaholyothin Rd. Bangkok 100400, Thailand. **Tel:** +662-619-1919; **Fax:** +662-619-1929; **Email:** hihero@hihero.com; **Web:** www.hihero.com

Hong Kong Tri-Ace Tire Co. Ltd., Rm. 207, Building 3, No. 9 Jiashun Road, Nancun Town, Panyu district, Guangzhou, China. **Tel:** +86-20-8559-6148; **Web:** www.tri-ace.com
North American representative: Tri-Ace Wheel & Tire Corp., 606 Greens Road, Suite 100, Houston, Texas 77032. **Tel:** 844-887-4223. **Email:** jack-bidding@tri-aceusa.com.

Horizon Addis Tyre S.C., P.O. Box 2394, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. **Tel:** +251-1-1442-1555; **Fax:** +251-1-1142-2108; **Email:** info@horizon-atc.com; **Web:** www.horizon-atc.com

Hsing Kwo Rubber Mfg. Co. Ltd., 596, 1 Sec Sha Tien Rd., Ta-Tu, Taichung Hsien, ROC, Taiwan. **Tel:** +886-4-2693-4811-6; **Fax:** +886-4-2693-4743; **Email:** sales.hkr@msa.hinet.net; **Web:** www.rubbertire.com
North American representative: Hsing Kwo (USA) Corp., 439 Cheryl Lane, City of Industry, Calif. 91748. **Tel:** 909-598-2300; **Fax:** 909-598-8810

Hung A Co. Ltd., 77, Eosil-Ro, Yangsan-Si, Gyeongnam-Do, South Korea. **Tel:** +82-55-371-3735; **Fax:** +82-55-366-4700; **Web:** www.hunga.com

Hwa Fong Rubber Industry Co. Ltd., P.O. Box 103, Yuanlin, Taiwan. **Tel:** +886-4-8520121; **Fax:** +886-4-8525833; **Email:** duroexp2@duro.com.tw; **Web:** www.duro.com.tw
North American representative: Hwa Fong Rubber (USA) Inc./Duro Tire & Wheel, 14290 Lochridge Blvd., Covington, Ga. 30014. **Tel:** 770-788-2060; **Fax:** 770-788-2099; **Email:** service@durotire.com

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Innova Rubber Co. Ltd., 2F, No 145, Lun Ping South Road, Chang Hua, Taiwan. **Tel:** +886-4-7521037; **Fax:** +886-4-7521062; **Email:** innova@innovatires.com.tw; **Web:** www.innovatires.com

Innovative Tyres & Tubes Ltd., 42-A, Purshotam nagar BPC Road, Vadodara 390 020, India. **Tel:** +91-265-2343679; **Fax:** +91-265-2339468; **Email:** innovativetyres@sify.com

Inoue Rubber (Thailand) Co. Ltd. (Subsidiary of Inoue Rubber Co. Ltd.), 258 Soi, Rangsit-Nakornnayok 49, Prachathipat, Thanyaburi, Pathumthumthani 12130, Thailand. **Tel:** +662-906-0890; **Fax:** +662-906-1439; **Email:** info@ircthailand.com; **Web:** www.ircthailand.com

Inoue Rubber Co. Ltd., 1-80, Haike-Cho, Nakagawa-ku, Nagoya 454, Japan. **Tel:** +81-52-353-6204; **Fax:** +81-52-353-6268; **Email:** ircadmin@inoac.co.jp
North American representative: IRC Tire USA Inc. **Web:** www.tictireusa.com

Inoue Rubber Vietnam Co. Ltd. (Subsidiary of Inoue Rubber Co. Ltd.), Thanh Lam Comune, Me Linh District, Vinh Phuc, Vietnam. **Tel:** +84-4-3816-5140; **Fax:** +84-4-3816-5144; **Email:** sales@ircvietnam.com; **Web:** www.ircvietnam.com

Iran Tire Manufacturing Co., Opposite Ghods Air Industries, Km 5 Karaj Makhsoos Road, Tehran, Iran. **Tel:** +98-21-445-034-60-9; **Fax:** +98-21-4450-3490. **Email:** info@irantire.com

Iran Yasa Tire & Rubber Co., Old Karadj Rd. Shahriar Road, Yasa, Iran. **Tel:** +98-21-6628-1050; **Fax:** +98-262-3656835

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J.S.C. Nizhnekamskshina, Tatarstan, Nizhnekamsk, Tatarstan, 423550, Russia. **Tel:** +7-84-353-2-1145; **Fax:** +7-95-262-20-49; **Web:** www.shina-kama-ru

Jiangsu Feichi Co. Ltd., 45 Renmin South Road, Yangheng, Jiangsu, 22402, China.

