

Issue 71 September 2026

BRAKING NEWS

AUTOMECHANIKA / IAA

Shaping the Future of the Aftermarket
and Commercial Vehicle Systems

SAC COMMERCIAL PARTS

Flexibility is key in South Africa

STUDIES / EDUCATION

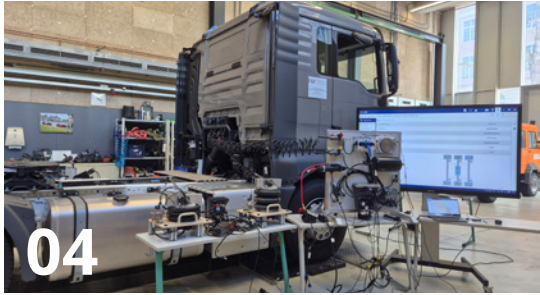
Hands-on learning with the iTEBS® X
Training Model at HTW Dresden



KNORR-BREMSE



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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE
Simon Basler, Sabine Duffner-Beck, Katrin Gienger,
Thomas Hünseler, Antonia Roth, Bettina Tokarski,
Magdalena Usar, Georg Weinand

PHOTOS
Getty Images, Knorr-Bremse, HTW Dresden, Team Hahn
Racing, SAC Commercial Parts, Professor Martin Wittmer
AI ILLUSTRATIONS in the article “When Everything Works
Together”: Created using generative artificial intelligence;
image concept and execution by Georg Weinand, ETM
Corporate Publishing.

GRAPHICS
Viploria, Gerlachweg 27, 80999 Munich, Ilona Burgarth

PUBLISHER
Euro Transport Media Verlags- und
Veranstaltungsgesellschaft mbH, Geschäftsbereich
ETM corporate publishing, Managing Directors: Bert
Brandenburg und Oliver Trost, Handwerkstraße 15, 70565
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CONTACT ADDRESS
bremspunkt@knorr-bremse.com



ALEXANDER WAGNER
Head of Global Aftermarket/TruckServices, Knorr-Bremse
Systems for Commercial Vehicles

Dear Reader,

The commercial vehicle aftermarket is evolving rapidly – and the pace continues to accelerate. Keeping commercial vehicles on the road requires more than just high-quality spare parts. Success depends on the seamless interaction of technology, data, service, and efficient processes. This is the key to reducing downtime, making better use of workshop capacity, and ensuring cost-effective mobility.

This dynamic shapes the latest issue of Braking News and is especially reflected in Knorr-Bremse TruckServices’ presence at Automechanika in Frankfurt. The spotlight is on the CVS Service Platform, including WESP CV, PleaseFix, Knorr-Bremse Diagnostics, and TRAVIS Road Services. Together, these applications create an end-to-end service process—from fault notification and appointment scheduling to diagnostics, repair, billing, and getting vehicles back on the road. At our open and welcoming trade show booth, the focus is not only on products. It is about conversations, real-world challenges, and practical solutions for everyday workshop operations.

Our workshop feature demonstrates just how relevant these topics are in practice. An EBS warning message, an urgent delivery, and a business where every minute counts illustrate why rapid access to information, clearly defined responsibilities, and available service capacity are true success factors.

Looking ahead, the IAA Transportation exhibition in Hanover offers a glimpse into the future. Electrification, automated driving, redundancy concepts, and connected vehicle architectures are shaping the industry’s direction—and the trends that will increasingly influence the aftermarket as well.

This issue’s customer profile takes us to South Africa, where SAC Commercial Parts has established a strong position in a diverse market through customer focus, high product availability, and a broad portfolio. Back in Germany, HTW Dresden demonstrates how modern trailer braking technology is already being integrated into education. Using the iTEBS® X training model, students gain hands-on experience with advanced braking systems—an important investment in the skilled professionals of tomorrow.

Jochen Hahn reveals a different side of his world. Instead of the racetrack, the focus is on the workshop of his professional racing team, highlighting surprising parallels to the daily reality of commercial vehicle service operations.

I hope you enjoy this issue and find it both informative and inspiring.

