

# FORDPROS

ISSUE 71

JUNE 2023

## WELCOME TO THE FUTURISH EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS



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Commercial Vehicle Business Summit Spring 2023

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Online: CV Buying in the Future

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

# IF YOU WAIT, YOU'LL BE LATE

There's been much talk about what's changing and what the future of the commercial space will look like. And there are about as many predictions as there are prognosticators. However, one thing is certain - if you stand on the sidelines to see how it all shakes out, you're going to be too late.

Consider this scenario. You get up in the morning and get ready for work. Would you wait until every traffic light on your route was green before you left your house? Of course you wouldn't. And why not? Because if you did, you'd never leave your house.

The same can be said in the context of the future of commercial vehicles and the businesses that support them. If you wait until all the changes are made and everything is "ready" you'll

be far too late and the competition will pass you by, and they'll take your market share on the way.

Does this mean you should jump in with no plan and no information about what's coming? Definitely not. However, there's also the saying "The early bird gets the worm" and it seems to fit in our business. The evolution of fuel types and batteries continues to morph, but those who have already been working to help their customers understand these changes, while outlining the pros and cons of each, are well ahead of those who are still thinking about their approach.

The theme of the Commercial Vehicle Business Summit hosted by Work Truck Solutions last month was "Futurish" and the numerous presenters and panelists all brought

some great ideas; in fact, we've outlined a few in this issue. And the common thread was that these experts, and the businesses they represent, weren't waiting to see what the future might hold. Instead, they'd proactively educated themselves on changes and were helping to shape their future - and the best news of all is that each was willing to share what they've learned, along with their strategies, with the audience.

They truly didn't wait until it was too late. Follow their lead and work on taking action to shape the future of your business today.

**Steve Henning**



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# JOE'S LETTER:

## Start with "WHY"

There is a speaker, a consultant, who gave a TED Talk in 2009 that really impressed me. Apparently, others were interested too, because I just checked, and it has in excess of 62 MILLION views. It is one of the top ten or twenty TED talks of all time. Take a few minutes to look at the link here: [Simon Sinek: How great leaders inspire action | TED Talk](#). Sinek, the speaker, wrote a book titled "Start with Why," which I haven't read, but the TED Talk encapsulates the issues that resonate with me.

All progress, all success, I think comes down to the "why" no matter what it is that we do with our lives and professions. Hang with me a minute, and let me explain. Within each of us, is a search for true meaning. The questions in life may be centered around: How do I make a living? How do I pay my bills? How do I find the right partner?...and so on, and are certainly valid. But these other questions are not the prime one:

### WHY

For businesses to succeed, Sinek says "why" is more important than "how" or "what" or anything else. I hear Sinek saying that Apple started with "why," and for that reason, they are a company who has been embraced and had such a loyal following.

For us as people, once we address the "why" of a chosen career, regardless of the time it might take to achieve anything else, if it is satisfying, then that is where a deep feeling of success is achieved.

In the case of us fleet/commercial consultants, us FordPros, the ones that I have had the great pleasure to

follow, to admire, seem to really have found satisfaction in helping clients, by:

- Patiently helping clients find best solutions
- Developing trust that they are being heard and understood
- Searching for ways to help their business reach goals
- Providing vehicles that give the owner/manager more control of the outcome
- Knowing the product benefits of our chassis, but also the vocational finishes that make them complete and effective

The fleet/commercial specialist that is in a hurry to "close a sale: any sale" is going to find success at a very shallow level, and the long-term, deep-root-based relationships will simply not follow. There are just too many who care deeply about the client, and it will become too apparent that the shallow roots of the quick sale will simply not evolve into a long-term relationship.

Slow down, be intentional, sink the deep roots in the profession, and it will bear fruit.

Or, find your WHY in some other pursuit and let another person have a crack at success in this.

### Good Selling,

Joe Hughes  
President, NFTC  
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### SPECIAL THANKS FOR THIS ISSUE TO:

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## WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS

### WORK TRUCK SOLUTIONS NAMED EMERGING 8 HONOREE BY CHEROKEE MEDIA GROUP

*Industry recognizes technological  
innovation and organizational  
excellence*

Chico, CA, May 9, 2023 -- Work Truck Solutions, the only company that offers a complete set of commercial vehicle business solutions, has been named an **Emerging 8** honoree by Cherokee Media Group (CMG). The Emerging 8 award recognizes the most innovative and promising companies in the automotive industry.

"We are thrilled to be recognized as an Emerging 8 honoree," said Kathryn Schifferle, founder and Chief Vision Officer of Work Truck Solutions. "This award is a testament to our team's hard work,

dedication and focus on industry changes and trends, and we are excited to continue providing innovative solutions to all our customers."

CMG announced the Emerging 8 award during the Auto Intel Summit/ National Remarketing Conference Spring Summit in Raleigh, North Carolina. Candidates for the award come from recommendations by industry leaders.

"Work Truck Solutions helps dealerships manage their commercial inventory and connect with their business buyers, reducing pain points throughout the process, while increasing profits for the commercial operation," said Aaron Johnson, CEO of Work Truck Solutions. "The company's powerful commercial vehicle platform educates buyers with digital marketing tools, and delivers insightful market and product data directly to our dealer customers."

Emerging 8 honorees are recognized as companies who address challenges through innovative technology and are at

the forefront of the automotive space.

Work Truck Solutions relies heavily on its company culture to stand out as a leader. "We have built an outstanding culture of collaboration, appreciation, and iteration in service to the industry," explained Schifferle. "Our team celebrates both mutual support and success achieved for our customers daily."

Not content to rest after receiving the Emerging 8 nod, Johnson wrapped up comments from the company by saying, "Work Truck Solutions will continue to build our partner network of OEMs, automotive tech stack providers, upfitters, fleet management companies, service providers and other industry stakeholders who share our vision of helping the industry become more efficient, transparent and connected."

[www.worktrucksolutions.com](http://www.worktrucksolutions.com)  
[www.Comvoy.com](http://www.Comvoy.com)





## ADRIAN STEEL EXPANDS HVAC LINE

**A**drian Steel continues to utilize our strong HVAC association connections and partnerships to deep-dive common industry problems and develop new accessories that save techs time and money.

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**Air Filter Storage Shelf:** Prevent damaged filters with this new innovative storage solution. Built into our newly released 16" shelving, this shelf will contain and protect air filters up to 26" tall. These shelves are available in three different heights.

