



# The Quarterly Dispatch

**GREAT PLAINS**  
TRANSPORT, INC.



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## 2017: Plans for the new year

by Dan Fetsch and Nick Graves

As we enter 2017, we look forward to a year in trucking that economists view with optimism. In 2016, trucking companies moved over 70% of the nation's domestic freight. During the past year, many things have happened that will shape the future of trucking as we know it.

In 2009, 150,000 trucking companies left the transportation industry due to fuel prices that made profit margins unsustainable. This past year has yielded similar results for the transportation industry as we have faced lower freight volumes, election uncertainty, tighter regulations and prolonged low prices in the oil industry. Trucking companies were in a fight or fold battle in 2016.

Analysts are predicting a comeback year like 2010, as companies that couldn't survive during the tough times have exited the industry. Oil prices are expected to average in the \$55 - \$70 per barrel range this coming year; a significant jump from 2016 prices. Oil prices affect more than just the price at the pump. Price per barrel is one of the main factors that drives economic production throughout the world.

A tightening capacity and likely increase in the need for services should translate into increased contract rates for 2017. Great Plains and CMT both employ salespeople who work full-time on obtaining new customers and freight lanes. Our salespeople have received positive feedback in regards to upcoming bids with the more positive economic outlook.

Throughout this year, we are looking to grow the Great Plains and CMT families. We will continue to purchase new equipment to keep up with the latest industry and customer standards. We aim to continue to add customers and to build those relationships to benefit all involved. Perhaps most importantly- we will continue to invest in our drivers via education, safety training, and working hard to ensure we provide everyone an opportunity to flourish.

We look forward to reaching for new heights in 2017!



Congratulations to Jack Clark for making our Driver Spotlight! Jack and his wife pull flatbed for CMT. They've been with us for 2 years!

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An exciting new opportunity is opening up at Great Plains! Find out about the new program we are launching!

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# CSA scores and you

By Casey Mittag

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association oversees many issues in the trucking industry. One initiative is Compliance, Safety, and Accountability, or CSA. The ultimate goal is to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities related to commercial vehicles. They do this, in part, by generating a CSA score.

CSA scores include 8 criteria: unsafe driving, crash indicators, hours of service, vehicle maintenance, controlled substances, hazmat compliance, driver fitness, and insurance. All these factors add up to generate our company's CSA score.

This score is used against us by many entities. The DOT uses it to increase or decrease our on-road inspections. Insurance uses it to increase or decrease audits (or even drop coverage all together). Customers use it to decide who they allow to haul their freight. If a company's score is too high, they risk having a load shutdown

by the DOT.

Another factor to keep in mind is our placement in the CSA system. Currently, we are one of many like-sized companies in the same CSA bracket. Within our current bracket, our scores are respectable. Yet as we continue to grow we could move into a larger bracket, where our score will have more of an impact on us.

Our timeliness in fixing issues can also impact our score. If you are inspected, no matter the effect on your record, you must notify us immediately! You may do so either by phone or Qualcomm. When the DOT finds an issue, our company only has a set amount of time to address it. Our goal is to have no DOT findings, but if you do please contact us immediately regardless of the day or time.

With these things in mind, it's important to factor safety into everything we do.



Compliance \* Safety \* Accountability

## FAST FACTS

CSA tracks fleet safety scores over a two-year rolling window. Over the last two years lights, tires and brake findings have been our top three violations. Which list below indicates the findings from most to least?

- A. Tires, Brakes, Lights
- B. Lights, Brakes, Tires
- C. Lights, Tires, Brakes

Answer: B. Lights 17 findings – Brakes 10 findings – Tires 8 findings

## Driver Spotlight

by Lindsay Hall



Jack and Theresa Clark drive for CMT. Jack has been with us for two years, and done 271 loads!

Jack Clark and his wife (and co-pilot) Theresa drive for the CMT flatbed division. They're from Wake Forest, NC. Jack is a successful driver, having hauled a total of 271 loads in 2 years! We sat down with him for an interview.

**What kind of tractor do you have?** 2013 Freightliner Cascadia.

**What kind of trailer do you pull?** A 50ft, 2006 Wilson Conestoga.

**What is your favorite thing to haul?** Specialized loads.

**What is the most unique thing you have hauled?** Carried Alice Cooper's personal mustang. It was a 64 1/2 Shelby GT. It's been in several MTV videos. And I still have pictures of it today.

**What is your favorite place to drive through?** Northern Alberta and British Columbia.

What do you like to do when you are not driving truck? Camping, fishing, and spending time with my family. I try to take 34 hour resets in places where I can get out of the truck and go hiking, fishing,

exploring. Pretty much anything to get out of the truck and keep a positive attitude.

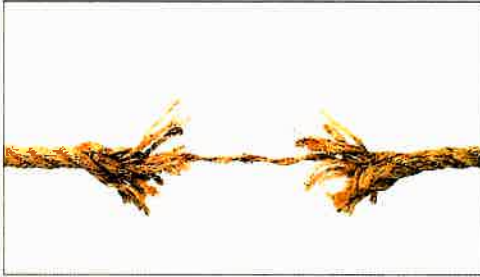
**What's the best part about your job?** The travel; going new places and meeting new people. I get the chance to visit old friends in faraway places I wouldn't be able to see otherwise.