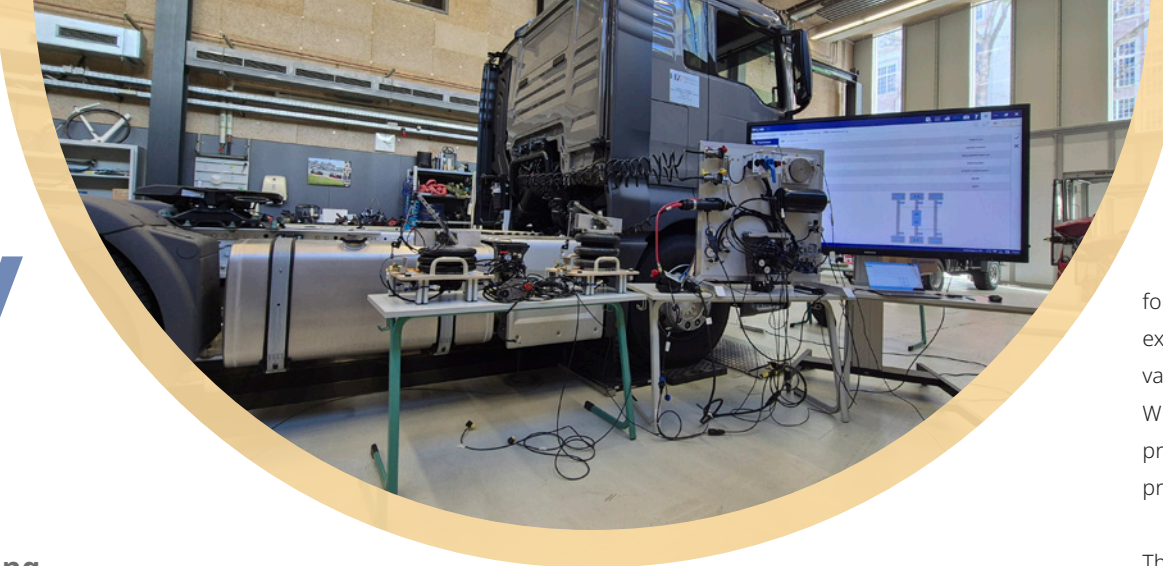
Alexander Wagner

Brake Technology *You Can Experience*

Knorr-Bremse brings state-of-the-art trailer brake technology into engineering education at Dresden University of Applied Sciences (HTWD) with an iTEBS® X training model – practical, digital, and highly relevant to modern vehicle systems.



Technology brought to life: Professor Martin Wittmer (center) and students at Dresden University of Applied Sciences (HTWD) working with the iTEBS® X training model.



The training model was built by Knorr-Bremse according to the requirements of HTW Dresden.

Modern trailer braking systems combine pneumatics, electronics, software, sensors, parameterization, and regulatory requirements. Anyone who will later develop, test, or configure these systems must do more than understand them in theory—they need hands-on experience.

This is exactly where the collaboration between Knorr-Bremse and Dresden University of Applied Sciences (HTWD) comes in. Knorr-Bremse has provided the university's Commercial Vehicle Engineering Department with an iTEBS® X training model, enabling students to gain practical experience with current trailer brake technology. For Professor Martin Wittmer, the system perfectly reflects the university's educational approach: "We always keep one foot firmly in the real world."

The university's commercial vehicle laboratory features trucks, trailers, and testing equipment as part of its practice-oriented engineering program. There is a good reason for this: Many students initially focus on passenger cars. "Students entering vehicle engineering often think first of Audi rings and Porsche emblems," says Martin Wittmer. For many, commercial vehicle technology is initially seen as "the traffic on the highway that gets in the way." To demonstrate the diversity and importance of the commercial vehicle industry, students need technology they can see and touch.

The iTEBS® X training model brings that world to life. Its modular design supports various vehicle configurations and incorporates original production components. Using the Online Configuration Tool (OCT), HTWD can create datasets

for individual vehicle combinations. This allows students to explore system design, European regulations, and digital validation in a practical and understandable way. For Martin Wittmer, the greatest value lies in understanding the complete process: "Understanding how the vehicle, axle configuration, pressure levels, and valve technology interact is essential."

The training model becomes even more valuable when students work directly with the system. Pneumatic lines can be intentionally connected incorrectly, datasets can be configured improperly, or parameters can be deliberately altered. The result is a powerful learning experience: Future vehicle engineers can immediately see how the system responds—and why correct system configuration is critical for safety.

This is confirmed by Manfred Schmalzbauer, Technical Trainer at the Knorr-Bremse Training Center. "Classroom theory is one thing. But physically working with the components greatly deepens understanding," he explains. Converting the system for a different vehicle configuration also presents practical challenges: "You quickly learn that something that sounds simple in theory can become quite challenging in practice."

For Manfred Schmalzbauer, who specifically designed and built the iTEBS® X training model to meet the requirements of HTWD, hands-on training is indispensable as commercial vehicle systems become increasingly complex. "If you don't continuously stay up to date, you can quickly fall behind," he says. Knowledge gaps can lead to costly delays in workshop and service operations when systems are not fully understood.

"Understanding how the vehicle, axle configuration, pressure levels, and valve technology interact is essential."

