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PMTc ANNOUNCE RECIPIENT OF THE 2026 RICK AUSTIN MEMORIAL DISPATCHER AWARD

The PMTC and CPC Logistics Canada announced the recipient of The Rick Austin Memorial Dispatcher of the Year Award on June 16th as part of the PMTC's 2026 Annual Conference in Niagara Falls, On. This award was established in 2018 to honor the memory of one of CPC's Fleet Dispatchers, Rick Austin, who passed away suddenly on March 15th of 2017.

Rick began his career in the Transportation Industry right out of high school, starting with a dry wall company loading, tarping and strapping trucks. Rick joined the John Deere Canadian Fleet on November 25, 1991, and quickly developed a reputation as a dependable driver with a great work ethic. Rick earned his Million Mile Award and started to train to provide relief dispatch and then moved into the full-time dispatch role in 2000. Rick received the CPC Logistics President's Award in recognition of his exceptional loyalty, service and dedication.

Because of his years on the road, Rick fully understood the demands and strains on a long-haul driver, and became not just a Dispatcher, but a good friend and wise council to many drivers over the years. Rick always took the time to communicate with the drivers and tried to make sure that they kept life in balance.

This award is designed to help recognize the exceptional and often under-appreciated efforts of Dispatchers who have made an outstanding contribution to their company over their career.

The 2026 Rick Austin Memorial Dispatcher of the year award went to **Fred Randell of Coca Cola Canada Bottling Ltd.**

Information and background for Fred.

Fred Randell has been a dedicated team member of the Ottawa terminal for 28 years. Fred is more than a dispatcher, in addition to planning out the drivers day & providing their schedule, Fred is also a mentor, safety champion, & a trusted leader whose actions directly contribute to a safer, stronger & more connected driving team. Fred is always personally involved in welcoming new drivers, working with them to ensure they understand the technical aspects of the job as well as the safety expectations that defines the culture & values of the team. Fred's background as a professional driver also allows Fred to coach new & experienced drivers with empathy &

credibility. Drivers explain Fred's approach as rooted in explanation & understanding rather than enforcement alone.

In addition to his dispatching duties, Fred is also the chair of the Ottawa incident review committee. Every incident is treated as an opportunity to learn & improve where his leadership fosters open communication & shared accountability, creating a workplace where safety is a collective priority. As a result of this steady & supportive approach, on road incidents in Ottawa have steadily declined over the years, culminating in zero at fault collisions for the region in 2025.

In driver testimonials, one driver stated "Over the years, Fred has grown tremendously as a leader. He has mellowed into a Dispatch Supervisor who balances high expectations with genuine respect, understanding, & approachability. His interpersonal skills stand out—he listens, communicates clearly, & treats people fairly. Fred knows how to motivate without micromanaging & how to correct issues without discouraging his team. He has earned the trust of the drivers at our Ottawa facility, including myself, through years of steady leadership and personal growth. I truly hope he remains my leader for the rest of my career."

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