

FleetOwner

Daimler sees “good signal” for NAFTA truck market

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Daimler Trucks chief Andreas Renschler

LAS VEGAS. With five large fleet orders for trucks in the last two months, [Daimler Trucks North America](#) (DTNA) believes its market may have “achieved the bottom,” according to Andreas Renschler, the head of DTNA’s parent, Daimler Trucks.

Speaking at a press briefing during the American Trucking Assns. annual convention here, Renschler pointed to an industry wide 9% sales increase in August over the previous month as “a good signal” for the NAFTA truck market.

Despite the positive signs, “we don’t think next year will be so much better than this year,” added Martin Daum, DTNA president & CEO. “Even if we see a 10% increase [in 2010], it will be 10% over a very bad year.”

With Daimler Trucks seeing similar dismal conditions in Western Europe and Asia, “changes in 2009 in our operations mean we can stay profitable even if the markets do not recover in 2010,” Renschler said. Currently Brazil is the best performing market for Daimler, recording only a 15% drop in truck sales compared to last year, he pointed out.

Overall, Renschler predicted that the truck market in the lucrative Triad nations (The United States, Canada, Western Europe and Japan) “won’t return to old levels in the near future. The growth will be in the BRIC nations [Brazil, Russia, India and China].”

Turning to positives for DTNA, Daum pointed to the [recent decision](#) to keep its Portland, OR, plant open; a new contract secured for military vehicles; some “modest rehiring” since June, and “a lot of growth opportunity in exports to Central and South America.”

Portland, OR-based DTNA produces Freightliner, Freightliner Custom Chassis and Western Star trucks.