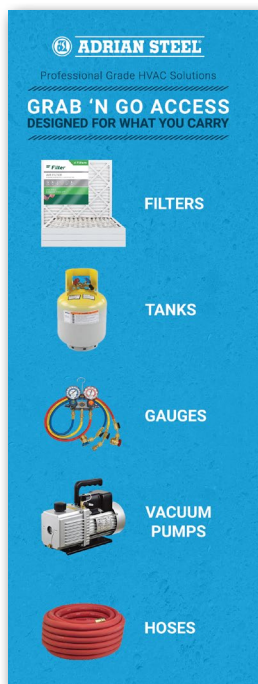
**Hose/Cord Organizers:** Hose and Cord holders allow you to free up valuable floor space and protect the longevity of your equipment.

The holder's curved surfaces allow your hose/cord to conform easily, preventing deformation and extending service life.

**Gauge Cover:** Our all-new gauge cover prevents expensive gauges from getting damaged in transport. It fits both mechanical and digital manifold gauges and can be mounted on window screens, end panels or partitions.

These new HVAC accessories help technicians prioritize safety, efficiency, and profitability.

To purchase these new accessories, reach out to your local Adrian Steel distributor, which can be found here: [www.adriansteel.com/buy/](http://www.adriansteel.com/buy/)



## KATHRYN SCHIFFERLE SELECTED AS A SOURCEDAY WOMAN TO FOLLOW IN MANUFACTURING 2023

**S**ourceDay's Women in Manufacturing Awards aims to bring recognition to the women working in the manufacturing industry that are breaking boundaries, creating inclusive spaces, and innovating in their fields. We're building a community

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Kathryn Schifferle

CVO / Founder @ Work Truck Solutions  
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How did you get into the manufacturing industry?

"A friend asked me to help someone in the commercial vehicle space with a publication, that led to finding a serious problem with tracking the final configurations of vehicles in a very complex manufacturing supply chain. I fell in love with this



of women that lift up and support each other in a field where representation is often overlooked.

-SourceDay, [sourceday.com/40-women-in-manufacturing-to-follow-2023/](http://sourceday.com/40-women-in-manufacturing-to-follow-2023/)  
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## SAFE FLEET

### TARPS SHIPPED SAME-DAY, SAFE FLEET UNVEILS NEW E-STORE

*Because When Productivity and Lost Revenue Are On The Line, Minutes Matter*

**B**elton, MO (May 31, 2023) - Safe Fleet, the leading provider of safety solutions for fleet vehicles, is proud to announce a NEW online option for purchasing replacement tarps. Just launched, Rapid Tarps™ e-Store allows for same day or next day shipping on tarps for dump truck, trailer, roll off, and most common open-top commercial vehicle applications.

The new Rapid Tarps™ e-store from Safe Fleet helps eliminate unnecessary downtime. "When a trailer or truck is down because of a tarp issue, it's lost productivity and revenue for our customers," says Scott Kartes, Director of Sales: Construction, Agriculture, Refuse & Recycling; Commercial Vehicle.

"That was the motivation behind our new e-store, an option to replace tarps as quickly as possible and get drivers back on the road with a genuine Roll-Rite® or Pulltarps replacement tarp."

Rapid Tarps™ e-Store offers tarp solutions from Roll-Rite® and Pulltarps® brands that are built to meet the safety and durability needs of truck and trailer operators. This means super tough mesh tarp fabric designed for demanding waste, construction or demolition payloads.

Because time is money, Safe Fleet's Rapid Tarps™ e-Store offers the following fast-ship options:

- Order online before Noon EST and your tarp will ship same working day
- Order online after Noon EST and it will ship next day by 5PM EST

For interview opportunities or more information, please contact Katie Welch Len at

612-720-9374 or [katiep@](mailto:katiep@newsworthycommunications.com)

[newsworthycommunications.com](http://newsworthycommunications.com)

To see products and learn more, please visit the Rapid Tarps™ e-Store at:

[www.rollrite.com/store.html](http://www.rollrite.com/store.html)

To learn more about Safe Fleet, go to: [www.safefleet.net](http://www.safefleet.net)



**KNAPHEIDE**  
SINCE 1848

## HARD AT WORK PHOTO CONTEST

**KNAPHEIDE MANUFACTURING  
COMPANY LAUNCHES HARD AT  
WORK PHOTO CONTEST**

**Q**uincy, Ill. - The Knapheide Manufacturing Company recently announced the launch of

its Hard at Work Photo Contest; the competition is set to highlight the variety of Knapheide truck and van body applications and will be accepting entries online through July 30, 2023, at 11:59:59 p.m. CST.

Three winners will be selected by a committee of Knapheide employees. The committee is looking for eye-catching photos of Knapheide truck or van bodies using the elements of setting, camera angles and lighting. The winning photos will be chosen through subjective determination by the committee.

The first-place winner will receive a \$2,500 credit to the Knapheide

distributor of their choice or Knapheide's online parts store. The second-place winner will receive a Knapheide Cooler Pack worth up to \$500, dependent on the winner's product(s) selection. The third-place winner will receive a Knapheide 175 Prize Pack, worth \$250, filled with Knapheide swag.

All photo submissions should be of Knapheide truck or van bodies and must be submitted online at [www.knapheide.com/hardatwork](http://www.knapheide.com/hardatwork). Additional terms and conditions apply and can be found on the website.



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# EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS

Imagine if your primary business was predicated on vehicles sustaining body damage that then required repairs. What would happen if suddenly these cars and trucks weren't on the road, and therefore weren't running into each other (or other objects)? While we frequently have short memories - and this can certainly be a valid defense mechanism to protect ourselves from painful experiences - this scenario just described is exactly what happened during the COVID pandemic when shelter in place orders went into effect.

If you know Tony Rimas, who is a Venture Partner from Autotech Ventures, you likely know of his personal involvement in a company called Repairify. During early 2020, when COVID started to become a common word in our vocabulary and our world changed dramatically, Repairify faced a huge challenge to their business model, and in reality, their survival, because they were in the collision repair business.

So what did they do? According to Rimas, who shared this case study when speaking at the recent **Commercial Vehicle Business Summit**, this is when they started to "look at what we could do to diversify our business in order to live another day." And diversify is exactly what they did. This diversification led to them expanding their horizons and adapting to a changing world.