Jiangsu General Science Technology Co. Ltd., Wuxi City, Jiangsu, China. **Web:** www.hodotires.com
North American representative: Statewide Tires Inc., 1900 W. Garvey Ave., Suite 260, West Covina, Calif. 91790. **Tel:** 323-599-8127; **Fax:** 626-337-8808; **Email:** mikec@tbtires.com

Jilin Province Chunwei Tyre Co. Ltd., Donghe Industrial Park Fanjiatun Town, Gongzhuling Jilin Province 136105, China. **Tel:** +86-434-6810128; **Fax:** +86-434-6810332

Jinzhou Xin Xing Rubber Production Co. Ltd., JinZhou Economic Development Experiment Zone, Liaoning Province, 121221, China. **Tel:** +86-416-7600660; **Web:** www.shinkotire.com.cn

JK Tornel S.A. de C.V. (Subsidiary of JK Tyre & Industries Ltd.), Santa Lucia 311, Santa Cruz

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Kabat Spoelka Jawna, u. Gumowa 6, PL-64-840 Budzyn, Poland. **Tel:** +48-67-283-41000; **Fax:** +48-67-283-4102; **Email:** biuro@kabat.pl; **Web:** www.kabat.pl

Kavir Tire & Rubber Co., Birjand City, Iran

Kenda Rubber Industrial Co. Ltd., 146 Sec. 1, Chung Shan Road, P.O. Box 180, Yuan-Lin, Changhwa County 51099, Taiwan. **Tel:** +886-4-8345171; **Fax:** +886-4-8331865; **Email:** kenda@kenda.com.tw; **Web:** www.kenda.com.tw

North American representative: Kenda U.S.A., 7095 Americana Parkway, Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068. **Tel:** 614-866-9803; **Fax:** 614-866-9805; **Email:** jyang@kendausa.com

KRM Tyres (Subsidiary of Kohinoor Rubber Industries), 5A, Jharmajri, EPIP baddi, Baddi, Hamachal Pradesh - 173205, India. **Tel:** +91-1795-308508; **Email:** sales@krmtires.com; **Web:** www.krmtires.com

Kumho Tire Co. Inc., Kumho Asiana Main Tower, #115, Sinmunol-Gu, Jongno-Gu Seoul 110-857, South Korea. **Tel:** +82-2-6303-8211; **Fax:** +82-2-6303-8299; **Email:** John@kumhotire.com; **Web:** www.kumhotire.com
North American representative: Kumho Tire USA Inc., 133 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30303. **Tel:** 800-445-8646; **Fax:** 800-525-8646; **Web:** www.kumhotireusa.com

Kumho Tire Georgia Inc. (Subsidiary of Kumho

Tire Co. Inc.), 3051 Kumho Parkway, Macon, Ga. 31216. **Tel:** 478- 812-9595; **Fax:** 478-788-8168

Lanxi Fuchuen Rubber Co. Ltd., The Western Suburbs, Lanxi, Zhejiang, 321100, China.

Laugfs Rubber (Pvt.) Ltd., Unit 7-9, 2nd Floor, Lucky Plaza, Colombo3, Sri Lanka. **Tel:** +94-11-5566222; **Fax:** +94-11-2577824; **Email:** ubfi@laugfs.lk

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Liaoning Tyres Group Co. Ltd., No. 1 Xiangyang Road/Longcheng, Chaoyang City, 122009 Liaoning Province, China. **Tel:** +86-421-381-5455; **Fax:** +86-421-381-1188; **Email:** llgs@mail.cpytt.ln.cn

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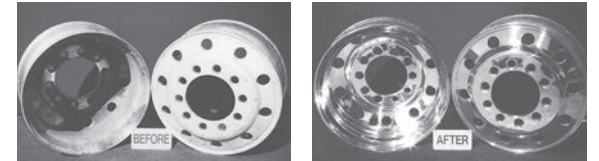
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Fax: 301-654-3299
Email: info@autocare.org
Web: www.autocare.org
CEO, president: Bill Hanvey
Trade Show: AAPEX, Oct. 30-Nov. 1, Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas

Automotive Maintenance & Repair Assn.
Oversees Motorist Assurance Program (MAP)
725 E Dundee Road, Suite 206, Arlington Heights, Ill. 60004
Tel: 847-947-2650
Fax: 202-318-0378
Email: map@motorist.org
Web: www.amra.org
Chairman: Al Wheeler
President: Denny Bowen
Meeting: Winter Technical Committee Meeting, Jan. 17, Marriott Lakeside Hotel, Orlando, Fla.

Automotive Service Assn.
8209 Mid Cities Blvd., North Richland Hills, Texas 76182
Tel: 817-514-2900
Fax: 817-581-3572
Email: asainfo@asashop.org
Web: www.asashop.org
President, executive director: Dan Risley
Chairman: Roy Schnepfer
Annual Meeting: ASA Annual Meeting & Conference, May 2-6, Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin Resort, Lake Buena Vista, Fla.;
Convention: NACE Automechanika, Aug. 8-10, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta

National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)
1503 Edwards Ferry Road NE, Suite 401, Leesburg, Va. 20176
Tel: 703-669-6600
Fax: 703-669-6122
Email: contactus@ase.com
Web: www.ase.com

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Tel: 831-620-5345
Email: info@retreadtire.org
Web: www.retreadtire.org
Managing director: Jeffrey Parks

Specialty Equipment Market Assn.
1575 S. Valley Vista Drive, Diamond Bar, Calif. 91765
Tel: 909-610-2030
Fax: 909-860-0184
Web: www.sema.org
CEO, president: Christopher Kersting
Trade Show: SEMA Show, Oct. 30-Nov. 2, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas

Technology & Maintenance Council/American Trucking Assn.
950 N. Glebe Road, Suite 210, Arlington, Va. 22203-4181
Tel: 703-838-1763
Fax: 703-838-1701
Email: tmc@trucking.org
Web: tmc.trucking.org
Executive director: Robert Braswell
Meetings: TMC Annual Meeting & Transportation Technology Exhibition, March 5-8, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta; TMC Fall Meeting & National Technician Skills Competitions, Sept. 15-20, Orlando World Center Marriott, Orlando, Fla.

Tire & Rim Assn.
175 Montrose West Ave., Suite 150, Copley, Ohio 44321
Tel: 330-666-8121
Fax: 330-666-8340
Email: tra@us-tra.org
Web: www.us-tra.org
Executive VP: Rudy Consolacion
President: Craig Kessler

Tire Industry Assn.
1532 Pointer Ridge Place, Suite G, Bowie, Md. 20716
Tel: 800-876-8372
Fax: 301-430-7283
Email: rlittlefield@tireindustry.org
Web: www.tireindustry.org
Executive VP: Roy Littlefield
President: David Martin
Trade Show: SEMA Show/Global Tire Expo, Oct. 30-Nov. 2, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas
Meeting: OTR Tire Conference, Feb. 21-24, Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, Ponte Verda Beach, Fla.

Tire Retread & Repair Information Bureau
1013 Birch St., Falls Church, Va. 22046
Tel: 703-533-7677
Fax: 703-533-7678
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Web: www.retread.org
Managing director: David Stevens
President: Tim BeVier

Tread Rubber & Tire Repair Materials Manufacturers Group
c/o Philip Boarts, Oliver Rubber, One Parkway South, Greenville, S.C. 29615
Tel: 864-458-6848
Secretary: Phil Boarts
Chairman: Ed Steck
Meetings: Annual Membership Meeting & Board Meeting, Oct. 29, Las Vegas; Spring Membership Meeting, March 21, Louisville, Ky.

