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(STORY ON PAGE 20)**

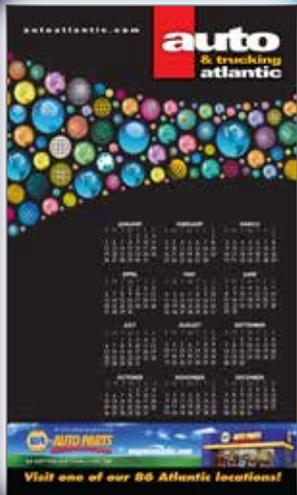
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trucking industry thousands of dollars and did not respond to the market demand in NL. Now, they want to try it again but I would caution them because things are good right now”.

This is not the only concern the APTA has these days. Marine Atlantic Inc. also advised the trucking industry that they might go to a three vessel service as early as 2016, resulting in the elimination of the Argentia service.

“With the growth Newfoundland and Labrador is seeing and the need for good service for goods on the island, a three vessel operation, without service to Argentia, would elevate the risk of a potential service disaster, not only for us but for tourism and the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Losing a vessel would also mean loss of revenues for MAI and a potential rate increase for both the tourism and trucking industries as well. “This would impact Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in a big way because they will ultimately pay for this increase”. 🚗

# YOU HAVE ARRIVED

By Kenneth E. Seaton

**ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO DRIVE THE OCCASIONAL PERSON INTO A LAKE, VEHICLE GPS SYSTEMS HAVE COME A LONG WAY, BABY! HERE'S THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE DIRECTIONALLY-CHALLENGED.**

There is an unwritten code that most of us males follow when driving. It may prove to be bewildering to some, but it makes perfect sense to us. We believe that:

- *No matter what we are driving we always look good;*
- *We always act like we know what we are doing;*
- *Even if by some off chance we make a*

*mistake, nobody mentions it;*

- *You never ask for directions (especially if there is a possibility that we may be lost);*
- *No one but us folds a map up correctly.*

With the arrival of the Internet, website service providers such as Yahoo and Google versions of maps and MapQuest, trip planning has never been easier. Drivers have rushed to embrace these new and easier forms of driver navigational assistance. However, as always, any navigational errors were the fault of our navigators. With the advancement of time and technology we powered ahead to the now publicly (and often free) available Navstar or Global Positioning System (GPS).

It was during the 1970s that the United States Department of Defence's GPS project really started to be developed and was at first exclusively used solely by the government. Civilians were allowed access to an intentionally degraded system in 1983. It wasn't until May of 2000 that then-US President Bill Clinton ordered the military to cease scrambling the satellite signals. As they say, the rest is history and soon a large number of manufacturers rushed to develop, manufacture and sell GPS systems to the masses.

Did you know that it takes 24 satellites (plus a number of spares) orbiting the Earth at more than 20,000 kilometers to make the navigational system work? They loop around us twice a day at a sedate speed of 14,000 kph and it takes four of them to establish the position of a GPS receiver. Ground stations are used to closely monitor each satellite's orbit as they continually transmit signals detailing their current location and time.

GPS receivers (utilizing a method known as trilateration) determine their positions by employing distance measurements from at least three points. Using low powered but high frequency radio signals, travelling at the speed of light, it communicates with three satellites. It then calculates the distance between those satellites and the device. All GPS receivers have an internal clock but they are not accurate enough to correctly calculate and measure the exact signal delay and a fourth satellite helps the receiver determine its exact position.

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With the opening of the skies to the general public it also forced early GPS users to open their wallets. The first commercially built navigation systems was GM's dealer-installed option for their 1995 Oldsmobile Eighty Eight. They called it Guidestar and at first it was only available in California. It cost just under \$2,000 and wasn't known for its accuracy. Ford and BMW also came out with early GPS navigation systems, but they became mostly famous for their deficiencies. Of course those troubles are a thing of the past as vehicle manufacturers such as Ford and its new Ford Focus, have developed systems that have the capability to not only alert emergency services if an airbag deploys but to also provide its GPS location to emergency services.

