

Driver training proves favoured way to cut operators' fuel bills

By Justin Stanton

DRIVER TRAINING is the most popular measure by which operators attempt to reduce fuel bills, according to a CM survey in association with Mobil Delvac.

More than 100 operators took part in the survey and half revealed that fuel had risen in price by more than 10% in the past year; a further 14% had experienced a fuel price increase of more than 20%, while 5% suffered increases of more than 30%.

However, 84% use driver training to reduce fuel consumption but take-up of other fuel consumption-reducing measures is indifferent, with sourcing the best fuel and optimising tyre pressures being the only

other measures to be used by more than half of respondents (at 56% and 54% respectively).

Telematics has found favour with 46%, while focusing on truck and trailer aerodynamics is used by just 24%. Just 14% source an engine oil that can offer improved engine performance.

Steve Crawley, commercial vehicle lubricants manager at Exxon-Mobil Lubricants & Petroleum Specialties, says: "While operators have traditionally focused on improving the fuel economy of their vehicles through driver training and fuel selection, there is an opportunity to further reduce fuel consumption by using fully synthetic heavy-duty diesel engine oils.

"For example, Mobil Delvac 1



LE 5W-30 has been formulated to help improve the fuel economy of CVs while maintaining engine protection," he explains.

"In addition to engine oils, operators can realise even greater cost savings by incorporating synthetic lubricants across the vehicle's entire drivetrain, including synthetic transmission and rear axle oils, which can offer improved fuel economy and protection versus mineral-based products."

The survey found that price is the dominant criteria by which operators purchase engine oil (56%), although an oil's impact on fuel economy was recognised by 37%.

Engine protection was important for a third, while brand mattered to just a quarter.

Brit European extends Mercedes-Benz contract

BRIT EUROPEAN Transport has won a three-year contract extension with Mercedes-Benz for the UK logistics of all its heavy trucks, Sprinter and Vario vans.

The deal was welcomed by the Crewe-based car transporter, which reported an annual pre-tax loss for the year ended 31 December 2010 of £453,258 on a turnover of £20m.

Marketing manager Ed Beresford says: "We look forward to building on our successful partnership with Mercedes-Benz."

The extended contract, which the car transporter first secured with Mercedes in 1997, sees Brit European collecting vehicles from docks at Purfleet, Essex and Killinghome, Lincolnshire, before onward delivery to dealerships and bodybuilders across the UK.

Last year, Brit European won contracts with VW, Audi, Skoda and Porsche, as well as VW commercial vehicles.

To celebrate the contract renewal, the company has taken delivery of two new 460hp Actros 2545 tractor units (pictured above).



Hauliers help road safety week

OPERATORS ARE doing their bit for Road Safety Week, which started on Monday (21 November) and ends on Sunday (27 November).

DHL Supply Chain and Bassetlaw District Council are holding two safety awareness presentations; Suttons will run road safety workshops for its staff; and Balfour Beatty Plant and Fleet Services is running a number of Beep Beep! days in partnership with local primary schools.

Meanwhile, BT has relaunched

its family and friends campaign in which it encourages staff to take road safety home to their families.

Road Safety Week is organised by Brake. Campaigns director Julie Townsend says: "It's fantastic to see so many operators taking part in Road Safety Week, which helps to get across life-saving messages to staff, customers and local communities."

Brake statistics show that every 18 hours a young person is killed on UK roads.

