

# Smooth operators

All the key news from last month's hugely successful Commercial Vehicle Operator Show 2010

The Commercial Vehicle Operator Show 2010 has been hailed a success by visitors and exhibitors alike. With more than 250 exhibitors situated in two halls of Birmingham's NEC, the event lived up to its billing, with a long list of products launched, and plenty of news from exhibitors relating to new contracts, expansions and recruitment plans.

Nick Jones, chief executive of the SOE (and, through IRTE services, one of the three firms fronting the show under CV Show LLP), commented: "As show managers, we are delighted by the show's extraordinary success. Initial feedback from exhibitors and visitors is that the show exceeded expectations. It has benefited our industry at a crucial time, while providing the biggest platform for the road transport sector to come together since the last CV Show in 2008."

Bob Sockl, chief executive of Crystal Communications, the exhibition consultants to the CV Operator Show, has confirmed that 2011 will see the CV Show return in a more familiar form, remaining in Halls 4 and 5 of Birmingham's NEC. The dates to make a note of are 12 to 14 April 2011.

## 1 Regional reshuffle announced at UK R&M specialist

Marshall Fleet Solutions arrived in Birmingham with news of a regional reorganisation plan, which is currently underway, helping to improve the efficiency of 160 mobile engineers.

As part of its plans, intended to provide operators with the fastest response times, 15 regional service centres have now been established within key logistics locations, covering the M8 corridor in Scotland, the Midlands, eastern counties, and South West and South East England.

The centres will be supported by Marshall Fleet Solutions' customer service centre in Cambridge, which operates 24/7.

## 2 Fuel management system to save 10%?

An innovative fuel management system launched at the CV Operator Show could save vehicle operators as much as 10% in fuel and emissions, according to Shell. The oil producer's FuelSave Partner system is designed to link customers' Shell fuel cards with the technology that can be found on the vehicle, as well as a central database, which can be accessed to monitor the performance of individual drivers.

Shell partnered with IBM for the software support and integration,



Airbiquity (which specialises in the transmission and collection of data from vehicles), and Continental for hardware and system installations. "We wanted it to be workable for operators and easy to use, and Continental has a large network of sites where customers can get an installation done," explains Ruth Cairnie, vice president, global commercial fuels at Shell.

Any commercial vehicle can be retrofitted with the system, which picks up vehicle data from the CANbus via an



industry standard FMS gateway. "In the development of the system, we have talked to a lot of fleet operators of different sizes about what they have at the moment and what they need," continues Cairnie. "The clear message is, while a lot of operators have systems with a lot of data, they find it difficult to integrate it all and do something with it. This is a full web-based system that pulls everything together and you get some clear dashboards to understand the performance."

Launched in the Netherlands in January, FuelSave Partner has already been piloted in the UK and proved the company's claims that the system achieves the 10% savings. Recorded data looks at throttle and braking control and acceleration, and picks up the most important aspects to work on for individual drivers. Once improvements have been achieved, the system allows further monitoring of driver behaviour, so allowing targets to be maintained.

FuelSave Partner is being sold on a subscription basis, which covers installation, data gathering and presentation of the information. Shell says prices will depend on a number of factors, including fleet size, operation and levels of data required.



**4 Multipart announces LDV, diesel Technik deals**

There were two announcements of note from Multipart, the vehicle parts supplier, at the CV Operator Show. First, there was relief for many LDV owners after Multipart announced it had signed a supply deal worth £6 million for van and minibus parts. Items including filters and brake linings, as well as suspension componentry, have been moved into Multipart's distribution centre in Chorley.

The agreement with China Ventures, the new owners of LDV, is expected to secure the life of thousands of vehicles, which are serviced by 80 bespoke centres around the UK. Brendan Leach, Multipart's sales director, confirms that

aftermarket, furnishing drivers of MAN, DAF, Mercedes-Benz, Scania and Volvo trucks with more than 20,000 products, each of which has a two-year warranty.

"Diesel Technik is a prestige brand of high quality parts at competitive prices that will have strong appeal to truck operators, particularly those running mixed fleets, and to CV dealerships and independent workshops," insists Leach,

**5 Electrics' drivetrain ramps up power**

Electric vehicle manufacturer Aixam Mega used the CV Operator Show to introduce a new ac motor drivetrain for its all-electric Mega Multitruck vans and tippers.

Aixam reckons the new unit gives improved performance and stronger regenerative braking, while also reducing maintenance requirements – and, of course, cutting carbon emissions. On the maintenance side, brushless construction means no intervention on the motor and better component life.

Most important, though, Aixam also claims an extra 5 to 10% range, a 10% increase in acceleration and improved handling on slopes, thanks to the extra power (controlled via a boost switch). By the way, there's also a new battery temperature sensor and a current sensor for better charging control.



**3 Vauxhall opens show with Movano news**

Many visitors and exhibitors to the Commercial Vehicle Operator Show got their first chance to see the new UK-built Vauxhall Movano, revealed early on the first morning of the show.

Sharp visitors noticed that the new vehicle is based on the Renault Master, but Vauxhall insists that the differences between the two will be seen in dealerships and servicing.

The company is planning to offer more 24-hour servicing, limiting potential disruption to vehicle fleets. Bill Parfitt has his eyes set on the example set by the company's passenger car division. "We are ahead of targets on the car side and want to improve our position within commercial vehicles... Movano is very important for Vauxhall, with huge potential as we rebuild the company's position in the market."