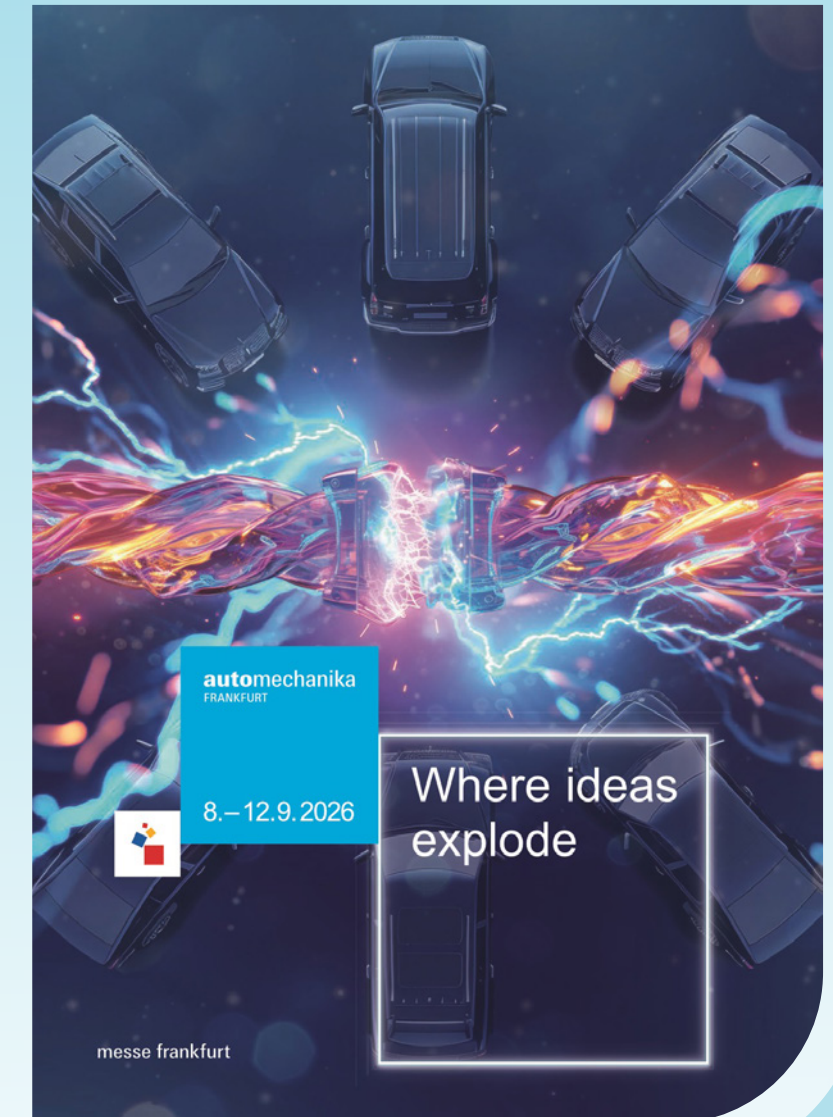
Prof. Martin Wittmer, Professor of Vehicle Design and Commercial Vehicle Engineering, HTW Dresden.

In addition to traditional braking technology, iTEBS® X also introduces students to cybersecurity topics. For Martin Wittmer, the brake system serves as an example of how software, tamper protection, and functional safety are increasingly interconnected. "It's an entry point into this new world," he explains.

Knorr-Bremse trainers supported HTWD during the initial implementation of the system, which is now integrated into laboratory sessions and engineering courses. Professor Martin Wittmer also sees himself as a learner: "Only what I truly understand myself can I later teach to my students."



Open, customer-focused and designed for dialogue: The Knorr-Bremse TruckServices booth creates space for exchange, personal conversations, and an interactive experience of its broad product and service portfolio.



Experience the Aftermarket in a New Way

At Automechanika in Frankfurt, Knorr-Bremse TruckServices will showcase the future of the connected aftermarket.

When the international aftermarket industry gathers in Frankfurt this September, Knorr-Bremse TruckServices will once again be at the center of the action. For the aftermarket division, Automechanika is the key meeting place for customers, partners, and industry experts from across the commercial vehicle sector.

Workshops, distributors, and fleet operators are facing increasing pressure. Vehicles must be returned to service as quickly as possible, processes need to become more transparent, downtime must be reduced, and workflows must be simplified. At the same time, commercial vehicles are becoming increasingly complex, digital solutions are gaining importance, and new service offerings are emerging around maintenance and repair. This is precisely where Knorr-Bremse TruckServices is focused.

The guiding theme is "Future Ready Aftermarket — Products & Services for Today. Solutions for Tomorrow." It reflects what visitors can expect at the booth: solutions that make customers' daily operations easier today, while shaping the aftermarket of tomorrow. Visitors will not only see the products and services offered by Knorr-Bremse TruckServices. They will experience how the individual building blocks work together and discover the opportunities they create.

To bring this vision to life, Knorr-Bremse has created an open, dialogue-oriented exhibition stand. Spanning more than 300 square meters, the booth features six app-controlled displays and a large LED screen that guide visitors through an interactive journey of the Knorr-Bremse TruckServices portfolio. The concept creates



Knorr-Bremse TruckServices looks forward to welcoming visitors in Hall 3.0 at Booths E91 and G98.

space for discussions, consultations, and practical customer questions. Rather than placing individual exhibits at center stage, products, services, and digital solutions are presented flexibly through digital storytelling. This allows conversations to begin wherever the visitor's interests lie—whether spare parts, diagnostics, workshop processes, or new digital services.

One of the highlights is the Future Ready Aftermarket area. Here, Knorr-Bremse TruckServices demonstrates how individual solutions come together to form the CVS Service Platform. What was described a few years ago as a vision for an aftermarket ecosystem has now become a tangible reality. With solutions such as WESP CV, PleaseFix, TRAVIS Road Services, Jaltest & Knorr-Bremse Diagnostics, and additional components, the platform supports the repair and maintenance process from multiple perspectives.

