

TOP 10

We're glad 2009's history. It produced more than its share of frightful headlines. But it was also a year for some of trucking's most innovative and helpful new gadgets and tools.

TODAY'S TRUCKING'S new products guru sorted through the hundreds of innovations that came his way and distilled it down to this list of great gizmology.

Y BY ROLF LOCKWOOD

You'll find no trucks in here, no engines, almost nothing from the really big outfits that are always in the limelight. You might never have heard of some of these companies, though a few—ArvinMeritor—and Truck-Lite—are household names.

One of them isn't a company at all, just a guy. What they have in common for the most part, aside from sparking my interest, is that they offer smallish and relatively inexpensive products that can somehow make a seriously positive difference in the trucking life.

Despite having said all of that, there are a few big-ticket items that I simply can't ignore. Eaton's new UltraShift-Plus transmission is an obvious one, which we covered extensively last year.

And a pair of aluminum flatdeck trailers stand out for me—Manac's brand new and wonderfully named Darkwing series, plus Fontaine's Revolution trailer that's said to weigh just 8,000 lb in 48-ft form.

On the electronic front, Freightliner introduced its proprietary RunSmart Predictive Cruise system earlier this past year. It evaluates the upcoming road profile more than a mile in advance and it even anticipates grades!

And how about the new Wingman ACB (adaptive cruise control with braking) from Bendix? It will break torque, engage the engine retarder, and even hit the brakes if necessary. Both Mack and Volvo have their own versions.

At something like US\$1200 if you already have ABS, more if you don't, Meritor WABCO's RSSplus independent stability enhancement system can now be had as a retrofit kit for trailers—with either spring or air suspension. I figure such things should be mandatory.

#10



Fuel-Theft Prevention

TruckProtect North America offers the Neck-It! anti-siphon device to fit all makes of class 7/8 vehicles. Cost is under US\$100. It fits in minutes and requires no drilling or gluing. It contains no moving parts and deters siphoning by having holes much smaller than 1/2 inch, yet allows hands-free high-speed fuel filling without splash-back. Should Neck-It need to be removed at any point, this can be achieved in a workshop.