



Any Time Sunday? ATS deliver

ATS stands for Australian Touring Services (Logistics), not Any Time Sunday. But this is a transport company who work around the clock, including those back of the clock hours that most people use for fun and sleep.

Now this Sydney based firm have added new truck tracker software, as an extra enhancement for worried production managers who will be able to log onto the web, and see where their trucks are. The system uses a Mobile Tracking and Data unit installed in each prime mover, which reports a range of truck operations in almost real time.

ATS partner Phil Duncan demonstrated the system for CX, and it is clearly a terrific innovation. It uses mobile phone technology, so when the truck leaves the coverage area it obviously can't be tracked. But that is foreseeable, and when it reenters a cell somewhere the telemetry is uploaded to cover the ground missed. I saw the progression of the trip over the Nullabor, on a map, with the time intervals. You can drill in and find out how fast the truck was going, and get a whole bunch of engine and drivetrain info too, even things like 'hard cornering'.

(continued on page 40)

Entertainment transport logistics firm introduce new GPS tracking and reporting system.



ATS operate 48 foot equipment like this pan

CX 37



Terry Turner, Chris Nicholson and Phil Duncan

ATS (continued from page 37)

So how do the drivers feel about it?

"I think it adds safety," says Michelle Martin (pictured below). "I like to talk to the folks at home every day in any case." Michelle has been driving big rigs for 13 years, her dad did the same thing before her. "I love to drive," she added.

ATS reason that good drivers don't mind the system, and that drivers have had to become very professional in recent years. New legislation requires drivers to do a fatigue management course, which in turn rewards them with slightly longer shift times. Without the extra hours allowed by doing the course, it becomes impossible to drive from Sydney to Brisbane in one shift. There's a lot of enforcement in the pipeline to make the roads safer, and ATS are not unhappy about it.

While ATS are most visible via their trucks, they also do all the forwarding parts of a show or film shoot. This involves import and export, and brokerage for FAK and LCL. I didn't know what there were either; FAK is Freight All Kind, and LCL is Less (than) Container Load. They recently added a Real Freight Solutions arm for film, and can move sets or even rush the rushes to LA every day.

People in entertainment know there is another carrier who shift shows, and the guys at ATS came from that company when it collapsed in the Ansett disaster. For those who have been on long term assignment for five years, (or on another planet), Ansett was Australia's second largest airline. It went broke without warning – after Air New Zealand took control and made some huge

mistakes. The only thing that was a larger story that year was September 11, and it was a crazy coincidence that Ansett was ashed within days of that cataclysmic event.

Showgroup got going again within days of the collapse, and was onsd to Avis, the American car rental firm. Showgroup founder Graham Fear remained (and remains) in charge, but the guys in the entertainment trucking division decided it was time to strike out.

Today there is ATS and there is Show Group, and they are locked in a titanic battle to win the market. They appear to be roughly

matched at the moment, with between 10 and 14 trucks each.

ATS is owned three guys - Phil Duncan, Terry Turner, and Chris Nicholson. They also employ veteran tour manager Jon Pope.

ATS have friends with trucks who help out, most significantly Bill Gibson, who owns Gibson Freight. He made his name doing motor sport logistics, and seems to move most cars and freight associated with most major car races in the region.

Gibson Freight is a big business, and it provides the backbone for ATS. It appears to be a really good match.

The other strategic partner for ATS is REHE and Sons Transport. They provide additional linehaul as required.

• www.at logistics.com