The lesson here for all of us is to look toward the future and examine what needs exist in the market and ways that you [your business or your department] can fulfill these needs. When viewing

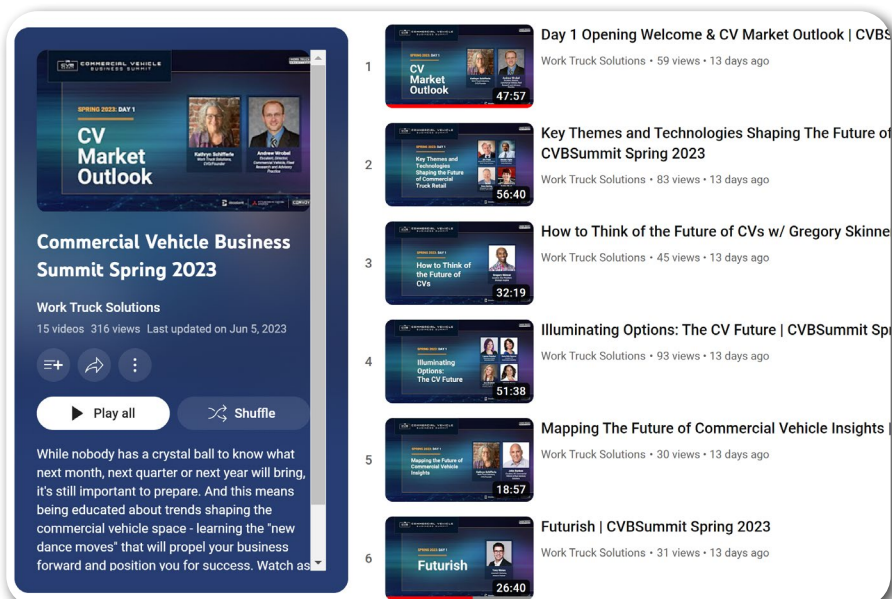
the commercial vehicle space this way, you quickly recognize there are many opportunities for those who are willing to look. Rimas explains it this way, "Think about a deeper relationship with your commercial customer. What else do they purchase alongside the vehicle? Who do they do business with from a roadside standpoint? What telematics technology are they using?" If you look at your business and your customers with this type of view, once you identify some of their needs, you can then look at how you can help, which is really what the commercial vehicle business is all about, as most of us who've been part of this ecosystem for any length of time will attest. Figuring out how you can assist your customers (who you likely look at as partners - and hopefully they look at you the same way) is key to building trust with them, while also building your business, and providing them with a way to be more efficient and

profitable in their operation.

Rimas also brought up some questions to consider when talking about commercial customers, such as, "Are you tracking how long they've had [their vehicle(s)]? Are you tracking how much their business is growing?" When you approach it this way, and then take action once you have the answers to these questions, you apply a future thinking mindset that will expand the horizons of your business, along with boosting your bottom line. This expansion means growth in both today's market, as well as the future, whatever that might be.

So don't wait, start applying a forward-looking mentality today and expand your business horizons; you'll be glad you did.

**Access the full playlist of all of the presentations/panel discussions from the Commercial Vehicle Business Summit Spring 2023**





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# THE TIME IS NOW

If you've been thinking about your commercial business and ways to improve it - increase your number of customers, boost your bottom line, add new products and services - that's great. But if that's the only step you've taken, then you might want to take heed of this quote:

**"You may delay, but time will not."  
- Benjamin Franklin**

In other words, don't wait; take action today.

If you attended the Commercial Vehicle Business Summit Spring 2023, hopefully you were able to sit in on [the session presented by Karen AG Krodel, FordPro Commercial Business Manager](#), where she talked about how she helps dealers, customers and upfitters grow their commercial business. Regardless of whether or not you carry the Ford brand, she presented takeaways you should consider, and perhaps the biggest one - or at least an excellent starting point - was this statement, "We try to make FordPro a one-stop-shop for our fleets. We want to help them manage their fleets and their total cost of ownership... and take their pain points off the plate..."

For all commercial vehicle dealerships, and really anyone in the commercial vehicle ecosystem, this type of one-stop-shop approach can have a tremendous impact because it's at the heart of helping customers in many different areas. However, one of the keys here is to not just think about adopting this way of doing things, but actually taking the action(s) necessary to implement it across your business.

Said Krodel, one area of focus for FordPro has been to "accelerate their [customers'] productivity and improve their vehicle uptime. We know uptime is critical to our commercial customers because if they have a down vehicle, they're not making money."

FordPro offers software for fleet management, as well as telematics, offering key insights for the vehicles they are using. Additionally, they offer services to assist commercial customers with properly maintaining their vehicles, as well as financial services. At the heart of all of these services according to Krodel is "Finding the right solution for that customer."

She went on to say, "All of these products and services continue to evolve as the future becomes the present." Put another way, this means time doesn't slow down and neither does the arrival of the future, so it's critical to always be looking at ways you can improve, but to also then be sure to put those changes into practice to stay current.

If you find yourself saying, this all sounds good, but I carry other/ additional brands, beyond Ford. Well, not to worry. All of the major OEMs have been rolling out solutions to help dealers and dealer customers with the various aspects of their commercial vehicle business. If you're unsure where things stand with a specific OEM, reach out to your OEM contact to get the details.

The reality is, the more you can help your business customers focus on what they do best - and here's a hint, it's not purchasing, financing, maintaining and managing the

vehicles they use every day - the more they'll see you as that essential business partner who's helping them grow their business.

Finally, here's a list (not all-inclusive) of some of the products and services you should consider when looking at how to expand your commercial vehicle business:

- Fuel efficiency analysis
- Mobile maintenance
- Alt Fuel education
- Fleet management
- Preventative maintenance plans
- Other OEM offerings, such as connected services
- Warranties
- Insurance
- Charging maps/guidance

No matter what you decide, have a plan and put it in place, because as noted at the beginning of this article, time does not delay, and chances are good your competitors don't either.

**ACCESS THE FULL PLAYLIST OF ALL OF THE PRESENTATIONS/ PANEL DISCUSSIONS FROM THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE BUSINESS SUMMIT SPRING 2023.**

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# HOW TO THINK ABOUT COMMERCIAL VEHICLES IN OUR FUTURISH WORLD

When discussing how to think about the future of commercial vehicles, it's pretty clear that whatever we thought about commercial vehicles in the past is about to change—dramatically. Whether we're talking about new technologies, new powertrains, new fuels, or new legislation and regulations, everything is going through a drastic transformation. And it will continue to evolve and change, so it behooves us to look at what's coming down the pike.

