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Human trafficking in the news

Florida program encourages truckers to fight human trafficking

Florida officials recently launched the Highway Heroes campaign, which aims to involve truck drivers in the fight to end human trafficking. Attorney General Ashley Moody and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV) on Oct. 26 launched the campaign, which aims to enlist 500,000 truckers. Human trafficking, which involves the use of force to obtain labor or a commercial sex act, exploits about 25 million people, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking.

Texas woman sentenced for role in international human trafficking operation with location in Minneapolis

A Texas woman has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for her role in an international Thai sex trafficking organization. According to a release from the U.S. Attorney's Office, 41-year-old Waralee Wanless was sentenced to 144 months (12 years) in prison Wednesday. As proven during a six-week trial and conviction by a federal jury, Wanless participated in a sex trafficking organization that coerced hundreds of women from Bangkok, Thailand to engage in commercial sex acts in cities around the United States, including Minneapolis.

Separating Fact from Fiction: Recent cases of recovered missing children and what they show about child sex trafficking

In just the past few weeks, law enforcement operations in Georgia, Indiana and Ohio have led to the rescue of some 70-plus children who had been reported missing or were considered endangered. In some cases, charges of sex trafficking have been filed. The public will likely never know a great deal of detail about how these children wound up in these horrible

situations – and that's as it should be. They deserve the privacy to heal. **Unfortunately, when information is hard to come by, rumors and misinformation fill in the gaps.**

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

Toyota proves company-to-company communication essential to growing mobile army in fight against trafficking



TOYOTA



Word of mouth may seem casual, but it often produces major impact. Toyota Motor North America recently became a TAT shipping partner, having first heard of TAT last year from Accelerated Logistics Auto Transport and Moore Transport, TAT supporters and Toyota carrier partners. As a result, Toyota has already:

- Trained its more than 110 employees in the Toyota Transport private fleet with TAT materials and outfitted their trucks with the TAT window decal.
- Surveyed carrier partners to inquire about their participation in the TAT program and their use of TAT materials (such as the wallet card and decal).
- Recommended to their carrier partners that they become involved with the TAT effort, using their quarterly service reviews to engage in this discussion.
- Committed to encouraging non-participating carriers to get connected to TAT.

Through Toyota's discussions with their carrier partners, a top 100 company has already called TAT and is committing to train their private fleet immediately.

"Toyota's two pillars are Respect for People and Continuous Improvement, and we're committed to actively engaging in our communities to improve lives for all. So, partnering with Truckers Against Trafficking to work toward eliminating human trafficking felt like a natural fit," explained Missy Pearlman, group manager, TLS Vehicle Transportation Operations.

Keep human trafficking on the front burner with TAT's Driving Freedom podcast

Looking for an easy way to keep the issue of human trafficking in front of employees and/or association or organization members?

TAT's new [Driving Freedom](#) podcast is a helpful training tool to maximize learning-on-the-go for the busy members of the trucking, bus and energy industries. Each short episode, most between 15-20 minutes in length, is designed to refresh critical issues learned to keep this life-saving information top of mind.

Current podcast episodes include the Victim-Centered Approach with Annika Huff, Addressing Demand with Alan Smyth, The "Life", Vulnerabilities and a Better Way Out with Christine McDonald, How TAT Got Started and Conspiracy Theories.

"We recognize that this mobile army of eyes and ears is constantly on the go," stated Kendis Paris, TAT executive director.

"Our new podcast is the perfect training tool to listen to about 30 minutes before you make your next stop. From survivors of sex trafficking describing what life for them was really like to addressing how the issue of demand fuels the sex trade, this podcast provides a content-rich, mini-refresher course on the realities of human trafficking and how to effectively combat it in the course of your everyday job."

To become a distribution point of these podcasts for your company employees or your association or organization members, contact Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, [here](#) to discuss options. Methods currently being used by companies to distribute include linking TAT's podcast to theirs, promoting it via an email blast to all drivers, putting it in their newsletter, sharing it via screens in terminals and introducing it during sales calls. Share these podcasts within your sphere of influence as well, so people continue to grow in their understanding of this crime and what they can do to combat it.



Take the Freedom Drivers Project general tour or ask for a customized tour for your company

Been waiting for the Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) to arrive in your neighborhood or workplace to experience its incredible imagery and the powerful truth it conveys about human trafficking? Wait no longer! You and your employees can take a free virtual tour via your tablet or computer.

Recently, through the generosity of the American Trucking Associations (ATA), and, in particular, Elisabeth Barna, ATA COO and TAT board member, leaders at the ATA Management Conference and Exhibition, held in October, had the opportunity to take the FDP virtual tour, available through a virtual booth. TAT staff members have attended the conference in the past.

The FDP virtual tour was also available at the Birmingham, Alabama and New Mexico Coalition Builds in October, and will be part of the North American Transportation Services Association conference early this month.

Featuring comprehensive exhibits, the FDP is a dynamic, visual tool demonstrating both the reality and devastation of trafficking through facts and survivor artifacts, as well as the critical role transportation and energy members are playing in combating this crime. It lends itself well to a virtual tour during these times.

View and share the [condensed tour](#) and/or email Helen Hofer [here](#) to design an event specific to your team. To further enhance the experience, schedule an in-depth anti-trafficking training webinar led by a TAT staff for your virtual event.



Virtual Coalition Build in New Mexico highlighted participation of energy industry in combating human trafficking

Featuring updated training modules, a virtual Coalition Build (CB) held on Oct. 28 drew 70 people from more than 28 entities from the energy industry, including operators, service companies and organizations from New Mexico, Texas and Colorado. The event was sponsored by Marathon Oil and co-hosted by Marathon and Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT), with the intent of engaging the energy companies working on the New Mexico side of the Permian Basin.

On a follow-up survey, one of the participants wrote, "We often don't think about everything and everyone that comes with trafficking. This was such an eye-opener to understanding what needs to be thought through and how we can make an effective impact in all areas."

A TAT partner, Marathon Oil joined the Oil and Gas Trafficking Awareness Group (OGTAG) in 2018 and began implementing their anti-trafficking initiative internally in January 2020. That month, they also led the members of OGTA in Marathon's first signature event, Energy Empowers Freedom Week, in which TAT participated with presentations and Freedom Drivers Project tours. This event resulted in more than 1,000 energy employees across Houston receiving awareness training about human trafficking.



Mary Ellen Weyland, community engagement lead for Marathon Oil, told CB participants that "no industry is immune to trafficking, and this is not an energy-specific issue. But we wanted to use the reach and scale of our companies to bring awareness to an issue that has unfortunately experienced a surge around the country. We hope you now have a better understanding of the issue and what you can do to help keep our community safe. Just like we did with safety, and like we're doing with environmental performance, we know that when we come together as an industry, we can create real, positive change."

"This Coalition Build serves as an excellent opportunity to work with TAT's longtime and new partners to expand the fight against human trafficking," said Ashley Smith, TAT director of Energy Operations. "With a recently updated Empower Freedom training DVD and an easy-to-use toolkit – both available on the [TAT website](#), our attendees have the resources they need to engage their employees in this important work."

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