The common thread is the journey of a vehicle through maintenance and repair—from the occurrence of a fault, through

diagnostics, appointment scheduling, spare parts supply, and repair, all the way to returning the vehicle to the driver or operator. Along this process, Knorr-Bremse TruckServices demonstrates which service solution provides support at each stage and how they combine to create a more transparent, efficient, and customer-friendly workflow. Rather than navigating abstract concepts, visitors can explore the platform through familiar workshop and fleet-management processes.

New digital services play a central role in this approach. PleaseFix supports workshop capacity planning and simplifies appointment scheduling and communication between workshops and fleets. WESP CV increases transparency regarding individual workshop performance and supports decision-making through benchmark-based insights that can be complemented by expert consulting when needed. This helps identify and unlock additional opportunities to improve workshop performance and profitability. TRAVIS Road Services extends the scope beyond traditional repair activities by providing a platform that enables users to search,



Six monitors and a large LED screen invite visitors on an interactive journey through the diverse product and service portfolio of Knorr-Bremse TruckServices.

for, find, and pay for commercial vehicle services such as parking, charging, vehicle washing, trailer tank cleaning, and repairs.

Knorr-Bremse Diagnostics represents diagnostic expertise and technical integration. At the booth, these solutions will not only be displayed digitally. Dedicated experts will also be available for discussions, demonstrations, and practical questions.

This is where the difference from a traditional product presentation becomes clear. Knorr-Bremse TruckServices aims to demonstrate how these solutions can be used in everyday operations. While Automechanika has long been an established event for distributors, this year's exhibition will also show workshops and fleet operators that the Knorr-Bremse TruckServices booth offers practical answers to their daily challenges—from more

predictable repair processes and digital support in workshop operations to additional services surrounding the vehicle.

Despite the strong focus on digital solutions, products and spare parts remain the foundation of the business. At Automechanika, Knorr-Bremse TruckServices will showcase the breadth of its portfolio. Featured topics include trailer applications, the ramp-up of iTEBS® X, the cloud-based Online Configuration Tool (OCT), and the integrated Software Update Management System (SUMS). Additional highlights include the Europe-wide ESB REMAN ECU repair service, new EconX® products such as EBS7 and the ST7 trailer disc brake, as well as innovations including the NexTT® (SyT7) trailer disc brake, the new air disc brake generation Synact® type SyA7 and SyR7, as well as the new GSBC braking system with active wheel-speed sensors, and retrofit solutions for Trailer EBS systems.



This year marks the 27th edition of Automechanika in Frankfurt, Germany.

This breadth is part of the message. Knorr-Bremse TruckServices sees itself not merely as a supplier of individual components, but as a partner for the entire aftermarket. That includes new products as well as remanufacturing, retrofit solutions, diagnostics, digital workshop solutions, and fleet services. The aftermarket is evolving, and Knorr-Bremse TruckServices aims to demonstrate that this transformation is already creating practical value today.

The company's commitment to innovation is also reflected in the Automechanika Innovation Awards. Knorr-Bremse TruckServices has submitted five solutions in five categories: WESP CV in Data, Connectivity & Cybersecurity; PleaseFix in Smart Workshop & Service Solutions; the NexTT® brake pad replacement solution in Advanced Parts & Vehicle

Technologies; TRAVIS Road Services in Commercial Vehicle & Fleet Innovation; and the ESB REMAN Testbench, together with Cojali, in Circular Economy & Remanufacturing.

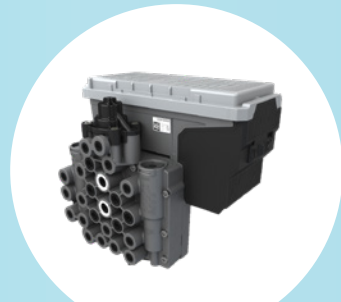
For Knorr-Bremse TruckServices, Automechanika is therefore much more than a showcase for new products. It is a place for meaningful dialogue. The booth demonstrates where the commercial vehicle aftermarket is heading: away from isolated standalone offerings and toward connected solutions that simplify processes. The aftermarket of the future is not an abstract concept. It begins wherever vehicles can be returned to service quickly, reliably, and cost-effectively—and Knorr-Bremse is already making that future visible today.



The Knorr-Bremse TruckServices exhibition booth covers more than 300 square meters.



Rotary vane compressor



iTEBS® X



Synact® radial (type SyR7)



When Everything Works Together

A flashing EBS warning light, an urgent delivery, and a service operation under time pressure: Our cover story shows how modern commercial vehicle workshops handle challenges like these. While the story is fictional, it is based on realistic industry practices. All people and companies mentioned are fictitious.

The hiss of a compressed-air line echoes from the workshop. A rolling door opens, and somewhere a pneumatic impact wrench briefly rattles. For Thomas Richter, this is all part of everyday life. As Technical Workshop Manager, he knows the sounds of the business just as well as the challenges facing modern commercial vehicle workshops today.

