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Human Trafficking in the News

Mississippi Trucking Association presented Truckers Against Trafficking Champion Award

Truckers Against Trafficking Executive Director Kendis Paris recently presented The Mississippi Trucking Association with the 2020 TAT Champion Award in the Association category.

Man arrested in Denton during human trafficking sting

An anti-human trafficking sting led to the arrest of a 30-year-old man April 23 in Denton, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office. William Adam Jonathan Smith, 30, was charged by criminal complaint with conspiracy to engage in child sex trafficking.

DOT doubles progress in human trafficking fight

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) more than doubled a goal staked out earlier this year to get 100 pledges in 100 days to raise awareness of human trafficking in the transportation sector. Over 200 companies and organizations answered the call for the effort that DOT Secretary Elaine Chao made in January.

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

Mississippi Trucking Association awarded 2020 TAT Champion Award in the Association Category

Commended for the passion and commitment of its leadership and members to do whatever they could to fight human trafficking, the Mississippi Trucking

Association (MTA) has received the 2020 TAT Champion Award in the Association Category.

TAT Champion Awards recognize and honor the outstanding and dedicated efforts of specific TAT partners in three categories -- association, state agency and organization -- whose actions have significantly furthered TAT's work in "engaging more members of the industries we work with, as well as the efforts of more agencies and organizations within their state and our nation, in the fight to end this crime and recover more survivors and prosecute more perpetrators."



Describing some of MTA's efforts, TAT Executive Director Kendis Paris detailed:

- Engaging TAT to speak at the MTA annual conference to educate its members about human trafficking and to partner with TAT
- Encouraging its member companies to get involved in the fight against human trafficking by partnering with TAT and becoming TAT trained
- Hosting multiple [Coalition Builds](#) in Mississippi, ensuring state and local law enforcement see trucking as a partner in the fight against human trafficking
- Serving on the statewide anti-human trafficking task force, gaining additional pathways for TAT's law enforcement video to make its way into the hands of the state's law enforcement officers
- Being the first state trucking association to bring in the Freedom Drivers Project for Mississippi's State Fair and providing a volunteer base to educate the state's citizenry about the realities of human trafficking
- Providing trucks for undercover operations with law enforcement
- Being a Silver Level corporate sponsor for multiple years



Hal Miller, MTA president, said, "MTA member companies have trained almost 10,000 trucking industry employees in conjunction with TAT. These trained employees are acting as a watchdog on the American highways to combat this horrific crime."

Speaking about the three Coalition Builds MTA hosted, he commented, "Thank you for letting us be a part of the Coalition Builds. I sincerely hope the events had as huge an impact on all the other attendees as they did on me. I already had a pretty strong understanding of the great things TAT was doing, but the real impact for me was the paradigm shift after hearing the survivor's testimony. That story needs to be heard by as many as possible. It truly brings a whole new level of empathy and understanding that will motivate many more to support the efforts of TAT to combat trafficking. Thank you for letting us find a place to help."

Paris remarked, "The associations, state agencies and organizations we partner with play a significant role in helping us combat the human trafficking taking place along our roadways. This year, in the Association Category, the MTA won hands down. They are inspiring and amazing, and it's a privilege and honor to present them with this award. Their efforts are translating into saving lives."

TAT expands digital resources

Revealing the truth of the adage that "necessity is the mother of invention," Truckers Against Trafficking staff have taken the opportunity presented by COVID-19 to expand the digital resources available to help in the fight against human trafficking.



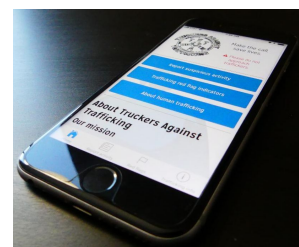
[COVID-19 Video Dispatch Series](#)

Each week, a new video is added to this series on the website. So far, these content-rich and bite-sized videos have included topics such as the impact of COVID-19 on human trafficking; a COVID-19 update for the bus industry; the impact of the virus on trafficking victims and how traffickers are likely to be operating in the pandemic; a reminder by TAT Ambassador Bill

McNamee of the importance for vigilance by truck drivers in watching for human trafficking as they deliver crucial supplies; a conversation with Jake Roberson, communications director for the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, on the increase in porn subscriptions during the pandemic; a conversation with Elizabeth Gerrior, associate director of Data Quality for Polaris, on the increased vulnerabilities the pandemic has created and the unchanging call volume; a discussion with Sydney Zuiker, manager of Safe Community Programs for Crime Stoppers of Houston, in keeping kids safe online; and a discussion with Liz Williamson, a survivor advocate, about the realities of familial trafficking and the importance of taking notice of those around you.

TAT App

If you haven't already done so, remember to download the TAT App for your smart phone, whether Android or iPhone. It contains the number for the National Human Trafficking Hotline as well as critical information, including red flags to look for and case studies.



Upcoming digital resources

To bridge the gap and lay the groundwork in a state for future meetings and greater impact, TAT is working on a virtual tour of the Freedom Drivers Project, its ever-popular mobile exhibit, as well as digital Coalition Builds. To continue equipping and empowering a mobile army to combat human trafficking, all of TAT's training is available online, and there are digital briefings and niche-specific toolkits in the works as well.

