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Human Trafficking in the News

Truckers can slam the brakes on human trafficking/opinion

by Eric Higgs for Newsweek

FBI agents recently arrested 67 suspected sex traffickers as part of a nationwide operation. This effort, which relied on contributions from dozens of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners, is encouraging. Still, more must be done to stem the rising tide of human trafficking in our country.

Manager of MGM Cabaret arrested in connection to sex trafficking hub, prostitution sting

SAN ANTONIO - The manager of MGM Cabaret was arrested Thursday afternoon in connection to a sex trafficking hub and prostitution ring at a Southwest Bexar County strip club. The Bexar County Sheriff's Office said Ronnie Elizondo, 39, knew about the prostitution ring at MGM Cabaret, located along I-35 in Von Ormy. Investigators said Elizondo, a manager that handled the day-to-day operations of the facility, failed to report the prostitution by dancers working in a back room of the strip club.

Basketball legend Jim Farmer arrested in sex trafficking bust

Former University of Alabama basketball player, James (Jim) Farmer has been arrested in Tennessee after an undercover human trafficking investigation, according to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations. He has been charged with trafficking a person for a commercial sex act. Farmer played University of Alabama basketball under Wimp Sanderson from 1983 to 1987 before he was the first-round draft pick of the Dallas Mavericks.

[Click here to read these articles on our website](#)

Give where your money makes an impact -

TAT is a great choice!



Most donors want to give where their financial support will make an impact. 2019 has been a year of impact for Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT). A few examples of that include:

- *Law Enforcement and Iowa MVE Model* - In 2019, full implementation of the [Iowa MVE Model](#) grew from five states to 23, and partial participation in the model from 42 states to 47. TAT conducted 34 law enforcement trainings in 16 states, training 1413 officers.
- *Busing on the Lookout (BOTL)* - By mid-November, over 40,000 members of the bus industry have been trained with TAT or BOTL materials, which includes 13,563 school bus drivers and 26,606 from the commercial side. An additional 100,000 more have "committed to training," of which 80,000 are school bus drivers. And this year, for the first time, TAT's prestigious Harriet Tubman Award went to two members of the bus industry for their actions in preventing the trafficking of a young woman. Additionally, through Coach USA/Megabus, eight survivors have received traveling vouchers.
- *Freedom Drivers Project* - The FDP continues to be in high demand across the nation by legislators, anti-trafficking groups and trucking leaders, with over 3000 people touring it at 28 events this year. The first driver-hosted-and-led FDP events took place in September at the UPS CACH Hub in Chicago, with 477 people touring -- the most of any 2019 corporate event -- and the UPS Ohio Valley Truck Rodeo in Indianapolis. Drivers trained by TAT to set up, host and tear down the FDP were in charge at both events.
- *Coalition Builds* - TAT held eleven Coalition Builds (CB) this year, including the first international CB in Toronto, Ontario, the first bus/casino CB in Colorado and the first Mid-Atlantic CB that covered Maryland, Delaware and DC. Their impact assisted with a successful launch of TAT Canada, which included training of UPS Canada employees, Pilot/Flying J Canada employees and numerous speaking invitations in Canada; the movement of both Alabama and Missouri to becoming fully compliant with the Iowa MVE Model; the planning of three more CBs for 2020 along the East Coast; activity in Florida to make it fully compliant with the Iowa MVE; and law enforcement training opportunities in a number of states.

Commenting on the Canada Coalition Build, Ken Seader, vice president of UPS Canada, stated, "The Coalition Build was eye opening for everyone who attended, especially listening to stories shared by previous victims, about their experiences and how they were coerced into it. I was inspired by their bravery and the work they do now to support other victims. We came away with an understanding that we need to do more to create awareness and actively train our people to look for and properly report suspected human trafficking

activities. I am proud that UPS is supporting this cause through training, awareness and policy. We are committed to helping get more truckers on board to fight this injustice."

TAT is in the second month of a two-month, [end-of-year giving campaign](#) with a \$75,000 matching grant. Now is a great time to make an [individual donation](#) or host an employee fundraiser on TAT's behalf. And for a complete picture of TAT's 2019 impact, keep an eye out for the 2019 annual report, coming in January.

