

FREIGHT EXCHANGES

Online freight exchange 'fills gap in quiet times'



By Joanna Bourke

HAULIERS ARE claiming that subscribing to an online freight exchange has helped them avoid job cuts by compensating for lost volumes during the recession.

David Humphry, group owner of Edmonton, North London-based RA Haulage, tells *CM*: "Volumes were down almost 10% in January compared to the same month in 2008, and although freight exchange is not our core business, it does fill the gap in quiet times and bring in extra income."

RA Haulage is a member of Haulage Exchange, part of the Transport Exchange Group – one of many online freight exchanges



that run in the UK ('Match of the day', *CM* 16 October 2008).

Peter Allen, company director at William Allens of Bolton,

concur with Humphry's findings: "Over the past few months, we have been using the site up to three times a day and it is now accounting for 10%-20% of our client base." He adds that, as a consequence, there have been no redundancies made this year.

"It is now more important than ever for hauliers to make sure they are running vehicles at full capacity as a means to cut costs," concludes Luke Davies, Haulage Exchange operations manager.

Haulage Exchange is expecting its membership to more than double in size by the end of the year, as hauliers make use of every option available to them to avoid lost revenue during the recession.

Davies reveals to *CM* that the number of members in February was 57% higher than a year ago, and that the exchange expects the number to rise another 55% by the end of 2009.

Meanwhile RA Haulage says online freight exchanges are not the only cost-cutting measure it is using. "By employing Volvo's Dynafleet telematics system on three of the 10-strong fleet in November, we have seen fuel consumption drop almost 4%," reveals Humphry, adding that it will be rolled out to all the trucks in the company's fleet.

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TRUCK CRIME

Thieves zap driver with Taser and snatch truck and cargo

DRIVER MICHAEL Osborne was stunned with a Taser gun and dumped by the side of the road as his truck and load were stolen from outside a Birmingham industrial estate last week.

Osborne, who was driving for Felixstowe-based

company Gipping Transport Services, was attempting to deliver a container filled with pasta that he had collected from Tilbury to an industrial estate in Duddestone Mill Road, Salfley, Birmingham. A man dressed as a security guard stopped him just outside the estate and when his back was turned used the Taser gun on him. Osborne was then bundled into a car by four other men and dumped by the side of a nearby road.

The truck was a Renault Magnum pulling a Dennison trailer, and the robbery took place on 3 March. Neither the truck nor trailer had been found as *CM* went to press and West Midlands Police are investigating.

Mark Fellingham, partner in Gipping Transport, says the violent kidnap happened just a few days after Osborne had returned to work following a prolonged absence due to a bad back. Osborne is shocked but otherwise unhurt.



▲ A demonstration of a Taser gun being fired

TruckPol has raised £5,000 by appointing three stakeholders over the past six weeks. They join as parent Association of Chief Police Officers' Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (AVCIS) waits on the reinstatement of its annual £400,000 grant.

Contrary to our interview with Nigel Butler ('Putting its house in order', *CM* 26 February), Ian Gordon Commercials, in Ayrshire, is not a member of the Renault Trucks UK network.

Home Delivery Network (HDNL) has started a text messaging delivery service to schedule deliveries inside a three-hour window. The group's IT director Chris Airey estimates this will improve the rate of 'first-time' deliveries.