

72,000 Trailers & Chassis Is Total 1975 Production

THE YEAR 1975 closed with the same dismal production figures that characterized the truck and trailer market all during 1975. Even a little upsurge at the end of the year didn't alter the monthly totals much.

However, all signals for 1976 are "Go". They point to a continuation of the recovery, although a slow and gradual recovery all through 1976. The big production push isn't predicted to come until 1977.

Total truck trailer production for 1975 is 67,888 complete trailers, plus 2,936 container chassis and 1,212 dollies or converter gear. These are the preliminary figures from the Census Bureau.

Also produced were 4,183 containers in the last 9 months of 1975. The Census Bureau won't tell how many were produced in the first three months because it would reveal individual company figures, but it is safe to assume it was less than 1,000. In round figures we can assume 5,000 containers were produced in 1975. This compares with 14,313 containers built in 1974, and 18,626 built in 1973.

The number of complete trailers plus chassis and dollies built in 1975 total 72,036 "wheeled units". This compares with 206,233 wheeled units built in 1974. That means that 1975 production was only 35% of 1974, or stated another way, the industry was off 65% for the total year.

There were only 36,579 van trailers built in 1975, compared to 128,493 vans the previous year. That means vans were off 71.5%. However, insulated and refrigerated vans

Gross Vehicle Weight	1975	1974
Over 33,000	94,917	147,003
26,001 to 33,000	26,321	27,730
19,501 to 26,000	139,148	165,123
16,001 to 19,500	10,275	9,835
14,001 to 16,000	1,129	3,208
10,001 to 14,000	14,342	8,843
6,001 to 10,000	962,987	646,104
6,000 and less	982,511	1,377,090
Total	2,231,630	2,384,936

were off only 43.4%. The 8,931 reefers in 1975 were 56.6% of the 15,788 reefers built in 1974. And the 2,122 FRP van in 1975 were just a third (33.2%) of the 6,391 FRP vans built in 1974.

Tank trailers held up well. The 3,966 tanks built in 1975 are 61% of the 6,513 built in 1974. Bulk commodity (pneumatic tanks and hoppers) were even better. The 1,066 bulk trailers in 1975 were an even two-thirds of those built in 1974.

Platform trailers were off 56% to 16,302, and dump trailers were off 48.3% to 4,070. Lowbed trailers turned in the best performance of any major group. The 3,575 lowbeds were off only 23.6% from the 4,677 built in 1974, and off 29% from the 5,041 built in 1973.

Total wholesale value of trailers, containers, chassis, and dollies shipped in 1975 was \$650,337,000, which is off 48.9% from the \$1,271,881,000 shipments in 1974. In other words, the industry slipped from a volume of 1¼-billion to 2/3-billion dollars.

Heavy truck sales also finished the year with a mild upturn. The heaviest trucks and tractors (over 33,000 GVW) dropped 35% in 1975, but the second heaviest (26,000 to 33,000 GVW) dropped only 5% from 1974 levels. The light heavy trucks (19,500 to 26,000 GVW) dropped better than 15%.

Medium trucks (between 10,000 and 19,500 GVW) made a slight gain, up 18%, but are still only 25,000 of the 2¼-million trucks built in 1975. In 1973 there were 71,000 medium trucks built.

An interesting thing happened on the light end of the scale. Trucks under 6,000 GVW dropped 29%, but the 6,000 to 10,000 GVW category jumped 49% over 1974. This was undoubtedly due to the many emissions and safety standards on trucks under 6,000 GVW, which are treated more like the personal transportation vehicles they are. The 6,000 to 10,000 GVW trucks are not similarly restricted. Now the two categories are about equally divided in numbers — just shy of the million built in each group. In 1973 and 1974, however, there were twice as many 6,000 GVW trucks built as 6,000 to 10,000 GVW trucks.