For years, the commercial vehicle market didn't change much, which has been great for business owners regarding total cost of ownership (TCO) forecasting. They've been able to project TCO reasonably accurately, and with telematics, which has been around for quite a few years, they've been predicting service and maintenance schedules. But we are entering a new era.

"Environmentalism, climate consciousness, climate change, greenhouse gasses, CO2 emissions and carbon offsets, energy dependence, these ideas have already become part of our social fabric," explains **Gregory Skinner, Vice President, Strategic Insights at Escalent**. "These terms are on everybody's tongue and social conscience. We need to embrace this because it is not going away. In fact, it's just ramping up."

## THE ZERO-EMISSIONS PROPOSITION

According to Skinner, government predictions for the adoption rate of zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) in the commercial market will grow from one-tenth

of one percent in 2021 to more than 18% by 2030. That projection is based on mandates alone. Take market and peer influences into account, and that number could be significantly higher.

## CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

"The AFDC government body [reports that there] are 53,000 level two and DC fast chargers out there in the market right now," says Skinner. "We're going to need significantly more [charging stations], but that's not a small number [and the infrastructure market] is gaining traction."

## TRANSITIONAL CHAOS

"I go to [quite a few] conferences, expos, and symposia, and we listen to the chatter and what's happening in trade media. And the prediction right now, or the word on the street, is... chaos. Everybody's saying 'This is so chaotic we don't know what to do, we don't know what's happening, how is [the commercial zero-emissions] market possibly going to grow?'"

Yes, more commercial ZEVs are becoming available all the time. And yes, more charging stations are coming online all the time. But by all appearances, more of both are needed to meet looming deadlines and subsequent demand. To say nothing of power grid and battery supply questions.

## ADOPTION RESERVATIONS

Another fly in the ZEV adoption ointment is that with technology changing so quickly, many business owners are taking a wait-and-see approach to investing.

Larger organizations may also

be reluctant to invest in building out infrastructure until it's clear which technology will be the most prevalent. In other words, which technology will provide the quickest and best ROI.

But is there a better way to think about the tsunami of disruption?

## ROOM FOR DIVERSITY

"We can anticipate the future to be a mixed fuel world," says Skinner. "Meaning you can't possibly have just one solution for every application."

Indeed, EV, fuel cell electric, hydrogen ICE, CNG, RNG, and propane are all perfectly viable, clean, and financially sensible, depending on the application. Apparently, that is a growing consensus within the industry itself.

"It's interesting that at events like the ACT Expo or Work Truck Week, this is probably the first year ever where I've heard speakers say that it's not just about electric," revealed Skinner. "It is a bunch of different solutions that end users will be able to pick and choose from."

Fortunately, there's a virtuous cycle where change drives innovation, spawning various ideas and solutions. And with that comes competition, which is always a good thing as competition leads to lower prices and more variety and options.

**ACCESS THE FULL PLAYLIST OF ALL OF THE PRESENTATIONS/PANEL DISCUSSIONS FROM THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE BUSINESS SUMMIT SPRING 2023.**



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# THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME



**F**or all the hoopla surrounding EVs, self-driving vehicles, and other underlying technology that's hitting the streets today, there really is "nothing new under the Sun." Sayings like that and "The more things change, the more they stay the same" have become clichés for a reason.

Change is inevitable, but what actually changes is the form of something rather than its intended use. Take transportation, for example. Forms of transportation have been changing and disrupting ever since the wheel was invented, but the need is still to move physical items from one location to another.

"The process that we're going through right now of introducing new technologies has repeated itself over time; it's not new," explains **Jim Press**, Former COO, of Toyota N.A. Co-President/Vice-Chair, Chrysler, Senior Advisor, Work Truck Solutions. "In 1912, we witnessed the first transcontinental commercial truck trip, but before that time, people thought it would

be impossible to deliver goods by truck. [Many people thought reliable delivery could be provided only by] train or horseback."

As nascent technologies make a splash in our market and in the media, it's essential to recognize that the role of commercial vehicle dealers remains as crucial as ever. In fact, savvy auto dealers are focusing on their core strengths and being proactive in helping their customers solve business challenges to deliver value and service in these tumultuous times.

## A TALE OF WOE

There are a lot of emerging technologies that are impacting the commercial auto market. Autonomous, electric, and connected vehicles are just a few examples of technologies that are changing the transportation landscape.

Leading-edge technology is literally changing the way people think about transportation. While these breakthroughs are exciting, they

also present challenges for business owners.

"First, visionaries see the future clearly as to what needs to be done and how it should be accomplished. And that's the exuberant period of the initial process of introducing technology," says Press. "Then you get into [the period when] the reality starts to sink in about where we really are versus where we want to be. And that's where we are now. Some call that the zone of disillusionment; I call it the zone of reality."

For business owners who depend on their vehicles to carry out their business, the rapid pace of technological change means they must stay current on the latest developments to remain competitive. For example, the rise of autonomous vehicles could disrupt their entire business model, and they may need to be prepared to adapt to this eventuality. Additionally, new technologies can be complex and challenging to implement, straining the limits of resources or expertise.



Jim Press put it this way, "The best thing you can do is gather enough information and get enough Insight so you can make decisions on future trends that are timely and maybe get ahead of your competition and allow you to move to where you want to be at the right time."

### A HELPING HAND

Commercial auto dealers have been in the business for a long time and have a deep understanding of the industry. They have built relationships with customers that go beyond just selling vehicles. Dealers have provided customer support and service for years and have become an integral part of their operations. It should be no different in times of disruption.

Commercial vehicle dealers can provide value to their customers by staying up-to-date on emerging technologies and identifying opportunities to improve their customer's operations. By sharing information about new technologies that can help customers reduce fuel consumption or improve safety, dealers can help them achieve their business goals. Additionally, dealers can provide guidance on implementation, regulations, and compliance.