Justice Seekers is a new digital resource for law enforcement

Justice Seekers, a one-hour, monthly webinar series featuring expert panelists covering a variety of topics is scheduled to begin June 16 for prosecutors and members of law enforcement. This series is designed to deepen understanding about victims of human trafficking, give practical steps on how to engage with them, present best practices for undercover operations and share case studies of human trafficking investigations.

"While we believe the most effective training we provide is in person, where we can generate back and forth discussion with our audience," explained Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, "with the uncertainty COVID-19 is causing as to when government entities will be allowed to gather their employees together again for training purposes, we felt this webinar panel series would be an effectual and accessible way for law enforcement officers and prosecutors to receive valuable information to help them in their work."

Due to the sensitive nature of some of the material discussed, not all of the panel discussions will be recorded and available at later dates. Therefore, it is best to plan on attending on the scheduled dates and times of the webinars.

The first Justice Seekers panel will feature Survivor-leaders Beth Jacobs, Sula Skiles, Liz Williamson and Annika Huff sharing their experiences and interactions with law enforcement and their best advice on how to engage with them. There will be time for Q&A.

To register for the first Justice Seekers panel discussion, click on the graphic below:



Employing a Victim-Centered Approach: Survivor Leader Panel	Undercover Human Trafficking Ops (not recorded)	Human Trafficking Investigations (not recorded)	Bridging the Gap: Best practices when engaging with victims of HT
June 16 @1pm CST	July 21 @1pm CST	August 18 @1pm CST	Sept. 15 @1pm CST

Shopping for a new tractor? Owner-operator selling tractor/trailer, donating money to TAT

During this time of pandemic, gestures of generosity are appreciated more than ever. One owner-operator is selling his tractor/trailer and has decided to donate all proceeds to TAT.

The tractor, a 2015 Peterbilt 579, with an 80" sleeper, is listed on [Truck Paper](#), as is the [trailer](#), a 2007 Great Dane SSL. Descriptions of both are available on the listings.

"This driver has a history of going out of his

way to serve with his time, talents and resources," said Helen Van Dam, director of the Freedom Drivers Project. "He's done this consistently and has consistently been generous towards TAT, but this gift just blew me away. He's worked so hard with this truck and treasures it. To sell it to benefit TAT is so fitting for his story and so awe inspiring. What generosity -- especially in the midst of the pandemic -- to remember this mission and keep it at the forefront, providing funding to serve those made vulnerable by this pandemic as well as the drivers he's worked alongside for years. I hope there are a lot of offers on this truck to honor his gift and benefit this mission."



If you're in the market for either a tractor or trailer, please check these out, and remember, the proceeds for each will be used to fight human trafficking.

Driving Goodness Campaign selects TAT as initial partner

Driving Goodness (DG), a recently launched campaign of The Vomela Companies to magnify all the good happening in the transportation services industry, has selected Truckers Against Trafficking as its first non-profit partner.



A Vomela Companies Initiative

On its [website](#), DG describes the transportation industry as "the omnipresent heartbeat of our people. Without the industry -- and the millions of hardworking people it consists of -- our lives would be unrecognizably different. We're committed to the connections we make every day,

whether it's on the highway, over the radio, or through our shared commitment to social good."

"DG recognizes the individuals and organizations inspiring hope, while championing industry causes in a collaborative approach," said Purpose Transformation Advisor Lou Raiola. "DG is proud to support the incredibly important work of TAT as our initial nonprofit partner in purpose."

In addition to website recognition, the campaign, supported by 3M, plans to act on behalf of the causes, individuals, companies and industry members it highlights through in-kind support, extending their messaging in a variety of ways and showcasing examples of DG partners in action and their life-changing effects.

The Vomela Companies is the parent company of a number of graphics/printing companies. They are a full-service specialty graphics and print provider, whose services include designing and printing fleet wraps for truck, bus, airlines and trains.

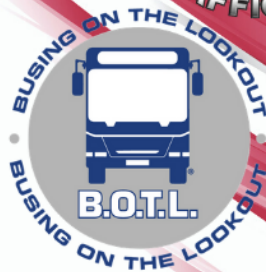
IN TIMES OF NEED, DRIVERS ARE ALWAYS
THERE TO DELIVER THE ESSENTIALS -
BOTH PEOPLE AND SUPPLIES.



HAVE YOU MADE A CALL ON BEHALF OF A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

*Let your company and
Truckers Against Trafficking know today!*

Even though we know it's not why you made the call,
you could be in the running for TAT's prestigious
Harriet Tubman Award presented by Protective
Insurance, that brings with it a prize package
including tickets to the Indy500 and \$2500!



**INDY500
TICKETS**



**\$2500
PRIZE & AWARD
GALA**

**Tell us your story at
tat.truckers@gmail.com**

Prize package is sponsored by
**PROTECTIVE
INSURANCE**

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@truckersagainsttrafficking.org to explore our giving opportunities.

Donate to TAT

Thank you to our Freedom Driver, Diamond, Platinum and Gold level sponsors!



Thank you to our copper level and above [individual donors](#)!

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