

Steven Todd discusses the work of ProMiles Software and how much the specialized transportation sector impacts his life.

By **D. Ann Shiffler**.

Steven Todd is one of the most well-known names in the specialized transportation sector in the United States. From the get-go, he said this industry has intrigued him and kept him engaged.

Todd began his transportation career as a self-employed consultant in both the civil engineering and public transportation industry, specializing in funding and organizing municipal infrastructure and public transportation initiatives throughout Illinois.

This led to a career with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) managing oversize/overweight (OS/OW) permits, fixed weigh stations and public transportation. IDOT earned a strong reputation amongst specialized carriers for achieving permit policy harmonized successes that carried over to other midwestern states, Todd said.

Off to D.C.

In 2012, he said he “took a deep breath” and left central Illinois to take a position with the Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association in Washington, D.C. For the next eight years, he served the global trade association as vice president

From ‘day

of transportation, advocating for safe, efficient and harmonized regulatory policies. He helped direct SC&RA’s successful approval from the FMCSA for an exemption for specialized transportation for the Hours of Service 30-Minute Mandatory Break. This exemption is still in use by the industry today.

Todd also helped lead SC&RA’s Uniform Permit Transport 2021 (UPT21) initiative resulting in an increase from 12 to 35 states employing fully automated permit systems. He co-authored two U.S. Federal Highway Authority (FHWA) Best Practice Reports: Automated Permitting of Oversize/Overweight Vehicles and Law Enforcement and Pilot Escorts, which also included a national training curriculum.

He helped SC&RA produce three specialized transportation training videos that are widely used today on such topics as driving, load securement and preventing bridge hits. He served on several USDOT and AASHTO/SCOHT working groups and committees.

Todd transitioned over to the private sector with ProMiles about three years ago.

“I was recruited to lead the efforts on three initiatives,” he explained.

“The first is to parlay ProMiles success in OS/OW permitting software utilized by state governments to the private industry. Secondly, to create and grow the consulting

arm of the company to both state and federal governments, specialized carriers, permit services and the like related primarily to OS/OW permitting. And lastly, to establish a partnership with HyPoint Solutions to deliver solutions to government agencies for detecting and preventing bridge hits.”

Todd said a number of carriers and permit services are now under contract and in early stages of utilizing ProMiles suite of products. He and Dan Wells are providing consulting services for two federal projects involving the sharing of permitting and related data between states and an initiative to improve the efficient movement of OS/OW loads during times of declared emergencies.

“We’re also providing permitting consultant services for specialized carriers and permit services designed for both initial training and ongoing training to set up our clients for more efficient permitting processes and improve their process for communication with states,” he said.

Cyber security concerns

Most recently, ProMiles has begun a cyber division that specializes in providing the trucking industry much needed security, which is fast becoming the greatest concern in the transportation industry, Todd said.

“The market is looking for increased connectivity,” he said. “More vehicles and systems are connected to the internet, increasing cyberattack vulnerability. According to Gartner, the number of connected IoT devices



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STEVEN TODD
Executive Vice President, Permitting
ProMiles Software

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in the transportation sector is expected to reach 25 billion by 2025. Transportation systems handle a lot of sensitive data that needs protection from hackers. The Ponemon Institute reports that 63 percent of transportation companies experienced a data breach involving customer or operational data in the past year."

Operational disruption is also a big concern, Todd said.

"ProMiles offers industry a free, one-hour Cyber Health Checkup," he said. "Think of it as a quick health check for your organization's digital world. We'll discuss your cybersecurity practices and any challenges you face and explore ways to beef up your digital defense. You will get personalized advice from our cyber pros. Plus, it's a great chance to see if there are any quick wins or enhancements you can make without any commitment."

Industry mentors

Todd counts as his mentors Joe Hill, David Johnson and Geno Koehler at IDOT; Joel Dandrea and Beth O'Quinn at SC&RA; the late Jay Folladori, Ray Morgan and Pete Trimble from industry, and Tony Stroncheck, Tim Pilcher, Bob Terneus and Dan Wells at ProMiles.

I've known Todd since he took on the role at SC&RA in 2012, and he's always been professional and enthusiastic. A leading voice for the specialized transportation sector, Todd is respected for his knowledge, commitment and passion. He has helped guide many young transportation professionals into leadership roles with their companies and as industry volunteers. Above all, Todd is known as a genuinely good guy. We spoke with him about his current role, harmonization and generally all things specialized transportation.

WHAT DOES PROMILES BRING TO THE SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY IN TERMS OF PERMITTING AND OVERSIZED/OVERWEIGHT LOADS?

Employees with decades of experience have afforded the company the opportunity to gain a clear understanding



ProMiles Software Development Corporation (PSDC), based in Bridge City, TX, was formerly a part of Road Legal. In the early 1980s, the PSDC team saw a need to take the hassle out of managing many facets of a trucking company. The ProMiles XF Mileage Guide, ProMiles Fuel Tax, ProMiles Fuel Management, TruckMiles and a comprehensive suite of online applications were designed by a unique combination of professional programmers, tax auditors, ICC practitioners and truck drivers.

The PSDC team developed a fast, easy-to-use and cost-effective mileage program for computer use which renders interstate and intrastate mileages. Now with Canadian and Mexican miles, ProMiles Mileage Guide offers the largest State/DOT approved highway database in the industry, according to the company. Founders **Tony Stroncheck** (top left) and **Tim Pilcher** are still owners and co-presidents of ProMiles Software.