### AN ENDURING SONG OF SERVICE

Despite the challenges presented by emerging technology, dealerships should continue to put their customers at the center

"I've always said that I'm not really in the car business; I'm in the people business," explains Norm Gilbert, Commercial Manager at AutoNation Ford Memphis. "What I mean by that is I'm building relationships. I'm not just looking to sell a company one truck a year for the following X number of years. Yes, I'm looking to get them the right vehicle, but then [I want to] help them grow their companies. Because if they're making more money, they're going to need more trucks. And if they're aware that I understand what they're trying to achieve, [and that I want to help grow] their business, I can [suggest] a product or a service that can help them generate more revenue and take things off their plate."

Dealers must take responsibility for their customers to ensure that what they want to purchase aligns with what they need. Sales is the beginning of a relationship; it's not a transaction. And after the sale is when the bulk of that relationship occurs.

Yes, innovation and change are constant in the commercial vehicle industry. Technology evolves, and machines improve, but the context is the same as it's been since the days of Henry Ford's Model TT; it's always about the customer's needs.

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## " DESPITE THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY EMERGING TECHNOLOGY, DEALERSHIPS SHOULD CONTINUE TO PUT THEIR CUSTOMERS AT THE CENTER OF THEIR OPERATIONS. "

"If we're smart, [we can start being proactive and think about a commercial customer's assets and ways for us to help them save money]," muses Dan Bryan, General Manager at Ricart to Business, during a session of the CVBS Spring 2023. "So, when we're proactive with a customer to try to identify opportunities and help educate them, it's truly a collaboration with all the parties involved to help keep [a customer's] assets on the road making money."

of their operations. Traditional models of excellent service and customer relationships will never be overshadowed by technology. In fact, the more complex technology becomes, the more dealers need to anticipate its impact on their customer's business and be proactive in adapting to it. By focusing on their core strengths and embracing new technologies, dealers can continue to provide value and service to their customers.

## COMMERCIAL PROPANE VEHICLE OUTLOOK FOR 2023

In the article [Commercial EV Outlook for 2023](#), we explored the demand for vehicles using fuels other than gas or diesel, otherwise known as alternative fuel (alt-fuel), and how the trend to create cleaner transportation systems is here to stay. In this article, we'll look at the pros and cons of propane-fed ICE vehicles, and what's in store for propane-autogas commercial vehicles in 2023.



### PROPANE-POWERED COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

Propane is a clean-burning fuel that emits fewer greenhouse gasses and pollutants, making it an attractive option for companies looking to reduce their carbon footprint. And unlike emerging alternatives, propane is a very mature technology. In fact, propane is the world's third most common transportation fuel, behind gasoline and diesel, and is considered an alternative fuel under the [Energy Policy Act of 1992](#).

### PROPANE FILLING AVAILABILITY

Although propane filling stations for commercial vehicles are less common than gas and diesel, they are certainly available. And since propane is produced in the U.S., the domestic supply is shielded from global geopolitical and economic shocks. Unlike gasoline and diesel, it provides a reliable energy source for business owners.

"Propane is available in every community in the United States,"

boasts Steve Whaley, Director of Autogas Business Development at the [Propane Education & Research Council \(PERC\)](#). "We lead the world in propane production, producing about 30 billion gallons annually. Americans use about 10 billion, and we export 20 billion gallons of propane to countries all over the planet."

The [AFDC Station Locator tool](#) helps fleets and private users identify nearby public and private fueling stations. Additionally, the ease of establishing a propane dispensary at your place of business makes that a realistic possibility when considering a transition away from gas or diesel.

"There are no EPA regulations for setting up a propane fueling site like gasoline and diesel where there's always that risk of leaks and spills," explains Whaley. "Propane can't contaminate the soil, water, or air, so the EPA doesn't even regulate propane filling sites. However, most business owners choose to let the fuel provider set up the fuel station at no cost. The provider and the business owner negotiate the fuel price they can lock in for a set period, say





one to three years. So the business owner gets to know what fuel costs will be for the term of the contract and doesn't have to pay the capital cost for the infrastructure."

Although refueling with propane autogas is a similar experience to refueling with gasoline or diesel, anyone dispensing propane autogas is **required by national codes** to be adequately trained. Training is available from your local propane or infrastructure supplier, the Propane Education & Research Council, and the NFPA.

### TOTAL COST OF PROPANE-POWERED COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

According to the **U.S. Department of Energy**, propane at vehicle filling sites typically costs less per gallon than gasoline. Propane vehicles provide a comparable driving range to conventionally fueled vehicles. However, propane is less energy



dense than gas or diesel, resulting in lower fuel economy, but propane is still considered cheaper to operate.

The U.S. Department of Energy also reports that propane's unique properties contribute to engine longevity and improved cold-weather operation.

And, of course, there is also the initial cost of either purchasing a propane-ready vehicle, which is comparably priced to a diesel

vehicle, or converting currently owned vehicles to propane power.

"It's in that total cost of ownership scenario where propane shines," explains Whaley. "Propane can produce plenty of horsepower, torque, and range. And when you factor in a much lower cost-per-gallon than gas and diesel, you can see the reality of meeting sustainability and financial goals simultaneously."

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# THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENTREPRENEUR

## THE 10-YEAR JOURNEY OF C+I SERVICES, LLC - ALWAYS DOING MORE WITH LESS



In 2013, Christian Schloegel was a fifth grader living in a small suburb of Chicago, IL. He reinvested the money he had earned from snow shoveling in prior winters and purchased a push mower to start cutting his parents and neighbor's yard to make some extra money.

In 2014, Schloegel's customer base started expanding organically. Families at church heard he was cutting lawns and eagerly hired him. Word spread quickly and business grew as neighbors saw Schloegel walking his push mower from lawn to lawn after school and on weekends.

In 2016, he was taking care of up to nearly 40 lawns. At this point, the push mower couldn't cut it (see what we did there). He purchased his 36" Bobcat stand-on mower with the profits he earned through his budding small business.

In 2017, Schloegel was interested in purchasing another mower, one that could "do more" than just mowing. He wanted to offer additional services to his clients, such as snow plowing, mulching, and Spring/Fall cleanups to keep him busy and his business profitable all year round. After much research, he purchased a Toro Multiforce

mower that allowed him to expand his service offering by being able to offer snow plowing, dethatching, and other seasonal services.

In 2018, at just 16 years old, Schloegel made another big investment into his business. Instead of using the profits from his small business to get a cool car, he purchased a Ford F350 and a trailer. No more riding his mower to and from jobs.

