

Trucking Tonnage Held Economy Sign

BY EVERETT W. FREDRICKSON
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The first signs of a turnaround in our economy will show up in the 1975 truck tonnage figures, as business and industry begin to fill in their reduced inventories.

There is really no accurate way to predict when increased truck tonnage will begin, as the trucking industry is tied to the health of all other industries in our state. These include textile and furniture, two of our largest Tarheel industries, showing a recent decline in employment and sales.

Using the trucking industry tractor-trailer as a supply pipeline for North Carolina business, more and more companies have ceased stockpiling large quantities of raw and finished products.

Truck tonnage and profits were down in 1974 compared to 1973.

Based on the Southern Region Interstate Commerce Commission report, tonnage was down 4.2 per cent for the 3rd quarter and five per cent for the 1st and second quarters of 1974, as compared to the same quarter in the unusual growth year of 1973.

Trucking industry profits in the same region show an 18.3 per cent decrease in net profits before interest and taxes were deducted, according to the ICC 3rd quarter report.

These trucking industry operating costs consumed 95.09 cents of every revenue dollar on the average compared to 94.19 cents the year before in the 3rd quarter, before deducting interest and taxes.

The recent ICC reports were based on 113 class 1 and 2 motor carriers operating in nine states in the ICC Southern Region 4.

The 1974 truck tonnage will possibly decline about seven



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per cent for the year in the Southern Region.

This decline is based on an average of the actual ICC figures for the first 3 quarters and other preliminary estimates for the 4th quarter, which show a down trend of about 14 per cent.

Interestingly enough the trucking industry operating costs for 1973 for all class 1 and 2 motor carriers consumed 95.2 cents of every revenue dollar on the average compared to 94.3 cents in 1972, before deduction of interest and taxes.

These trucking industry profits for 1973 show 18.8 per cent decrease in net profits for all class 1 and 2 carriers in the United States.

The trucking industry has done everything in its power to cut costs, including: improvement of load factors; consolidation of shipments where feasible; and elimination of circuitous routings were permitted.

The greatest obstacle to increased productivity is the out-moded engineering requirements on the use of new and modern truck trailer equipment.

Although the earnings power of the trucking industry



SECOND CHANCE FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING

College students and recent graduates are facing intense competition for a limited number of job openings. But for students who haven't completed their sophomore year, there are programs available which could prepare them to land jobs after graduation. One such is the Army ROTC Two Year Program which is designed for two-year college graduates. It also embraces transfer students and other college and university students who didn't enroll in Army ROTC at the beginning of their college career.

The leadership and management training these students get, coupled with the responsibilities and challenges faced during active duty, gives the Army ROTC graduate a competitive edge in getting civilian jobs.

To qualify, students must be at least 17 years old, but under 28 at the time of graduation. They must be academically, physically and morally acceptable. In

addition, they must attend a six-week Basic Camp during the summer prior to entering the program. For this they are paid approximately \$500.

After successfully completing the Basic Camp and enrolling in the Army ROTC Advanced Course, cadets earn \$100 each month for up to 20 months and attend a six-week Advanced Camp between their junior and senior years. During this camp period, the principles of leadership are put into practice and cadets are paid approximately \$475.

Army ROTC graduates normally have a two-year active duty commitment with the Army for which, as Second Lieutenants, they earn approximately \$10,000 a year.

Students interested in enrolling should contact the Professor of Military Science at one of the colleges and universities across the country which host the Army ROTC program. This contact should be made prior to March 31, 1975.

Nature Notebook

Wind Is Pollinator For 'Rushed' Trees

BY MILLIE BLAHA
Sherwood Forest

"Hurry" is the by-word for many of our trees in spring — hurry before the leaves come out to interfere with their windblown pollen. Many of the flowers of the treetops have no gay petals, no advertising department, no nectar nor landing stages, for they do not need to attract insect visitors. The wind is their pollinator.

I was reminded of this recently as I drove along Highway 276 between Cedar Mountain and Brevard. Shafts of sunlight singled out clusters of tiny abundant sausage-like shapes suspended from the tall, almost tree-like forms of the alders, growing where their feet can be wet — on moist slopes, in ditches and along the streams which meander near the roadside.

These sausage-like shapes are called catkins and contain the male, or staminate,

flowers of the alder. Each catkin contains hundreds of individual florets, each with three to six stamens, virtually a pollen dust factory! With the first touch of Spring, the catkins soften, elongate and shake out an immense amount of pollen. This supposed waste of pollen is understandable when we look for the pistillate flower on which the golden dust is to fall if seeds are to form. The female, or pistillate flowers also are catkin-like but are very tiny, usually in groups of four, on short stems just above the dangling male catkins.

Alder flowers are among the smallest of all flowers and ordinarily are not seen by anyone even when massed together in these interesting shapes. Because they have no showy petals, no one thinks of catkins as containing flowers. Catkins are a very ancient invention for wind-pollinated flowers. Botanists indicate that the first woody plants

with catkins were growing in the world more than fifty million years ago when our continents and oceans were very different from what they are today.

Every detail of these flowers is designed for one purpose — to perpetuate the alders. When a pollen grain falls on a receptive pistil, the seeds will begin to be formed into what will eventually resemble a miniature pine cone. Within this cone will be tiny nuts which are a source of food for goldfinches and such occasional winter visitors to our area as pine siskins and red polls.

There is a very accurate way of identifying an alder, especially when it is leafless. Just below the dark red winter bud within the scar left by last year's leaf is a most delightful "tree face" which can be seen

only through a hand lens.

The scar and the dots inside it indicate where the sap and food pipelines leading from the twig to the leaf were broken off, forming a round face with a tiny nose and big wide eyes that seem to look at you with startled surprise.

Other "catkin" trees not quite ready to shake out their pollen are the willow, birch, oak, beech, walnut, hickory, hazelnut, butternut, ironwood and poplar. The silent explosion that occurs when the air is bombarded with their pollen is especially annoying to persons afflicted with allergies.

Right now, as February makes its departure, the fluttering golden and purple pendant, pollen-shedding tassels of the alder are flaunting their banners — announcing that Spring is here!

First Union Offers Auto Buyers Rebate

First Union National Bank will rebate up to \$250 on the first monthly payment of any new car loan financed with the bank beginning today, Feb. 24, Ray N. Simmons, vice president, has announced. The offer is good until March 31.

"We feel this rebate is one more way First Union National can help North Carolinians afford a new car now. It also should be a boost to car dealers across the state," Simmons said.

The new rebate is the second has been somewhat diminished, trucks continue to deliver the necessities of life to more than 5 million Tarheels.

Trucks deliver virtually all livestock to major markets and nearly three-fourths of all fresh fruits and vegetables; more than 75 per cent of radios, televisions, phonographs and records; 82 per cent of all clothing and 91 per cent of all office and accounting equipment.

effort First Union has made to reduce the impact of new car prices on the consumer. In November, 1974, the bank began its optional Plan 48 which makes monthly payments smaller by extending them over a longer period of time - 48 months instead of the traditional 36.

Simmons added that consumers have several reasons to buy that new car now. They can receive exceptionally high trade-in values on their old car making it worth more toward a new one. Many car dealers are offering them a big rebate on new cars.

First Union's rebate offer will give them additional savings of up to \$250 depending on the size and the number of monthly payments in the loan. And the bank's Plan 48 makes monthly payments smaller.

Information and details on First Union's new rebate offer or Plan 48 can be obtained from any First Union National loan officer.

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