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## ***Transitions***

By Paperitalo Staff

It seems to be a time of transition from where I sit. I mentioned my aunt a couple of weeks ago. We have all seen the announcement of Wayne Gross's retirement. Last week we had the news about Georgia-Pacific being bought by Koch. If you think about it, transition is the constant in our careers and in life.

Most decisions, good and bad, come from us trying to influence transitions-ones we want to avoid or ones we want to hasten along. Taken to an extreme, one can see this idea in action every minute of every day. We transition from sleep to wakefulness, from home to work and so on throughout each and every day.

Let's focus on the transitions we couple with bad decisions for a moment today. If there is something we want, but for one reason or another we are not ready to move towards it, we can reflect this desire in a bad decision. Perhaps that decision affects only a small number of people, say when someone focuses on their career to the exclusion of their family. Sometimes it can affect a large number of people, say, when a CEO brings down a large energy company or a large telecommunications company. Small or large, these people did not have the character attributes necessary to steer a stable course.

Other bad decisions result from a desire to transition quickly. For instance, if one tries to transition from the work setting to the home setting too quickly, they may find themselves with a traffic ticket, involved in a car accident, or worse. Same is true at work, and this is where safety plays out good or bad, not so much the result of character, but more the result of thinking (or not thinking) about what we are doing.

I have been asked several times why I always end this column with a safety note. It is for this reason: safety is something that has been proven to require constant awareness. Our rush to pass through some sort of transition can almost always get us off track when it comes to safety.

Yes, life is full of transitions. And life is all about how we handle them. Be aware of the transitions around you, be mindful of them and think them through. You will end up with more smiles on your face than frowns-I guarantee it.

For safety this week, let us talk about attitudes. You have to be prepared for safety incidents all the time. We had a great real life example this past Saturday night. My wife and I were driving south out of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, just after dark. We were coming down a long mountain road--about eight miles long. Part way down there was a runaway truck ramp. If you have never seen one of these, they usually go off the road at a shallow angle, are loaded with sand, and pointed up. They are used to stop trucks that have lost their brakes. As we came upon the ramp, two cars were sitting in the entrance to the ramp, and the occupants were outside and talking. This is like parking on the railroad tracks! But the point for us is this: be prepared for an accident all the time, do not think it cannot happen to me here and now. We will talk next week.

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