Business started booming! A few friends worked for him part time to earn some extra money, but more so because they wanted to encourage Schloegel to grow his business. This boom ultimately led to the creation of C+I Services, LLC in 2018. It was a monumental point for the company as Schloegel set his sights on further growing his company and offering commercial contracts for landscaping and snow and ice services.

In 2020, the pandemic hit and the future of C+I Services, LLC was unsure. Would customers prefer to take care of their own lawns since

they were home? To his delight, calls came flooding in and he was swamped.

As a junior in high school, he was busy in virtual classrooms during normal school hours and completing coursework. On top of all that, he was busier than ever quoting and completing additional landscaping and maintenance jobs. Thankfully, Schloegel had some college friends return home during the shutdown who were all too eager to help with the extra swell of landscaping work. With business continually growing, he needed another truck to keep up with demand. He purchased a Ford F450 with an affixed Aluminum Dump Body to increase the amount of material that could be taken and removed from job sites.

Schloegel was also able to grow his social media presence during the pandemic. He knew that a solid

**" IN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS C+I SERVICES HAD  
THE SWITCH-N-GO® SYSTEM IN THEIR FLEET, THEY SAW A  
DIFFERENCE IN HOW THE COMPANY WAS OPERATING "**

social media footprint would be necessary for the next expansion of his business. He posted videos of the different products he used, while paying very close attention to what other top landscaping companies were using to improve their businesses. Repeatedly Schloegel saw landscapers using a particularly intriguing system – one proven to "do more" than a normal truck. They were all using the Switch-N-Go® hoist system with interchangeable bodies to provide a fleet of solutions with a single truck. This became the next big goal for Schloegel.



## THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENTREPRENEUR

In 2022, Schloegel purchased and received his Ford F550 Crew Cab/Long Bed chassis upfitted with the Switch-N-Go® system. At that moment, in the Autumn of 2022, he knew his business was about to change. Rolling up with the Drop Box, Dump Body, and the VersaFit™ Bumper System assured his client base that he had the tenacity and the equipment he needed to get the jobs done.

In the first few months C+I Services had the Switch-N-Go® system in their fleet, they saw a difference in how the company was operating. They were saving money on fuel, no longer needed to rent a dumpster for cleanups, and his team was safer working at ground level. The flexibility of the business felt unlimited.

The Drop Box gave his team the ability to load 12-13 yards of material, including mulch, debris, and clippings. He's even rented it out as an additional service. The Dump

Body was customized with welded-on D-Rings and upfitted during the winter with a salt spreader that doubles as a liquid brine sprayer - another piece of equipment that can do more. As a commercial snow removal service, customers have zero tolerance for delays. The quick changeover of the Switch-N-Go system allows Schloegel to meet, and even exceed, their expectations when the weather would change without a moment's notice. The spreader is located in the back of the Dump Body, giving plenty of room for additional salt and equipment. Plus, the fold-down sides feature gives the operators safe access to materials, whether they are using it for snow and ice removal or for loading sod and pallets at jobsites. The VersaFit™ Bumper System has made this new truck even better. This allows his team to take a single truck plus a trailer to a jobsite with all the materials they need.

In 2023, Schloegel celebrates his 10th year in business (so far). Growing this company from a lone fifth grader with a single push mower to a full landscaping and snow and ice management service at only 21, he has many reasons to be proud. However, Schloegel is positive that the business is not done growing quite yet. He plans to add more trucks to his fleet, all similar to his current Switch-N-Go® set up. He also plans to add a couple more interchangeable bodies, such as the Landscape Body, Storage Body, and more Drop Boxes or Dumpster Bodies, all of which will keep him on his goal to find equipment that will do more, with less.



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# THE ALWAYS APPEALING TREND OF BEST-IN-CLASS

Long after the first predictions were made of how solar or wind power or rechargeable batteries would replace fossil fuels, gasoline and diesel engines are still the predominant energy source in commercial work trucks. Those great ideas are coming but they are not here yet. First something becomes possible, then it becomes economical, and finally it becomes well-designed and ready for widespread acceptance.

Eventually, the future arrives. But rarely as quickly as predicted. New technologies can yield huge leaps of improved efficiency, but the learning curve to get to that point can be very steep for early entrants into a field. And quite a bit of time can be wasted on ideas that don't pan out. Sometimes being first at

something is not as wise as being the most committed to perfecting the previous "Next Big Thing".

## The Next Big Thing at Scelzi

The truck building professionals at Scelzi Enterprises have made their choice, and consistent "Premium Quality" is still the biggest Next Big Thing their customers are asking about. Not a half-baked new body package or not-ready-for-prime-time gadget that fails far too often, nor a plastic/composite storage unit or accessory that will wear out or break under rigorous workloads. Instead, Scelzi focuses on USA-sourced components made of steel, or (better still) Galvanneal, that are laser cut, grinded, sanded, coated with computer-matched OEM quality

paint and finish, and then precision fitted to tight tolerances. Scelzi is keeping one eye on the horizon for what is coming up ahead, while both hands are kept firmly on the steering wheel, busy fulfilling and exceeding current customer expectations.

## Harder To Maintain Quality Products

The draw and allure of adopting too much cutting edge technology is offset by the increased challenges today of just maintaining a high level of quality for existing products. "I think new technological ideas in the work truck industry are fun to talk about," states President Mike Scelzi. "And how they might make us all more efficient and even

**"THE DRAW AND ALLURE OF ADOPTING TOO MUCH CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY IS OFFSET BY THE INCREASED CHALLENGES TODAY OF JUST MAINTAINING A HIGH LEVEL OF QUALITY FOR EXISTING PRODUCTS."**





## BEST-IN-CLASS

safer in the years ahead. But if you commit too much, too soon to new ideas and devices that have not been thoroughly tested yet, you are taking your eyes off the ball of today's challenges to keep your customer's businesses thriving. It is easier for startup firms that don't have a customer base and a reputation to uphold."

Supply chain issues continue to confound truck body upfitters. There is a greater temptation than ever to switch out high-quality brand name components with substitutes having little or no track record of premium quality performance. Whether it be cranes, compressors, mud flaps or screws, Scelzi continues to resist this temptation. As co-owner Gary Scelzi puts it, "Back in my racing

days I saw the need to take a few chances every now and then to win a race, and sometimes they paid off. But building truck bodies and making the Scelzi name mean something over the long-term is a whole different competition."