Since its inception, the founders have positioned ProMiles as the industry's regulatory compliance technology leader, advancing harmonization, roadway safety, infrastructure integrity and efficiencies, benefiting all industry stakeholders.

ProMiles has designed and implemented OS/OW permitting and routing custom technology for more than 20 states, increasing the average self-issue rate for these states to 73 percent, with a volume of over 3.2 million permits issued nationwide in 2023.

of issues facing the industry. Combine that with a determination to serve their state partners and industry representatives in doing what ProMiles can to allow the industry to be more efficient and safer. Compliance is key to safe operations and we believe that technology is one of the keys to encouraging compliance. By 2025, 60 percent of the country's state OS/OW permits will be issued through ProMiles software.

WHAT ARE PROMILES SOFTWARE'S MAIN PRODUCTS?

Permit Manager automates the multi-state permitting process to increase safety, accuracy and decrease turnaround time. Route Manager is a first-of-its-kind national interactive map including vertical clearances, temporary/permanent restrictions, bridge/road weight postings, etc. Custom Restriction Manager allows users to add their own unique restrictions on top of state restrictions. Quote Manager offers precise quoting of OS/OW loads including permit fees, pilot triggers and more. The Permit Manager App converts OS/OW routing to audible turn-by-turn directions. The Route Survey App conducts over-the-road survey without typing/taking notes via mobile app followed by an efficient print-out of complete survey post trip.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, AASHTO AND PROMILES CREATED A PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THIS DEVELOPMENT?

AASHTOWare is a unique and powerful enterprise software suite designed by transportation professionals for

transportation professionals. No other software matches its effectiveness for transportation project design and management.

Pooling knowledge and resources enable costs to be distributed across many users, so agencies procuring AASHTOWare realize vast cost savings and receive quality software that matches precise needs. AASHTOWare is built to help state entities comply with Federal Highway Administration regulations, AASHTO standards and industry best practices, but it easily accommodates state-to-state differences. Easy to download, customize and deploy, AASHTOWare efficiently monitors costs, schedules, inventories, inspections, performance, displacements and safety.

WHAT DOES THIS DEVELOPMENT BRING TO THE SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION SECTOR?

Consistent, high-quality technology making it possible to acquire OS/OW permits in a manner which saves time and meets the requirements of state agencies while improving the user experience of the industry.

YOU HAVE BEEN IN THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR FOR A LONG TIME. WHAT KEEPS YOU ENGAGED?

Literally from day one, I fell in love with both the people and the equipment/processes in the specialized transportation industry. From the owners to the mid-managers to the drivers and dispatchers, I've found folks in this industry to be tremendously genuine and hard working. And the challenges especially with my passion – automated OS/OW permitting.

It started when I was hired at the Illinois Department of Transportation and directed to implement such a system. Taking that successful experience to SC&RA, it was a natural progression to work to convince both government and industry of what many have heard me characterize this initiative many times – a win/win/win for industry, government, taxpayers, infrastructure and most importantly improving safety of our nations roadways for all motorists.

THE INDUSTRY HAS BEEN ADVOCATING FOR HARMONIZATION FOR DECADES. WHERE DO YOU SEE HARMONIZATION CURRENTLY AND THE PROGRESS MADE?

It's understandable when I hear some folks grouse about the pace of harmonization over the past couple decades. Unfortunately, the wheels grind slowly in government, especially when coordinating uniformity among 50 states. As the late SC&RA Vice President Doug Ball said, "It's worse than herding cats uphill."

But honestly, tremendous progress has occurred in not only the automated permitting processes, but right on down

the line in harmonization of pilot and police escort requirements, valid days of permits from state to state, flag and sign requirements, reciprocity between state pilot certification programs and on and on.

HONESTLY SPEAKING, CAN HARMONIZATION EVER BE FULLY ACHIEVED IN THE UNITED STATES?

Yes (and no). Example, when we first began advocating for automated state permitting systems, there were several critics and cynics both within government and industry (surprisingly). Change is hard for some, yet here we are in 2024 with just two states left to implement such systems.

But with any achieved goal in harmonization comes a second layer of new goals. Given the increased levels of detail states now possess, a logical, next step may entail more states following the lead of a few states that have increased the dimension and weight thresholds by which they Auto Issue permits. If done safely, which I'm confident states will ensure, this could certainly lead to even greater efficiencies realized by industry.

WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY?

Since rededicating my life to Jesus Christ, it's been a never-ending attempt to follow His command in Luke 6:31, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

YOU COVER A LOT OF BASES IN THE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT WORKING?

Traveling with my beautiful wife Denise and spending quality time with my grown children. I also enjoy volunteering in my church and community, tennis and golf.

But perhaps my greatest passion, for the past five years Dan Wells, Ray Morgan, John Vaughn, Bryce Baker, myself and many others conduct a weekly industry roundtable group sharing best practices usually involving OS/OW permitting in some manner, followed by a 30-minute informal Bible Study which we typically related God's word to our work and personal lives.

All total, there are about 60 of us in the group. 'Ain't none of us saints, we're far from perfect, but we take comfort knowing we're saved by God's grace and mercy.' ■