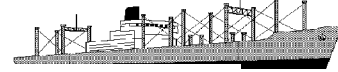




Rollin' On



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SUMMER MALAISE: Rewind and reload

Although only a small percentage of my *Rollin' On* readers are members of the Transportation Association of Portland (your membership there would certainly be welcomed), I have tried to refrain from printing the same article in both *Rollin' On* and the TAP newsletter. However, I must deviate from that goal this month, due not to a change of philosophy but due to the fact that today is August 28, this has an August date on it, and the end of the month is not only in sight, it is blinding me. Which is a shame for other reasons, as that means that summer will soon be an afterthought as we put our kids back in school and go on about what it is we do. So with a heavy heart (who said that?), the following is taken from my article in the August TAP newsletter.

Trucker Turmoil

As we get deeper into summer, many people are venturing down the public highways in pursuit of a last chance summer vacation before life resumes next month to their version of normalcy. These travelers may want to check their rearview mirrors or look around at the trucks that are keeping them company on the highways as life is hectic for several of those truckers. The fuel that is feeding the frenzy is good old fashioned free market economics. Since lumber prices are high, several shippers are buying truckloads, not railcar loads, thus putting a strain on available truck resources. At the same time, trucking companies have equipment sitting due to driver shortages.

The Obligatory Disclaimer

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The shipper's location is also a factor. The northbound loads out of California are destined not to Oregon points but to destinations in Tacoma and Seattle, leaving Oregon shippers high and dry.

Meanwhile, UP is struggling, to put it politely. The saga of delayed cars, lost cars and misrouted cars continues. With the sometimes rapid price fluctuation in lumber prices, it can be a dicey proposition to buy your lumber at the mill, put it on the rail and hope it gets to the destination you have chosen in a timely manner. On a different note, UP has discontinued intermodal service between Portland, Eugene (paper ramp), Tacoma and Seattle, on the one hand, and Denver, on the other (in language harkening back to the days of economic regulation).

But let's get back to the truckers. Ron Carey has continued the Teamster tradition by being the fifth president out of the the last seven to be jailed, die or resign under an ethics cloud, as reported by *Traffic World*, assuming his ouster by the federal court is confirmed. Consider the good fortune of James Hoffa, who is expected to succeed to the Teamster presidency, not because he did not also cheat in the election — he was found guilty of violating election laws — but because he did not cheat as badly as Carey (or he was better at it). It is like being graded on the curve in school. Portland's own Tom Leed-ham is Hoffa's only challenger, but unfortunately there is not much hope

that he can seriously challenge Hoffa who probably will not be required to cheat in the next election.

Be careful what you wish for

You have probably noticed that there are lots of strikes in the news these days, some of them about mandatory overtime. When the economy goes south on us, which could be sooner than later, those picket lines could turn into unemployment lines. We can all take a lesson from our indigenous neighbors, the squirrels who are storing food for winter, which is expected to be colder than normal. Perhaps in more ways than one.

To Poll or not to Poll: Doing it the USPS way

I recently received a "U.S. Postal Service Business Customer Satisfaction Survey". The first question had 12 subparts, with six boxes to choose from, ranging from excellent to poor. There were 17 numbered questions in total, with several of them containing multiple subparts like #1. #18 asked whether I had especially good experiences with the USPS, and then, in the only space in the survey allowing a narrative answer, asked: "Please describe especially good experiences."

I am now anxiously awaiting word in the news media that a recent survey showed that USPS customers overwhelmingly responded in an unbiased survey that their experiences with the USPS have been especially good experiences.

That's all for now. To shippers, carriers, agents and other third parties, keep the cargo rollin'!!

Short Bio

Admitted to the state bars of Oregon, Alaska, Florida and Massachusetts. Practicing law for over 20 years and emphasizing transportation law, business law and related litigation.