On this particular morning, he is sitting in the office of Weinhart Commercial Vehicle Service GmbH with Operations Manager Markus Weber. Current performance analyses from WESP CV are displayed on their screens. The figures reveal encouraging news: Order volume is strong, workshop utilization is high, and demand for short-notice support continues to grow. At the same time, WESP CV highlights an issue that had largely gone unnoticed internally so far: Despite a price adjustment last year, the margin generated from small parts per order remains below the anonymized average of comparable workshops in the region. It is not a cause for concern, but it does raise questions.

For successful workshop management, it is essential to monitor not only workshop utilization and billed labor hours, but also revenue per repair order and workshop margins compared with other regional businesses. In times of skilled-labor shortages, success is no longer just about generating more work—it is about handling as many profitable jobs as possible with the resources available. Weber and Richter have already learned an important lesson: The most profitable days are not necessarily the busiest. What matters is how well processes are coordinated and how efficiently available capacity is utilized.

Weber is about to ask another question about the performance data when a notification tone interrupts the discussion. An alert appears on Thomas Richter's smartphone. The workshop manager walks over to his workstation and opens a new repair request in the PleaseFix portal. No phone call, no follow-up questions, no manual scheduling—every relevant detail is already available. Within seconds, Richter can decide whether and when his workshop can accept the job.





A tractor-trailer requires immediate assistance. An EBS warning light has illuminated in the vehicle's instrument cluster. The load is scheduled to reach the customer later the same day. Richter immediately sees all the information relevant for planning: the vehicle type, its current location, the reported EBS warning, and the urgency of the request.

While still on the road, the dispatcher had used the PleaseFix portal to locate a suitable available workshop nearby—without time-consuming phone calls and without requiring the driver to search on their own. For the fleet operator, this means minimal downtime and maximum planning reliability. For the workshop, it marks the beginning of a situation that has become increasingly common in modern commercial vehicle service operations: Identifying the warning message

is often the easy part; the real challenge is determining the root cause as quickly and precisely as possible.

A few minutes later, the tractor-trailer pulls into the yard. The driver appears tense, understandably so. The warning light raises important questions. Is it something minor, or a problem serious enough to prevent the vehicle from continuing its journey? As the driver explains the situation, commercial vehicle technician Sven Hoffmann is already making the necessary preparations. Warning messages like this are part of his daily routine. Yet no two diagnostic cases are ever exactly the same.

The truck is brought into the workshop. Between vehicle lifts, tool carts, and spare-parts shelves, activity is in full swing. Several vehicles are being serviced at the same time.

For Hoffmann, the real analysis begins now. He connects the vehicle to Knorr-Bremse Diagnostics. Within a short time, all relevant vehicle and system data becomes available. Fault memories are read, status messages checked, and information consolidated. Modern commercial vehicles generate enormous amounts of data. The challenge is no longer obtaining information—it is identifying the critical clues quickly.

Although the EBS warning indicates a malfunction within the Electronic Braking System, it does not reveal the underlying cause. Only the analysis performed with Knorr-Bremse Diagnostics provides the crucial clue: A faulty wheel-speed sensor signal triggered the warning. This immediately

changes the situation. What initially seemed like a difficult-to-assess problem becomes a clearly defined repair case.

While Hoffmann prepares the necessary repair work, Richter briefly returns to the office. Weber is still reviewing workshop performance data. The current case confirms many of the trends already indicated by the numbers. Fast information flows, clearly defined responsibilities, and standardized processes result in shorter response times and more efficient use of workshop capacity.

Their discussion is interrupted by a call from the workshop floor. Hoffmann has found the cause. The issue can be clearly isolated, and repairs can begin immediately. The affected component is inspected and replaced. Several tests follow. Relevant systems are checked once more, data is verified, and the results are documented.



The outcome is clear: The warning message has disappeared, and all values are within specification. The vehicle is ready to return to service.

Neither the driver nor the workshop has to worry about billing. Once Richter has entered the net prices into the PleaseFix portal, payment is processed automatically and securely through TRAVIS and PleaseFix. There is no invoicing effort, no payment risk, and no price negotiations on site. The self-billing document is generated automatically and payment is subsequently transferred to the workshop.

Before leaving the premises, the driver books a parking space for the upcoming rest period through TRAVIS. For the driver, the outcome means much more than a successfully completed repair. The trip can continue as planned, and the shipment reaches the customer on time.

For Weber and Richter, however, the completed case provides another important insight. Response time,

diagnostics, repair, and job completion together form a picture that extends far beyond this individual incident.

Weber recognizes the same pattern he had noticed earlier that morning. The order was accepted quickly, diagnosed efficiently, and completed without unnecessary delays. Cases like this do more than increase customer satisfaction. They improve workshop utilization, increase productive labor hours, and create additional capacity for further business. These are exactly the relationships that WESP CV makes visible.

Not every repair order follows the same path. Not every repair can be completed within a few hours. Yet the data repeatedly reveals similar patterns: Successful workshops manage their processes and resources with exceptional consistency. Weber and Richter see this as a key factor in their ability to handle additional business in the future using the capacity already available.