U.S. Tire Manufacturers Assn.
1400 K St. N.W., Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005
Tel: 202-682-4850
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Web: www.ustires.org
CEO, president: Anne Forrestall Luke
Chairman: James Hawk

Wheel & Tire Council, c/o Specialty Equipment Market Assn.
1575 S. Valley Vista Drive, Diamond Bar, Calif. 91765
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Mid-America Tire Dealers Assn.
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Tel: 785-286-1110
Email: herrick.shawn@gmail.com
Web: www.matda.org
Executive director: Shawn Herrick
President: Tony Thompson
Convention: Feb. 23-24, Kansas Star Casino, Mulvane, Kan.; Scholarship Golf Tournament, TBD

New England Tire & Service Assn.
Serves Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont
3 Lefevre Drive, Kingston, N.H. 03848
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Executive director (as of Feb. 1): Tony DeSimone
Convention: Trade Show & Convention, April 6-7, Foxwoods Resort & Casino, Mashantucket, Conn.

North Central Tire Dealers & Suppliers Assn.
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Executive director: Bonnie McCleary
President: Tom Wright Jr.
Convention: Mid-Winter Conference & Trade Show, Feb. 15-16, Treasure Island Resort & Casino, Red Wing, Minn.

Northwest Tire Dealers Assn.
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Executive director: Richard Nordness
President: Ed Tuck III

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Alabama Tire Dealers Assn.
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Tel: 256-974-1998
Fax: 256-974-1480
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Web: www.alatiiredealers.com
Executive director: Cheryl Lentz

Arkansas Independent Tire Dealers Assn.
2201 Miramonte Drive, Sherwood, Ark. 72120
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Executive director: Charlie Edens

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Web: www.catiredealers.com
Executive director: Marc Connerly
President: Chris Barry
Meeting: CTDA/1-800EveryRim Luncheon, Jan. 17, Dal Rae Restaurant, Rivera, Calif.

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P.O. Box 801378, Acworth, Ga. 30101
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Web: www.gttra.com
Administrative director: Stacy Jarrett
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Convention: Annual Conference, July 20-22, Omni Amelia Island Plantation, Amelia Island, Fla.

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Web: www.iowamotortruck.com
President: Brenda Neville
Meeting: IMTA Management Conference, Sept. 5-6, Coralville Marriott, Coralville, Iowa

Louisiana Independent Tire Dealers Assn.
P.O. Box 82531, Baton Rouge, La. 70884
Tel: 225-767-7640. Fax: 225-767-7648
Email: litda@tatmangroup.com
Web: www.litda.org
Executive director: David Tatman
President: Chris Bonaventure
Convention: LITDA Trends & Treads Annual Convention, April 12-14, Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans

Michigan Tire & Vehicle Service Assn.
Division of Michigan Retailers Association
603 S. Washington Ave., Lansing, Mich. 48933
Tel: 517-372-5656.
Fax: 517-372-1303

Email: jhallan@retailers.com
Web: www.retailers.com
President: James Hallan
Meetings: Annual meeting, Aug. 21, Lansing, Mich.; Legislative Reception, April 24, Lansing, Mich.

Missouri Tire Industry Assn.
P.O. Box 1326, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102
Tel: 573-616-2065
Fax: 573-636-6846
Email: motireindustry@gmail.com
Web: www.mtia4u.org
Executive director: David Overfelt
President: Mike Diehm
Convention: MTIA Annual Convention, Aug. 24-25, The Elms Hotel & Spa, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

Montana Tire Dealers Assn.
Under umbrella of Montana Retail Assn.
1645 Parkhill Drive, Suite 6, Billings, Mont. 59102
Tel: 406-256-1005
Fax: 406-256-0785
Email: brad.griffin@mtretail.com
Web: www.mttiredealers.com
Managing director: Bradley Griffin

New York Tire Dealers Assn.
258 Broadway St., Amityville, N.Y. 11701
Tel: 631-789-9505
Fax: 631-789-3378
Email: info@nytda.com
Web: www.nytda.com
Executive director: John DeLillo
President: Ernie Caramanico

North Carolina Tire Dealers Assn.
P.O. Box 17046, Raleigh, N.C. 27619
Tel: 919-784-0111
Fax: 919-784-0144
Email: reece.hester@nctda.com
Web: www.nctda.com
Executive director: Reece Hester
President: Mike Erickson
Trade Show: NCTDA Expo/Trade Show, March 2-3, Marriott City Center & Raleigh Convention Center, Raleigh, N.C.