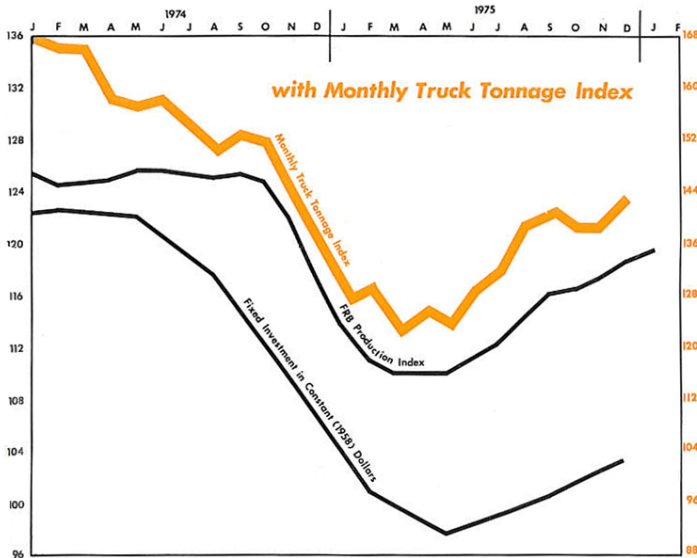
As for the future, leading economic indicators are still rising, and are predicted to continue that trend. Intercity freight tonnage was up again in December, and is now at the point it was in November of 1974.

The Federal Reserve Board Production Index, which leads any change in our industry by several months, con-

	1975	1974
Complete Trailers	67,888	191,262
Total Vans	36,579	128,493
Refrigerated 1975 —	8,931	
1974 —	15,788	
FRP 1975 —	2,122	
1974 —	6,391	
Tanks	3,966	6,513
Bulk Commodity	1,066	1,576
Pole & Logging	1,049	1,735
Platforms	16,302	36,834
Low Bed	3,575	4,677
Dump Trailers	4,070	7,872
All Other Trailers	1,281	3,562
Detachable Trailers (Containers)*	(4,183)	(14,313)
Detachable Trailers (Chassis)	2,936	12,933
Dollies or Converter Gear	1,212	2,038
Total Trailers, Chassis, Dollies	72,036	206,233

*Not counted in total

Fixed Investment & FRB Production Index



tinues to climb, as it has for nine straight months since the April low point. It gained 0.7% in January, following a 1% rise in December.

The Fixed Investment portion of the GNP, as recorded by the Commerce Department in constant (1972) dollars, also is following a predicted gradual increase. The increase is gradual enough that economists are not predicting the return to double digit inflation this year, but it is a real worry for 1977, when a faster pace of economic growth is possible. □

Firestone Recalls Truck Tires

The Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, Akron OH, is recalling 610 Transport I and Transport All Traction truck-bus tires. All tires involved in the voluntary recall are size 9.00-20, 10-ply rating nylon tube-type. The Transport I tires being recalled bear serial numbers VA2FCPM495 or VA2FCPM505. The Transport All Traction tires have serial numbers VA2FUAM495 or VA2FUAM505.

Tires with any of those serial numbers should be returned to the place of purchase or to a more convenient location, which can be determined by a toll-free call to Firestone's Consumer Affairs Department, 800-321-9638. Known owners are being notified by mail. Tires returned within 60 days after contact will be replaced at no cost.

Firestone said the rubber compound used between some of the plies was not intended for that application. A separation between plies therefore can occur, resulting in a possible rapid loss of air.

Fire Protection Handbook

The 14th edition of the *Fire Protection Handbook* has been released by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

The new 1,300-page handbook contains 790 illustrations, photographs and diagrams, as well as a 50-page subject index. Among important additions to the 14th edition are: new sections on special fire protection problems and life safety hazards; 14 new chapters on industrial and process hazards, and a new look at transportation problems.

Copies of the "*Fire Protection Handbook* (Catalog No. FPH-1476) are available at \$43.50 each from the National Fire Protection Association's Publication Sales Department, 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston MA 02210.