The day's case provides a compelling example.



CVS Service Platform Tools	Customer Benefits
PleaseFix	Digital scheduling and capacity planning for better coordination between workshops and fleets.
WESP CV	Benchmarking makes workshop performance and optimization opportunities visible, helping improve service efficiency.
TRAVIS	Search for, book and pay for vehicle-related services such as parking, EV charging, vehicle washing, tank cleaning and repairs.
Knorr-Bremse Diagnostics	Fast, multi-brand diagnostics for electronic systems in commercial vehicles.
Jaltest	Telematics and multi-brand diagnostic solutions that help maximize vehicle uptime.
Expert Network	Partner network providing direct access to expert knowledge, training, and on-site technical support.
ESB Reman	Europe-wide, sustainable repair service for electronic control units that reduces costs and extends component life.
EconX®	Remanufactured genuine parts for cost-effective and sustainable repairs.



Ready for the Commercial Vehicle of Tomorrow

At IAA Transportation 2026 in Hanover, Knorr-Bremse will demonstrate how key commercial vehicle systems are being prepared for electric propulsion, automated driving functions, and connected vehicle concepts.



The commercial vehicle industry is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Electric powertrains, automated driving functions, and digital services are changing not only individual components but also the interaction of entire vehicle systems. At IAA Transportation 2026 in Hanover, Knorr-Bremse will showcase the technological solutions it has developed in response to these trends. As the global market and technology leader for braking systems, the company positions itself as a development partner for vehicle manufacturers on their transition to zero-emission, automated, and connected commercial vehicles.

According to Bernd Spies, Member of the Executive Board of Knorr-Bremse AG and responsible for the Commercial Vehicle Systems division, Knorr-Bremse sees itself as a key partner in

this transformation: "As a specialist in safety-critical systems, we support our customers on their journey toward zero emissions, automated driving, and connected commercial vehicles. Our innovation approach is clearly focused: less complexity, more impact. What is needed are solutions with measurable added value that can be flexibly integrated into different vehicle architectures. The current performance of our Truck Division clearly shows that we are investing in the right areas. We remain focused on driving growth and increasing content per vehicle, and we will present our innovation pipeline at IAA Transportation 2026."

Visitors can experience these solutions firsthand from September 15–20, 2026, in Hall 12, Booth C21. At the core of the exhibition stand is the Center Display, which guides visitors through



Interactive displays showcase how Knorr-Bremse is shaping the mobility of tomorrow.



Electric Power Steering (EPS): fully electric steering technology for commercial vehicles.

Knorr-Bremse's portfolio of solutions using exhibits and digital applications. It demonstrates how key market requirements are translated into concrete technologies, including Zero Emissions, Redundancy and Automated Driving, Road Safety, and Connectivity.

Sustainability also plays an important role in the booth concept. As in previous years, Knorr-Bremse will use high-quality, reusable container structures for the exhibition stand, reducing material consumption. Following the IAA, exhibits and themes will continue to be used as part of a truck roadshow program.

Among the key technological highlights is the oil-free, electrically driven Multi Tumble Piston Compressor. The eCompressor MTP will make its trade show debut in Hanover. Designed



Oil-free MTP eCompressor for the next generation of electrified commercial vehicles.



Knorr-Bremse's trade show booth is built around sustainability. The modular information containers will not be stored after the event but will continue to be used during customer roadshows.

for an optimized lifecycle and scalable use with or without an inverter, it provides efficient and quiet compressed-air supply. In doing so, it addresses one of the key challenges of electrified commercial vehicles: efficient energy management.

Another major focus is redundancy. Automated driving functions place extremely high demands on the reliability of safety-critical systems. To address these requirements, Knorr-Bremse will showcase the redundant braking system rGSBC, which is scheduled to go into series production in 2027. Based on the GSBC platform, the system ensures highly available braking functions even in the event of a fault, fulfilling a key requirement for highly automated driving functions.

Steering technology is also becoming part of this broader systems perspective. With Electric Power Steering (EPS), Knorr-Bremse is presenting a fully electric steering system that is planned for market introduction next year. Based on a "power-on-demand" principle, EPS reduces the steering system's energy consumption by up to 90 percent compared to conventional solutions. In its redundant configuration, rEPS, the system also becomes highly relevant for automated driving applications.

Traffic safety remains a central guiding principle. In Hannover, Knorr-Bremse will present technologies that support the vision of an accident-free future for road safety, ranging from state-of-the-art braking systems to advanced driver

assistance systems. These include Knorr-Bremse Fusion Front and Side ADAS, which actively help defuse dangerous situations and thus contribute to road safety.

At the same time, the company is looking ahead to future vehicle architectures. Knorr-Bremse is specifically applying its systems expertise to the development of Software Defined Vehicles, as the basis for safe, flexible, and updatable vehicle concepts.

In addition, Knorr-Bremse will showcase aftermarket solutions at the exhibition booth that are integrated into the CVS Service Platform, including offerings from Cojali, PleaseFix, WESP CV, and TRAVIS.