Adds Mike, "At Scelzi, we are going to take care of the ones who brought us to the dance – our customers – and we believe they trust us to know when to adopt a new technology that won't cause more problems than it solves. That will probably mean we won't be the first to implement some new, untested cool thing."

Scelzi's dealers and customers may not have considered their truck bodies the Top-of-the-Line when they first began building them in 1979, but after several decades that is the consensus today. And one that Scelzi Enterprises plans to keep, despite new challenges in the world around them.

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# COACH KEN

BY KEN TAYLOR, [ken@coachkentaylor.com](mailto:ken@coachkentaylor.com)



## *THE PERFECT STORM*

**W**hen climate conditions are at a certain point in tropical waters the weather is perfect for tropical cyclones, also called hurricanes, that are of such a destructive force that the storm destroys thousands of homes and structures, as well as human life. In the business world we have just experienced our own "hurricane" of destruction. Covid 19 led to a dramatic slowdown in the commercial market, coupled with an extreme shortage of inventory based on not only the pandemic, but also microchip shortages and a shortage of parts. We are only now in the process of recovering. It is amazing how one missing part in a chain of events influences every step in the chain.

**" WE ARE AT THE END OF THAT CHAIN OF EVENTS CALLED A PANDEMIC. EVEN WHEN THINGS SEEM TO BE GETTING BACK TO NORMAL, THERE IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL AFTER EFFECT THAT CAN IMPACT SALES AND EVEN RELATIONSHIPS. MANY SALESPeOPLE STOPPED MAKING CONTACTS AND ARE IN MANY CASES 'STARTING OVER'. "**

We are at the end of that chain of events called a pandemic. Even when things seem to be getting back to normal, there is a psychological

after effect that can impact sales and even relationships. Many salespeople stopped making contacts and are in many cases "starting over." Where are you or your dealership in this "restart" on the fleet and commercial side? If you never stopped performing the activities that create success, congratulations. But, if you are suffering from the "post pandemic sales blues," here are a few things you can do!

1. Have a meeting with your entire commercial and fleet department. Have each person bring a list of current customers with key decision makers identified.

2. Assign each team member (and you!) to call five customers each day, five days a week. This is a simple conversation:

- a. Talk with your key contact and say the following: "I was thinking about you today and wanted to touch base to see how you guys are doing."
  - b. "What are some of the issues you are currently facing in your industry?"
  - c. "What can we do to support you?"
  - d. "Would love to set up a brief meeting to talk about some things we are doing to help in today's marketplace. Is there a good day and time for you?"
3. Set up a system for maintaining regular contact, such as an electronic newsletter or bulletin, that keeps you "top of mind" during their work week. We actually do this for hundreds of dealerships nationwide with great results. They don't know we exist and you get all the credit!
4. Make sure you continue to attend trade shows and association meetings. This is a great way to not only stay in touch with current clients but also pick up new prospects. I have found that it is also a great way to get new appointments. It is hard for someone to turn you down when you are face-to-face with them. I use a very simple strategy, here it is:



- a. Have the executive director introduce you to a specific attendee. He or she is more than happy to do this and, in most cases, will actually give you an endorsement!
- b. Have questions prepared that are focused on them, not you! These are simple questions like:
  - i. "How long have you been in business?"
  - ii. "So, how did you get started?"
  - iii. What are some of the obstacles you are facing in today's economic environment?"
  - iv. The most important question, "I'd love to visit your operation sometime - would that be ok?" (They always say, "Come by anytime.") Yes, that's called an appointment!
- v. Always have brochures or handouts with you in addition to your business card.

There are always opportunities to grow your business, even in difficult times. It just takes positive thinking, a little preparation, and having an attitude of "How can I help!" I'm confident that you will see quick results from taking the steps mentioned in this article. Why? We've been following this formula for over twenty years with great success. Make 2023 your best year ever!



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# DEALERSHIP SUCCESS

Shawn Horswill - Work Truck Solutions VP, Customer Success

## "FUTURISH" SHOCK



I've written quite a bit about commercial vehicle shows in this publication, including NADA 2023 and WTW 23. In this issue, I'd like to talk about the Commercial Vehicle Business Summit (CVBS) Spring 2023, which was hosted by none other than Work Truck Solutions.

The CVBS is the only major virtual summit dedicated solely to the growing commercial vehicle industry. And forgive me if I'm a little biased, but I believe it is also the number one place to soak up the collective wisdom of experts from data/market research firms, vehicle manufacturers, upfitters, finance providers and venture capitalists, fleet management and small business solutions companies, commercial dealership managers, and more.

Tesla cars as an example. In fact, Kathryn Schifferle, Founder/CVO of Work Truck Solutions, kicked off [The Future of Automotive Commercial CVBS session](#) with Steve Greenfield, Founder & CEO of Automotive Ventures, by sharing her first experience driving a Tesla.

"I had to drive down to Napa from Chico, and I decided that I was going to rent a car rather than take my car. When I showed up in the morning and was going to get my cheap car, there was a Tesla out front. So, I rented it," explained Kathryn. "Strangely enough, this was my first experience, not being in one, but driving one. Oh my gosh, I have to tell you it changed my world. To me, it was like being inside of software and having an app help you."

present is drones delivering cargo. Even if it is only small packages, drone delivery is now part of the commercial vehicle arena because they are a combination of air mobility and autonomy for moving cargo.

"Amazon is spending a tremendous amount of money in [the drone delivery] space as you can imagine. Walmart is as well," said Steve. "And there's a company called Zipline, that's working primarily right now in Africa, moving medical supplies to remote areas with drones and they just raised something like a four-billion-dollar valuation. We got used to next-day delivery, now you can pay for same-day delivery. I think in the near future, you're going to have the option of having products delivered to your house within minutes by drone."

And we can't talk about "futurish" without bringing up artificial intelligence (AI). You can't look anywhere without seeing an article opining about how ChatGPT, or some other generative AI, is going to take over the world. Now, we have to take it all with a grain of salt, but AI is going to automate a lot of mundane, repetitive tasks. So, if you're an accountant, if you're on the phone all day with potential customers, if you're writing, if you're a creative-type, even for graphic arts, amazing things are already happening. This is difficult for a lot of professionals to accept.