Ohio Tire & Automotive Assn.
50 W. Broad St., Suite 1111, Columbus, Ohio 43215
Tel: 614-221-7833
Fax: 614-221-7020
Email: alexboeh@ohioretailmerchants.com
Web: www.ohiotire.org
Executive director: Alex Boehnke
President: Joe Flynn

Texas Tire & Automotive Assn.
4600 Spicewood Springs Road, Suite 103, Austin, Texas 78759
Tel: 512-343-8604. Fax: 512-343-1530
Email: space@ecpi.com
Web: www.texas Tiredealers.org
Executive director: Chuck Space
President: Jody Jarvis
Convention: Texas Tire & Automotive Convention & Expo, April 13-14, The Menger Hotel, San Antonio

Tire Dealers Assn. of Western Pennsylvania
P.O. Box 15205, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15237
Tel: 412-496-6269
Fax: 412-822-7335
Email: fish822@aol.com
Web: www.tdaofwpa.org
Executive director: Ron Fischer
President: Bill Schwartz

Virginia Automotive Assn.
8814 Fargo Road, Suite 225, Richmond, Va. 23229
Tel: 804-739-1400
Email: sakridge@vaauto.org
Web: www.vaauto.org
Executive director: Steve Akridge
President: Scott Brown
Convention: VAA Convention & Trade Expo, April 13-15, Omni Homestead, Hot Springs, Va.

Wisconsin Automotive Care Assn.
5330 Wall St., #100, Madison, Wis. 53718
Tel: 608-240-4700
Fax: 608-240-2069
Email: gmanke@mseda.com

Web: www.wiaca.com
Executive director: Gary Manke
President: Brett Matschke

Canada

Atlantic Tire Dealers Assn.
Serves New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island
93 Henderson St., Riverview, New Brunswick E1B 4B6
Tel: 506-386-4306
Fax: 506-387-3987
Email: connorcrank57@gmail.com
Web: www.atda.ca
Executive director: Frank Connor
President: Shane Sutherland

Ontario Tire Dealers Assn.
22 John St., Box 516, Drayton, Ontario N0G 1P0
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Fax: 866-375-6832
Email: bbignell@otda.com
Web: www.otda.com
Executive director: Bob Bignell
President: Mike McClory
Trade Show: TDA of Canada Trade Show & Conference, Sept. 13-15, Delta by Marriott, Toronto

Quebec Tire Specialists Assn.
CP 51017 - CP Cléroux, Laval, Quebec H7T 2Z3
Tel: 866-454-0477
Fax: 888-276-1633
Email: marie-josee@aspmq.ca
Web: www.aspmq.ca
Executive director: Marie-Josée Aube
President: Cynthia Fredette

Suppliers Council to the Canadian Tire Industry
100 Sleeman Ave., Guelph, Ontario N1H 6G4
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Fax: 519-824-1030
Email: info@sccti.org
Web: www.sccti.org
Executive director: Peter Parik
President: Mauro DiTullio

Tire and Rubber Assn. of Canada
A19-260 Holiday Inn Drive, Cambridge, Ontario N3C 4E8
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Fax: 519-249-0401
Email: info@tracanada.ca
Web: www.tracanada.ca
President: Glenn Maidment

Tire Dealers Assn. of Canada
Tel: 888-207-9059.
Email: bbignell@tdacanada.ca
Web: www.tdacanada.ca
Executive director: Bob Bignell
President: Richard Bender
Trade Show: Trade Show & Conference, Sept. 13-15, Delta by Marriott, Toronto

Western Canada Tire Dealers
Serves Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia
65 Woodbine Road, Sherwood Park, Alberta T8A 4A7
Tel: 780-554-9259
Email: rayg@wctd.ca
Web: www.wctd.ca
Executive director: Ray Geleta
President: Paul McAlduff
Convention: TDA of Canada Trade Show & Conference, Sept. 13-15, Delta by Marriott, Toronto

Michelin absorbs TCi remnants; Shrader, Meekhof expand reach

Continued from page 1
two in Arizona.

Michelin has divested or closed 48 TCi commercial sales locations in 2017 and has refocused efforts on expanding the TCi wholesale distribution footprint and increasing the capacity of its distribution network to support new commercial customers and new product categories.

Michelin divested 16 locations in Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Texas in September to T&W Tire and 27 in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Virginia in July to Snider Fleet Solutions.