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IN HANNOVER

We Deliver

Proximity Matters

From large fleet operators to single-truck owners: South Africa's aftermarket demands proximity, speed, and a broad product range. SAC Commercial Parts is growing with this challenge—and relies on Knorr-Bremse for OE quality and technical expertise.

When a truck breaks down in South Africa, the clock starts ticking immediately. Downtime does not just cost time and money. If a vehicle is stranded at the roadside at night or for an extended period in an unsafe area, the driver, vehicle, and cargo face additional risks. That is why, in South Africa's commercial vehicle market, the next hour often matters more than the next business day. Sometimes the phone rings at SAC in the middle of the night. A mobile roadside assistance provider needs a spare part, a vehicle is stranded somewhere on the roadside, and a driver is waiting to get back on the road.

For Francois Lategan, this is not an exception—it is simply part of the business. The 26-year-old nephew of company founder Hein Lategan is responsible for procurement and supplier relations at SAC, managing both international and local partners. He understands the unique dynamics of his market: In South Africa, availability means more than reduced downtime. It means safety, cash flow, and sometimes simply the ability to complete a transport job.

SAC has organized its operations around this reality. Every branch has an employee who can be reached outside regular business hours. If a call comes in at one o'clock in the morning, that person opens the branch and provides the required spare part. In this way, SAC creates the foundation for rapid assistance: the right part, as close to the customer as possible, available as quickly as possible.

South Africa's commercial vehicle aftermarket is anything but uniform. On one side are professional fleet operators with hundreds of vehicles, modern workshops, and clearly defined quality requirements. On the other are small transport businesses

with one or two trucks, limited budgets, and very basic repair capabilities. Lategan describes customers who service their vehicles under a tree and cover them with a tarp when it rains. They, too, make daily decisions based on price, quality, and availability.

This is precisely where SAC's strength lies. The company does not want to be just another distributor; it wants to be present where the spare part is actually installed. "We serve the customer who throws the packaging away," Lategan says in essence. As a result, SAC offers a broad portfolio ranging from value-oriented

aftermarket products and quality brands to OE and OEM components. Customers looking for a more affordable solution can find one. Those who prefer original quality can find that as well.

The company's roots lie in a Volvo workshop in Centurion. From there, SAC gradually built its spare parts business. A major turning point came more than 20 years ago at Automechanika in Frankfurt. Through a connection with a large German commercial vehicle parts distributor, SAC received products on a handshake agreement, sold them, and paid for them later. For Lategan, this story demonstrates the importance of trust in the spare parts business—then and now.

SAC has been active in the spare parts business since 2002, with the dedicated truck parts operation taking shape in 2004. In 2019, the company moved into a central warehouse. Today, SAC operates 23 locations—22 in South Africa and one in Botswana—employs more than 860 people, manages a 16,000-square-meter central distribution center, and stocks more than 25,000 items. Annual revenue is approximately €100 million with double digit growth.

Despite its size, SAC believes there is still big market potential. Expansion is driven by data. SAC analyzes where customers are located, which products generate demand, and where new branches make sense. For SAC, proximity is therefore a core element of its business model.



The SAC Commercial Parts central warehouse, opened in 2019, is located in Centurion between Pretoria and Johannesburg.



SAC operates 23 branches across South Africa and Botswana.

The product portfolio is changing as well. Historically, SAC has been strongly focused on European truck brands. Volvo, Scania, Mercedes-Benz, MAN, DAF, Iveco, and Renault remain an important foundation. According to Lategan, European trucks is still the biggest portion of SAC's offering. But the market is evolving. Since 2019, SAC has significantly expanded its offering for Japanese vehicles, including Isuzu, Hino, UD Trucks, and Mitsubishi Fuso. This segment of the business is now growing very well. Even more dynamic is the growth of Chinese vehicles, which is still small today but shows big potential. Lategan is certain that the number of vehicles from China will rise sharply in future, as customers can often buy a new Chinese vehicle for the price of a second-hand European truck with high mileage.

For Knorr-Bremse, this trend creates an important opportunity. Components from Knorr-Bremse are also installed in many Asian vehicles. As these vehicles enter the market, demand for

aftermarket parts will follow over time. For SAC, this means that anyone seeking to serve these emerging vehicle segments must understand early on which technologies are installed, which parts will be required, and how to ensure reliable availability.

The partnership with Knorr-Bremse fits perfectly into this strategy. In South Africa, SAC views Knorr-Bremse almost as a local supplier because the company maintains a distribution warehouse and a local team in the country. This makes a significant difference in day-to-day operations. SAC can place orders on a weekly basis rather than planning inventory six to nine months in advance. For a distributor whose value proposition centers on speed and availability, this is a major advantage.

Quality is another important factor. As long as vehicles remain covered by manufacturer specifications, service contracts, or

warranty requirements, many operators prefer OE or OEM quality in order to protect their claims. Once those obligations expire, price pressure increases. Many customers then move immediately into the aftermarket environment. Some deliberately choose a lower-cost part, even if it lasts only half as long. SAC must serve this reality. At the same time, it needs strong brands for customers who place greater value on quality, safety, and reliability than on the lowest possible price. In this segment, Knorr-Bremse stands for original quality and trust.