Coalition Build highlights intersection of buses and casinos in the fight against human trafficking



Louie Greek, TAT training specialist, presented at the CB. Behind him are (L to R) Janet Drake, deputy attorney general with the Colorado Office of the Attorney General; Anne Darr, victim specialist with the FBI Denver Division; Detective Shanna Michael with the Denver Police Department; and Annika Huff, TAT field trainer and survivor-advocate.

By building on TAT's successful Coalition Build model, Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) hosted its first-ever half-day briefing that specifically brought together law enforcement with casinos and the bus companies that serve them. BOTL partnered with the Colorado Attorney General's Office and the Colorado Gaming Association to host this pilot initiative in Golden, Colorado Nov. 13.

"With casinos only legal in two small mountain towns in the state of Colorado and bus companies running either scheduled or chartered routes specifically to those casinos, this Coalition Build focused on closing loopholes to traffickers at the intersection between buses and casinos," explained Annie Sovcik, BOTL director. "We plan to replicate this in other gaming towns in the United States, given the close connection between casinos and buses, as well as the important role that casinos also have to play in the fight against human trafficking."

The briefing was attended by 85 law enforcement and key industry representatives in Colorado. In a survey completed at the end of the briefing, 90 percent of respondents reported they are better prepared to identify human trafficking after attending the briefing and 100 percent said they would recommend attending a briefing like this to others in their field. A Colorado State Patrol officer described the presentation given by TAT Field Trainer and Survivor-Advocate Annika Huff as "one of the most powerful testimonies I have ever heard."

**Book now if you want
the Freedom Drivers Project in 2020**



The Freedom Drivers Project (FDP), TAT's in-demand mobile museum on domestic sex trafficking, is available in 2020 for a variety of events, from trucking championships to employee appreciation days to human trafficking awareness conferences and corporate/industry conferences, but it must be booked in advance, due to the logistics required and its popularity. The [request form](#) is easy to complete, so book now.

In the last few months of this year, the FDP visited BNSF Logistics headquarters in Texas, the Whiting Petroleum All-State Safety Conference in North Dakota, the UPS CACH Hub in Illinois, the UPS Ohio Valley Truck Rodeo in Indiana, N2Publishing headquarters in North Carolina and the International Foodservice Distributors Association Distributions Solutions Conference in Florida. A total of 943 people toured the exhibit at those events. Those who tour the FDP express greater awareness and understanding of human trafficking and the toll it takes on lives as well as more inspiration to become involved in the fight against this crime.

Christmas shopping? TAT merchandise still available at TravelCenters of America stores

Looking for a hat, cup, flashlight or cell accessory as a stocking stuffer or gift? TravelCenters of America (TA) still has TAT merchandise available for purchase at its stores. If you don't see it right away, ask a store employee. TA conducted a product promotion for TAT back in January and February, giving TAT \$1 from every product sold those two months and raising \$112,946. They still have some product left, and these items could be just what you're looking for to complete your Christmas purchases.



Curtailling demand cuts off the head of the snake

by Lyn Leeburg

Communications Director, Truckers Against Trafficking



WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT DEMAND?

trafficking, stopping demand is every bit as important, maybe more so, than learning to recognize and report sex trafficking when you see it happening: No demand = no victim = no sex trafficking.

Since its inception a decade ago, Truckers Against Trafficking has been working with critical industries, including trucking, bus and energy, as well as law enforcement and shippers, to raise up a mobile army of transportation professionals who can provide an extra set of eyes and ears for law enforcement to close loopholes traffickers are exploiting and ensure that perpetrators are arrested and victims recovered when it comes to human trafficking, both labor and sex. We do this by educating, equipping, empowering and mobilizing the members of these industries through creating turnkey, anti-trafficking protocols and policies that activate the public and private sectors in an effort to combat human trafficking.