Toledo, Ohio-based Shrader takes over TCi service locations in Columbus, Heath, Pemberville and West Chester, Ohio, expanding the dealership's reach to 17 outlets in three states — Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

The Pemberville location includes a Michelin Retread Technologies (MRT) retread plant; Shrader operates one other MRT plant, in Melvindale, Mich., that it opened in 2006.

The deal allows Shrader Tire to solidify and expand its business in the greater Columbus and Cincinnati metropolitan areas, Shrader Tire President Joe Shrader said, where it has been serving a growing customer base for the past several years.

"It puts us in a better position to



Shrader

service those customers we already have," Mr. Shrader told *Tire Business*, "and will provide some sales growth with customers that TCi has been servicing." The deal also provides Shrader Tire with increased flexibility both on the new tire and retread fronts, he added, noting that the Pemberville MRT plant — which he said was highly regarded with customers and within the MRT community — essentially doubles the dealership's retread capacity.

Mr. Shrader declined to discuss financial details of the deal or comment on the size of the business being acquired, other than to say he expects the volume of business to grow measurably under his company's ownership.

The acquired stores will become part of the Michelin Commercial Service Network along with Shrader's existing 13 locations. One change worth noting: Shrader will be taking on the Hankook commercial tire line that TCi handled.

Grand Rapids, Mich.-based Meekhof Tire Sales & Service Inc. acquired the assets of the TCi commercial service outlet in Saginaw, Mich., and incorpo-

rated them into other nearby locations, including one in Saginaw. The TCi location ceased operations Nov. 30.

Meekhof Tire operates a network of 10 commercial service locations in central Michigan.

Michelin bought TCi, then considered the nation's No. 2 independent commercial tire dealership, in 1999. At that time it operated 163 locations in 34 states, including 17 with retread shops, and was generating more than \$470 million in annual sales.

As recently as 2009, the TCi commercial tire network comprised more than 75 outlets and a dozen retread plants.

Other significant TCi divestitures have included:

- Service Tire Truck Centers Inc. (STTC) taking over 16 TCi outlets and one retread plant in February 2010 in Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Virginia;

- Colony Tire Corp. buying a pair of commercial centers and a retread plant in Virginia in May 2009; and

- Snider Tire buying 10 TCi commercial service locations in Georgia and North and South Carolina — including a pair of retread plants — in April 2009.

TCi operates 89 wholesale distribution locations throughout the U.S. and continues to promote the T3 retail marketing program nationwide.

Acquisition gives Leeds West Groups 97 locations

Continued from page 1

under Leeds West Groups as chief operating officer of the new division.

"We have worked closely with LWG in a strategic partnership over the last two years to make this acquisition a natural fit that will grow ASE for many years to come in resources and new locations, making this a seamless benefit for all," Mr. Mahrt said.

The planned acquisition comprises all of ASE's locations in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma, including real estate holdings, buildings and equipment, making it the largest single acquisition by a franchisee in Midas history.

The transaction has been approved by the ASE and LWG boards of directors, LWG said.

In conjunction with the acquisition, LWG named current board member Joshua Weinreich to be chairman. Mr. Weinreich previously was the global head of hedge funds for Deutsche Bank and CEO of Deutsche Asset Management.

This is LWG's second major purchase of Midas franchise locations in the past four years.

In late 2013, the company — a partnership involving Judd Schader and Jeff Genuario — acquired 30 Midas stores across the country from parent company TBC Corp. in a partnership arrangement.

ASE earlier this year committed \$6 million throughout 2017 to upgrade the business' 42 Midas locations. Mr. Mahrt was a Midas franchisee of the year in 2016.

The deal will make LWG the second largest Midas franchisee in the U.S., trailing only Toledo, Ohio-based Max Auto Supply Co., which operates 113 Midas locations throughout the Midwest and in Georgia.



Mahrt



Weinreich

Kumho rebounds with double-digit growth in 2017

Continued from page 1

we've instituted as an organization globally is a more planned product replacement cycle," Mr. Mayfield said. "So every product now has a life cycle. And it varies depending upon the segment of the market that we're talking about.

"If it's a segment of the market where there are new vehicles being developed or the technologies are being launched very quickly, the life cycle will be shorter.

"If it's a segment of the market where the sizing is not changing quickly or the technology is not changing as quickly, then that life cycle might be longer."