As vehicle technology becomes increasingly complex, this role grows in importance. Modern commercial vehicles can no longer be repaired the way they once were. Many components must be diagnosed, programmed, and integrated with the vehicle's electronic control systems. Lategan cites air dryers as one example. It is no longer sufficient to remove an old part and install a new one. Knorr-Bremse supports SAC primarily through technical know-how, component information, and access to appropriate diagnostic and programming solutions. SAC, in turn, invests in the necessary equipment and is working to make this expertise more widely available across its branch network.

As a result, the spare parts business is becoming increasingly technical for SAC. Success is no longer just about having a part on the shelf. What matters is ensuring that the part matches the vehicle, is available quickly, and can be properly diagnosed or programmed when required. This is exactly where the partnership with Knorr-Bremse becomes increasingly valuable: It combines OE quality with the proximity that the South African market demands.



European brands still dominate the parts warehouse today. However, competition from Asia is steadily growing.



"Knorr-Bremse stands for genuine quality and trust in South Africa."

Francois Lategan, Head of Procurement, SAC Commercial Parts

UP2DATE



Y633034
Knorr-Bremse Concentric Clutch Actuator (CCA) – Counterfeit products identified in the aftermarket



Y585174
Launch of Knorr-Bremse Diagnostics 26.1



Y631209
Daimler Evobus EAC ePBC available for IAM



Y626558
Fan clutches – product portfolio update



Y631841
ELC valves for competitor applications



Y629339
Gearbox and differential bearings – new product range introduction



Y627683
The ultimate compressor for MAN D26 engines (agricultural)

The documents are available for download at:

<https://mytruckservices.knorr-bremse.com>

Against the Clock

A racing team and a commercial vehicle workshop share the same goal: avoiding downtime. But at the racetrack, every repair becomes a race against time.



During training sessions and races, the mechanics work under intense time pressure.

Team Hahn Racing's most dangerous opponent is not on the track. It hides in performance data, temperature curves, and components that are still functioning—but perhaps not for much longer. For Jochen Hahn and the team's mechanics, the objective is the same as in any commercial vehicle workshop: Prevent breakdowns and keep the truck operational. The difference is that in the paddock, the deadline is not determined by a transport schedule, but by the next race start.

At Team Hahn Racing, repairs begin long before a component actually fails. "We continuously monitor all vehicle data—both during race weekends and throughout post-race analysis," explains Jochen Hahn. Any deviation from target values is systematically investigated.

An increase in crankcase pressure can signal potential engine damage before any loss of performance becomes noticeable. In the braking system, pressure, load duration,

and temperature development provide valuable insights into the condition of brake pads and discs. In addition, every race is followed by a visual inspection. Data may indicate a potential issue, but experience turns it into an accurate diagnosis. "Without data acquisition, targeted troubleshooting would be almost impossible today," says Jochen Hahn.

A pre-season test illustrated how even an improvement can create new challenges. An additional fuel cooler was installed to reduce fuel temperatures. However, the heat generated by the cooler increased the intake air temperature upstream of the turbocharger. One solution inadvertently created a new problem elsewhere in the system. Identifying such interactions before they become an issue during a race is a critical part of the team's work.

Modern commercial vehicle workshops operate according to the same principle. Diagnostic systems and vehicle data are used to detect anomalies at an early stage, make service visits more predictable, and minimize downtime. The difference lies less in the methodology than in the speed required. A fleet operator can schedule a maintenance appointment. Between races, Team Hahn Racing often has only a few hours to complete the necessary work.

In that situation, there is no time for lengthy explanations or task assignments. Every mechanic knows exactly what to do, and every movement is practiced. "Our mechanics know every bolt on the race truck. That is why we rehearse engine and transmission replacements in the workshop beforehand," Hahn explains. As a result, a major repair at the racetrack becomes a well-rehearsed routine.

This preparation also includes a spare-parts strategy that would be difficult to imagine in a conventional workshop. "Essentially, we bring an entire race truck in spare parts with us—only the frame and cab are missing," says Hahn. From front and rear axles to the engine and transmission, nearly every major assembly can be replaced. While a commercial vehicle workshop can rely on inventory networks, delivery logistics, and supplier partnerships, a racing team must have the solution on hand.

The effectiveness of this approach is reflected in the team's record: "In 30 years, we have never had to miss a race start on the second day of a race weekend," Hahn emphasizes. Achieving that has sometimes required working through the night. And when even the team's extensive spare-parts inventory is not enough, competition ends at the workshop door. Truck racing teams support one another with spare parts or additional manpower when needed.

As different as a pit lane and a commercial vehicle workshop may appear, their core principles are the same: expertise, organization, clearly defined processes, and the ability to make the right decisions under pressure. Team Hahn Racing demonstrates these principles in their most extreme form—a commercial vehicle workshop in fast-forward.



At Team Hahn Racing, every mechanic knows exactly what needs to be done.



Heading out to the grid: What challenges will the new race day bring?



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