**What's the hardest part of your job? How do you overcome it?** Leaving family behind and missing important occasions. I overcome it with lots of communication with the family. I try to schedule time off for important events at home, and spend quality time with the family while I'm there.

**What advice do you have for other drivers?** I try to always see the big picture, not just one load at a time. I try to manage my time and use effective pre-planning; scheduling my day, watching the weather and traffic, using my clock as best I can. And I don't turn down loads, even though some don't pay that great. You gotta take the cheaper load to get to a better location sometimes. The company is trying to load you with the best rates they can. If the truck isn't making money, the company isn't either. I always keep that in mind.



## STRESS MANAGEMENT



## Stress

Chronic stress can cause serious health issues. Headaches, high blood pressure, depression, and gastrointestinal problems are just some of the negative effects of chronic stress.



## Know your triggers

Keeping a stress journal can help you identify what triggers your stress. Once you know your triggers, you can work out solutions.



## Coping strategies

Eating healthy, regular exercise, and support from loved ones can all help keep stress levels low. Aroma therapy, deep breathing, and yoga can help you relax when you have extra stress in your life.

# Less stress for 2017

by Christie Moe

Working in the transportation industry can induce more stress than other jobs. Long, irregular hours and limited access to healthy food can increase your stress. According to the Mayo Clinic, stress is "a normal psychological and physical reaction" to the day to day demands of life. "Over time, high levels of stress lead to serious health problems," the Mayo web page states. These issues can include headaches, high blood pressure, depression, and gastrointestinal problems.

There is no way to completely erase stress, but there are ways for you maintain a healthy level. Keep a stress journal to track what caused your stress, how you felt, and how you reacted. Over time, you'll see patterns that can help you cope better.

Journaling about your stress will help you to identify triggers. Most will be negative events, but positive ones can also cause stress. Some may be self-inflicted, like poor time management. Overlooking the role your own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors play in creating stress is easy. HelpGuide.org states, "until you accept responsibility for the role you play in creating or maintaining it, your stress level will always remain outside your control".

Knowing your triggers gives you a starting place for coming up with solutions. Most solutions fall into one of five categories: avoid, alter, adapt, move, adopt, relax, or engage.

Avoiding unnecessary stress is a valid management tactic. Distinguish between the things that you need to do, and things you want to do. Try to limit the time you spend with people who stress you out. Control your environment to reduce stress. If watching the news before bed stresses you out, then watch something else instead.

You can also alter stressful situations. Express your feelings. Respectfully communicating your concerns helps to deflate stressful situations. Try to compromise with others, so you can reach a middle ground. You can also alter the situation by planning ahead, so you don't

over exert yourself.

Adapt to stressors by reframing the problem. Try to find a positive way of looking at the situation. You can also look at the big picture; how important is it in the grand scheme? Adapting can also mean adjusting your standards. Not everything has to be perfect. You may need to accept what you can't change. Know what you can control and what you can't. Be positive, and let go of negative feelings.

Getting your body moving helps to both reduce and prevent stress by releasing endorphins. Activities that use both your arms and legs, like walking or dancing, are more effective. Pick something you like to do and stick with it! Adopt a healthy lifestyle to keep you at your best. Eating healthy and getting enough sleep help you physically to cope with stress. Caffeine and sugar can cause your mood and energy level to crash. Alcohol and tobacco can provide temporary stress relief, but make things worse in the long run.

Taking time to relax is vital to managing stress. Set aside time every day to rest and relax, without allowing obligations to interfere. Taking time to do things you enjoy helps you to feel more positive. Engage. Engaging with others, especially face-to-face, can release hormones that reduce stress. Confide in family and friends who are good listeners. Video chat, talk on the phone, or email to keep in touch over the road.

Everyone is different in how stress affects them. Different management strategies will work better for different people. Find what works for you, and make it part of your routine. According to HelpGuide.Org, "stress management is all about taking charge: of your lifestyle, thoughts, emotions, and the way you deal with problems. No matter how stressful your life seems, there are steps you can take to relieve the pressure".

# New Release:

## GPT rolls out lease purchase program

by Mike Holland and Christie Moe

We have an exciting new opportunity to offer! We are rolling out a lease purchase program beginning immediately. This opportunity is one GPT has been waiting to offer because of low freight rates and fuel. We feel like we have the right program for our employees to be successful.

To take advantage of this program, interested drivers must meet certain hiring requirements.

We will have 2014 Freightliner units available for sale. These units can be financed for a simple plan of 25 payments of \$2500 per month and the title is yours.

GPT provides trailers at \$325 weekly rent. All our trailers are 2014 and newer Great Dane's. Each trailer has a Carrier or Thermo King reefer unit. Our trailers also include aerodynamic systems. Some have side skirts and trailer tails, while others use the Smart Truck system. Each of our trailers are equipped with a standard tire inflation system, GPS, and temperature tracking.

A driver under the lease purchase program can expect:

- 85% Line-Haul
- 100% Fuel Surcharge
- Top notch equipment
- Continuous Freight
- Weekly Settlements
- Fuel Discounts

Our goal for the lease purchase program is to offer our driving staff the opportunity to have control of their destiny. Do you want to own your own truck? If so, then we will help you make that happen. If you hope to own your own business, we can also help with that. We look forward to rolling out this program and hope you are excited too!



*GPT's lease purchase program is a great new opportunity! Drivers under this program will enjoy 85% line-haul, great equipment, and fuel discounts!*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Questions about the new lease purchase program? Contact:

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