The plan for consumer tires is to launch two to three products each year and retire products that are at the end of their life cycle, Mr. Mayfield said.

The planned Crugen HP71 will offer improved treadwear and snow traction, Mr. Mayfield said. It will feature a symmetric tread pattern in H- and V-speed ratings and be available in 53 sizes in 16- to 22-inch rim diameters when it launches in 2018's fourth quarter.

With the Ecsta PA51, Kumho will increase the number of sizes and speed ratings, allowing it to replace two tire lines. One of the key design targets of this tire also is improved snow traction, Mr. Mayfield said.

Kumho will offer the PA51 in 64 sizes in V-, W- and Y-speed ratings and in 15- to 21-inch rim diame-

ters starting in the third quarter. The tire will sport a racing-theme sidewall design and an asymmetric tread pattern.

As for its new entry for the commercial truck tire market, Kumho has designed the KLP11e for enhanced mileage and low rolling resistance, Mr. Mayfield said, as well as improved durability and uniform wear characteristics, an optimized traction groove for all-weather performance and reduced block-edge wear for endurance. It will be available in 2018's second quarter.

Kumho also is planning enhancements to its Premium Fuel dealer program in 2018. For sales of 18-inch and larger rim-diameter tires, Kumho is adding a \$5 bonus opportunity for the Fuel dealer. This will allow a Fuel dealer the ability to earn up to \$11 per tire on a UHP product if it's 18 inches and higher in rim diameter, Mr. Mayfield said.

"We think that's a very strong incentive for the Fuel dealers," he said. "And we will continue to look at quarterly programs to help drive more business through the Fuel dealers, pull tires out of your inventory, assist your sales effort, as well."

Kumho also is making it easier for Fuel dealers to earn points for premium prizes that can be earned through the dealer portal. For 2018, Kumho will increase the points dealers can earn through the program.

Level-one dealers now will be



Robbie Rudolph, president of tire distributor Rudolph's Tire in Murray, Ky., supports the return of J.H. Kim as chairman of Kumho Tire USA parent Kumho Tire Co. Inc.

able to earn up to 1,000 points per quarter, up from 500, level two up to 1,500 points from 750 and level three up to 2,500 from 1,000.

"So a level-three dealer can earn 10,000 points and that gives them the ability to get whatever they want from the (prize) list on the portal," Mr. Mayfield said. "So we think that is something that they are going to like and appreciate and bring more value to them."

In 2017, Kumho redesigned its corporate website to make it easier to navigate and allow for a simpler brand experience for consumers to help them get the information they need when they are trying to buy

new tires, said Brian Gallagher, Kumho's senior marketing manager.

Social media — Twitter, Instagram, Facebook — too has a place in the company's marketing approach and will remain a "big priority" for Kumho in reaching consumers, he added.

"All the content we put on there, we...want to entertain, educate and engage, and also we want people to come back in. We want people to recognize that we are out there and that we are a smart choice," Mr. Gallagher said.

Grassroots motorsports has a place in the 2018 marketing plans as well.

Along with these efforts, Kumho

will continue to leverage and optimize its sponsorship as the official tire of the National Basketball Association. The NBA is definitely on the rise and has superseded the NFL as the hottest property for sponsors, Mr. Gallagher said.

"We just have to be as strategic as possible in what we invest in to fully activate around the partnership we have in place, not only with the league but with the teams and some of the players themselves," he said.

This includes serving as the title sponsor of the NBA G League (formerly the D League) for the All-Star Game, which will be held in Los Angeles next year, and regionally continuing Kumho's engagement with the Charlotte Hornets and the Atlanta Hawks, the latter of which will involve a video series with the team in 2018.

During the meeting Kumho executives made no mention of the financial difficulties being experienced by the company's parent firm in South Korea.

Asked about this following the dealer meeting, Mr. Mayfield said his priority is growing the company's business in the U.S.

Robbie Rudolph, president of tire distributor Rudolph's Tire in Murray, Ky., also expressed his enthusiasm for the return of J.H. Kim as the chairman of Kumho Tire USA parent Kumho Tire Co. Inc.

"J.H. has been around for a long time.... He brings confidence and stability to Kumho," he said.

Tire Business photo by Dave Zielasko



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