Nowadays GPS systems are cheaper and technology is miles ahead of where it was. There are several contributing factors to this. Competition for the end user's dollars have forced prices down as has the advent of smartphones. Where the first built-in systems offered only limited features and benefits; newer systems can actually integrate with your cell phone, respond to voice commands and even interact with some Internet services. GPS systems can run anywhere from \$100.00 - \$1000.00 or more.

Drivers purchasing GPS devices for their vehicles must consider several factors before making their choices, including price, system use, systems that offer alternative passage to a destination, system installation (i.e. dashboard mounted), and choosing a system that offers verbal as well as graphical directions.

For consumers searching for that perfect GPS system, oddly enough, price is not always their first concern. Saraara, an electronics expert sales associate with Best Buy, says that they "want a device that comes with lifetime maps that will be continually updated and another must have is one that responds to vocal commands." Handheld devices are selling as well as some popular dashboard-mounted systems.

While GPS navigation systems have proven to be a boon to drivers in general, commercially its wide spread usage has really been adopted. Companies now use GPS systems to track just about everything; from monitoring delivery or rental vehicles to knowing the precise location of single parcel. Systems can also be used to monitor individual drivers and their driving habits. It can locate lost-or-stolen vehicles and can be used to provide the most efficient route planning. The choices are as varied as the different types of

models now available.

A GPS system can take you from one point to another via the easiest, most optimal route while responding to your personal preferences; even point out "good eats" along the way. Some systems will provide you with auditory directions and even tell you when you arrive at your target location. As newer devices roll off the assembly lines, we are being offered more advanced models with Star Trek- like op-

tions. Bluetooth integration with MP3 players or cell phones, speed trap and red light warnings, voice recognition and (usually a pay-as-you-go subscription service) real-time traffic alerts.

However, as with all systems and technology output is only as good as input. Be aware of any hidden costs that might be included with your GPS system. For example, are there preloaded maps included on your system and will they be updated



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for free or are there further fees to come. Does your unit have traffic services available to you and will it cost you more money to update these services. Ensure that your system has the capability to upload new updates and to keep abreast of the latest technological advances.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly having and using technology such as GPS systems does not lower or diminish your responsibilities behind the wheel. As with persons using cell phones to talk and text while driving (for some even walking),



common sense is still an important human system that must be used in conjunction with technology. Just because you program your GPS system to take from here-to-there does not necessarily mean it will. Blindly using or following technology is a sure-fire way to get you in trouble. As in days gone by sometimes no matter how much you try to make it go back you just can't get the map back into its folder!

**SOME BIZARRE "JUST FOLLOWING MY GPS" MOMENTS!**

In July of 2007 in Switzerland a German truck driver, driving in broad daylight, blew past several "No Entry" signs. He claimed that he was "only following his GPSs instructions" when he drove down a busy pedestrian walkway and demolished a cherry tree.

Also in 2007 the town of Exton in the UK erected a sign warning drivers, hoping to convince motorists to use their common sense, to NOT FOLLOW their GPSs instructions. Too many motorists were getting wider vehicles stuck in roads that were just too narrow for their vehicles.

Then there was the Seattle bus driver who in April 2008, failed to see the numerous flashing lights and yellow signs, and tried to fit a 12 foot tall bus under a 9 foot pedestrian foot bridge. The re-

sulting collusion took its roof off and injured several students. In the bus drivers defence the president of the charter bus blamed the GPS claiming, "We just thought it would be a safe route, because why else would they have a selection for a bus?"

In May of 2010 in New Jersey a 17 year old driver caused a four car pile-up, while following his GPS, when he made an illegal left turn Route 33. His excuse was that his GPS "told him to turn left." When asked what he would do if his GPS told him to jump off a bridge, the teen asked, "How high?"

Also near Seattle in June 2011 three women in a rented Mercedes SUV (even though they could see that they were driving down a boat launch) continued to followed their GPSs directions and ended up sunk in a lake. 🚗💧

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