In 2017, we began our [Man-to-Man Campaign](#) to zero in on demand. Using top-flight drivers from the ATA America's Road Team, as well as drivers from other company Road Teams, through our TAT Ambassadors program, we have drivers out making presentations across the country; we have life-size posters of them appearing at events alongside our mobile museum, the Freedom Drivers Project, with quotes explaining why they don't buy commercial sex; and we have a video anyone can use to explore the attitudes and perceptions toward women that contribute to commercial sex trafficking. We provide a list of suggestions on how companies can work on lowering demand, including asking them to implement anti-trafficking-in-persons policies with a demand-reduction focus, and we provide samples of how these could read.

The argument has been made that if prostitution were legalized, sex trafficking would cease to exist. However, it is impossible to regulate an inherently harmful system to safety. In a recent article in [The Guardian](#) about the dangers of rebranding prostitution as "sex work," author and activist Kat Brand points out that "The whole point of the sex industry is that it offers men the chance to buy sexual access to women who do not want to have sex with them -- otherwise they wouldn't have to pay." She goes on to describe why it is impossible to commodify consent, which the decriminalize prostitution advocates want to do: "Perhaps the single most effective strategy hit upon so far is to pump out the myth contained in the term 'sex work': the myth that it is possible to commodify

consent. How can sexual consent be a thing that can be bought and sold, yet we can still talk with a straight face about there being such concepts as healthy sexual relationships and meaningful consent? If, while having sex with someone, you feel repulsed by them touching you, afraid of what they might do, degraded and humiliated by the sexual acts, hurt by the hateful words they're whispering in your ear, sore because he's the fifth man you've had sex with today, exhausted from it all, traumatized, abused -- the fact that you'll get a bit of cash at the end does not change anything. There is no invisible hand in the prostitution market that magically disappears the lived experience of sexual abuse."

All of this speaks to the issue of demand and why it must be curtailed. We urge you take the time to read through the [strategies and anti-trafficking-in-persons policy examples with a demand-reduction focus that we have at the bottom of this website page](#) and work to implement one in your company. Studies show that some of the purchased commercial sex is bought during the day from men at work. Having this policy in place will provide the necessary accountability for anyone using company resources or company time to purchase commercial sex or engage in anything that furthers trafficking. Whether you're out on the road or behind a desk, your role in fighting human trafficking, and the demand that fuels it, is critical.

Support BOTL through Dressemer

Dressemer 2019 has officially started! Dressemer is a 31-day style challenge benefiting anti-trafficking programs around the world, including Busing on the Lookout (BOTL)! It's not too late to join in and be part of the impact by wearing a dress (or a tie!) every day this month. Head to [dressemer.org](https://www.dressemer.org) to find out more and check out the Dressemer profile of TAT/BOTL as a 2019/2020 grantee:



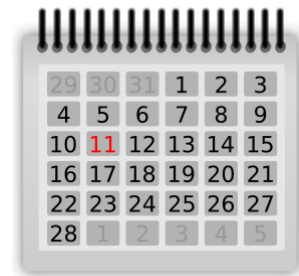
<https://www.dressemer.org/blog/introducing-one-of-dressemer-s-new-grant-partners-truckers-against-trafficking>

Upcoming Events

Dec. 8-10 - Uber Freight Chicago Speaker Series Lunch, Chicago, IL, Helen Van Dam, FDP director, presenting

Dec. 12 - North Dakota Highway Patrol Training, Bismark, ND, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, and Annika Huff, TAT field trainer and survivor-advocate, presenting

Dec. 11 - Truck Training Schools Association of Ontario, Canada, Heather Fry, TAT Canada director, presenting



Dec. 12 - Central Transport Holiday Luncheon, Warren, MI, Laura Cyrus, TAT Corporate Engagement director, presenting

Dec. 17 - West Michigan Safety Council Meeting, Grand Rapids, MI, Laura Cyrus, TAT Corporate Engagement director, presenting

TAT's work is made possible through the generous support of our corporate sponsors, foundation partners and individual donors. Our education, training, legislative engagement, and advocacy efforts would not exist without those who invest in the change that we work towards each day. If you are interested in learning more about how you can provide financial support, please visit our [corporate engagement webpage](#) or contact Laura Cyrus at 612-888-4828 or lcyrus@truckersagainstrafficking.org to explore our giving opportunities.

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