## "AS WITH ANY NEW TECHNOLOGY, JUST BECAUSE IT'S AVAILABLE DOESN'T MEAN EVERYONE IS READY FOR IT..."

CVBS Spring 2023 ran with a theme of "Futurish." Appropriate for these times when emerging technology becomes current technology in the blink of an eye. Things don't seem to stay in the future as long as they used to! Take self-driving

Did Kathryn enable the self-driving mode? In a word... no. As with any new technology, just because it's available doesn't mean everyone is ready for it.

Another example of the future of mobility colliding with the



**"IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD WE'RE ENTERING INTO. IT'LL BE FRAUGHT WITH A LOT OF CHALLENGES. I WOULD ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO BE EXPERIMENTING WITH THIS. STAY ABREAST OF IT BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO CHANGE THE DAY-TO-DAY LIVES OF ALL OF US"**

Three years ago, many industry experts figured useful AI was still ten years out, but the **release of ChatGPT** late in November of 2022 popped many a bubble in that regard. Again, some of the same experts, whose industries stood directly in the crosshairs of disruption, reckoned the upstart's

results to be woefully subpar and that professional-level results were still years away from reality. Open AI's new version, ChatGPT-4, was released only four months later. And its output is a drastic, jaw-dropping, cold-water-in-the-face, upgrade.

"On one side, you could say AI is really going to unlock tremendous opportunities for productivity and that it's going to alleviate a lot of repetitive drudgery and manual tasks," Steve opined. "On the other side, you could argue it'll eliminate a broad swath of white-collar laborers. Either way you look at it, the next generation is going to grow up always surrounded by AI. It's a Brave New World we're entering into. It'll be fraught with a lot of challenges. I would encourage everyone to be experimenting with this. Stay abreast of it because it's going to change the day-to-day lives of all of us."

Driving home a point, Kathryn remarked, "I remember one of the books that I was asked to read in college was called Future Shock by Alvin Toffler. And, it was shocking at the time."

Well, in many ways, the future is already here. But as leaders in the commercial vehicle sales industry, we must go about our daily work with eyes wide open to future technologies breaking through into our now. Fear and loathing is not an option if we want to thrive. In fact, I would challenge every dealership to look at emerging technologies as, yes maybe disruptors, but more aptly as possible new ways to serve your customers better.

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# CUP o'JOE These ARE the Days....



**T**he economy is in the pits, There are no fleet/commercial vehicles anywhere in stock. Nobody will dealer trade any inventory: nobody has any.

I just was at the latest meeting of the Northwest Ford Truck Association (formerly Club), and reminiscing about the time twenty years ago when another FordPro, Chris Webster (Bickford Ford), Geoff Strother (Nelson Truck, an upfitter), Robert Jorgenson (now Summit Truck Body), Verle Ketchum (now Mullinax Ford), Tim Tobin (Northside Ford Trucks) collaborated with a most excellent Steve Hurley (Ford CBM Retired and missed), to start the Club.

It just seemed like a good idea to get together to listen to upfitters, to Ford keys, to Ford (now) FinSimple, and one another talk about the latest trends. Talk about the challenges of being the "step-child in the sales department" that everybody envied. Talk about how we worked to serve vocations, to

build long-term relationships, and the many other things related to each dealership we served.

It took a little work, but with 5-6 agreeable professionals working together (building relationships at a different level, professionally), we kept on doing it because while we gave a bit of time getting it started, but gained so much in the process. It's like when you're called on to teach a group something, you end up learning so much more about the subject; you become better, while helping others get better.

#### YOU COULD DO THIS

If you felt like it, you could try putting one together. With an enthusiastic CBM, it's likely you could pull it off, and learn and grow in your expertise, and likely build a bigger book of business. It's not rocket surgery, as they say, just good people getting together with good people.

I remember Ray, a dealer located nearby, asking me why he would want to come and talk around his competitors...who ended up serving on the Board after the second year, serving for seven years until he retired. Getting together with peers can open up new opportunities, and getting to know distributors and bodybuilders is vital to growing your completed chassis business.

If you are located within a hundred miles (or two hours' drive) from a club, you should go to a meeting and see what I mean. Not all

clubs operate the same way: some meet every month or two at the same location. Others meet in different locales, at distributors' operations. The NW Association meets sometimes in North Seattle, sometimes in Portland, some 160 miles away. It is so meaningful that some travel the ~200 mile distance for a meeting...regularly!

If you are in an area where you feel that not enough dealers are within range, I encourage you to meet other FordPros that are 2-3 dealers distant from your location, so you don't feel like others might think you're poaching. Share a meal, a cup of coffee, find out how they do dealer trades, meet the bodybuilders in the area. Make the effort to meet with other FordPros, and see for yourself the difference it can make in how your work feels to you.

Do it now. Pick up the phone, meet somewhere with your peers. These are the days! Start something!

**Joe Hughes**  
[admin@cvbnetwork.com](mailto:admin@cvbnetwork.com)

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### 2022 Ford F-350 Super Cab SRW 4x2, Scelzi Signature Service Truck



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#### Chassis Details

Stock Number	FN2029
Stock Type	New
Year	2022
Make	Ford
Model	F-350
Class	3
Drive Train	4x2
Cab Type	Super
Vehicle Trim	XL 2WD SuperCab 168 WB 60 CA
Vehicle VIN	1FD8X3E57NEE26061
Interior Color	GRAY
Exterior Color Description	WHITE
Engine Cylinder Count	8
Engine	8 - CYL.
Transmission Type	Automatic
Rear Wheels	Single
Fuel Type	Gasoline
Engine Make	Ford

#### Body Details

Manufacturer	
Body Type	Service Truck
Body Line	Signature
Body Model	SB-108-79-49-38-VO
Ladder Rack Description	2" x 3" x .120 Wall
Ladder Rack Style	Forklift
Ladder Rack Color	White
Body Material	Steel
Body Height	38"
Body Width	79"
Body Length	9'
Body Inside Width	49"
Bumper Type	Step
Bumper Material	Diamond Plate
Bumper Depth	6"
Bumper Color	Gray
Camera Description	Backup Camera
Compartment Type	Top Opening

“

We've been with Work Truck Solutions now for over seven years, and it's been great using their commercial inventory platform, with their reporting, custom content and great consultation, to continue to expand our commercial business. When they launched Comvoy we were excited they were helping their dealers gain national leads.

**Dan Bryan**  
General Manager, Ricart to Business

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