Parfitt says he hopes to sell 30,000 vans in the UK as the company recovers from recession.



the company now has stocks worth £16 million at the distribution centre and that "Multipart is committed to keeping LDVs going for 10 more years and beyond".

The other Multipart news was the announcement that the company has agreed to act as the official distributor for Diesel Technik in the UK for its all-makes truck parts. The German company is one of the largest full-range spare parts suppliers for commercial vehicles in the global automotive

**6 Drivers get a new charity, helped by Novodata**

The UK Professional Drivers Association has now established itself as a registered charity, the Professional Drivers Foundation (PDF).

The move is thanks to a donation of £2,500 from Novodata Transport Training, made at the CV Operator Show. Patron of the PDF is none other than Steve Parrish, winner of more than a dozen British, European and world motorcycle and truck racing titles.

"Having had a few accidents on the track over my racing career, it is good to see a charity specifically supporting lorry drivers, whom we all know are the lifeline of the country," he said.

During the presentation, PDA founder and spokeswoman Pat Nicholson thanked Novodata and said: "The UK haulage industry is one of the UK's largest employers, providing a

**And finally...**

The stand of heavy-duty mobile vehicle lifting equipment supplier Somerstotalkare, at the Commercial Vehicle Operator Show, was dominated by the S6cf, a cable-free lifting unit that features a rechargeable battery pack. As well as the elimination of cables, advantages of the S6cf include the ability for those without three phase power to use the technology wherever suits them. S6cf has a lifting capacity of 7.5-tonnes per column and can be used in sets of four, six or eight.



More useful products could be found on Texa's stand, which was displaying the company's latest tools for workshops and mobile units, as well as the Konfort 09 Evolution air-conditioning machine, offered with a device for the agricultural, bus and coach markets.

Many visitors made sure they didn't miss Thermobile's stand, which featured a selection of warm air workshop heaters, available to the UK automotive trade. The company's waste oil-fired heaters were shown alongside oil- and gas-fired units in floor standing and suspended versions.

Visitors to the BP stand in Birmingham found out about the extension of the fuel company's BP Plus Card scheme. The company has signed a deal with Texaco, which allows card-holding drivers to use more than one in three UK forecourts.

The Axscend stand gave show visitors the first opportunity to see TrailerMaster, the company's trailer management solution. The service comprises three parts: an Axscend data collection unit (DCU) fitted to every trailer, a website aimed at the requirements of the operator and a team of trailer management specialists on hand to help. "TrailerMaster has been two years in the making and is the result of years of experience in trailer management," asserted Axscend's managing director Tim Steer. "It tells you where your trailers are and their current load status."

Last, but not least, the Handeman hot water hand wash unit was in operation on the Teal stand. Providing enough hot water for 10 hand washes, the unit is powered from a conventional lighter socket, situated in the vehicle.

livelihood for thousands of HGV drivers, many of whom are over 50. The foundation was formed primarily for the welfare of lorry drivers."

She made the point that, with tight regulation, drivers can lose the right to work through the revocation of their licences by the DVLA.

PDF is there, she adds, to provide help, both financial and advisory, wherever it's needed. "It also aims to help with retraining where a lorry driver finds he is unable to return to driving through ill health, and needs support in finding other work."

**7 Smith telemetry promises to cut vehicle off-road time**

Smith Electric Vehicles launched a telemetry system "specifically engineered for commercial electric

vehicles" at the show. Said sales director Kevin Harkin: "Smith Telemetry represents a paradigm shift in the product support of electric commercial vehicles. This is a very cost-effective method for fleet managers to streamline the management of commercial EVs."

The system itself takes data from the EV's driveline controller and battery management system, along with a GPS tracker. It relays information to the operator's central server and to SEV for remote assistance, if necessary.

"Smith Telemetry will also allow our service engineers to provide even more focused and targeted product support, minimising call-outs and reducing the amount of time a customer vehicle is off the road," insisted Harkin.

The first systems in Europe are being fitted to the fleet of SEV vans being

delivered this summer, under the government's Low Carbon Vehicle Procurement Programme. Harkin says that the company is also running a retrofit programme for existing EVs.

Meanwhile, Smith Electric Vehicles is focusing on diversifying its vehicle operations. Building on the Ford Transit Jumbo 4.6t chassis cab platform, the company is keen to point out that its EVs are not just about panel vans.

In fact, the most recent LCV to its credit is a flatbed electric truck for Scottish & Southern, equipped with its own boom lift – all powered from the electric traction batteries.

**8 Citroën triumphs with Nemo and Dispatch**

Citroën took double prizes in the iVan Awards 2010, at the Commercial Vehicle Operator Show. Its Nemo received the award for Light Van, while the Dispatch won the iVan Compact Van category award.

Nemo was credited for its innovative design and large load space. John Fife, editor of iVan, said: "Unusually, in this sector, the Nemo is purpose-designed as a van and is full of practical features to suit business usage. It also benefits the operator with a surprisingly big load area and space for two burly crew, yet it has a very small footprint on the road."

In the iVan compact van category, the Dispatch triumphed, thanks to a combination of choice, comfort and versatility. Stated Fife: "The Dispatch offers a wide and practical choice of body configurations, all of which provide large load space within compact external dimensions. This is the most comfortable van in its class and unusually offers standard features, such as Trafficmaster Smartnav satellite navigation." 

