**Women in Motion; Bringing More Women into the Trucking Industry**

***By TBD***

I’m often asked what it’s like to be a woman in the trucking industry, the assumption being that I’m one of few or that I face unique challenges that women in other industries don’t face. While there are far more men than women in trucking – only about 8% of truck drivers are women – there are more than 260,000 female drivers. On top of that, more than half the people working in the industry aren’t drivers.

But it’s true that we need more women in trucking, which is why the American Trucking Associations is launching the “Women in Motion” campaign. The goal is to raise awareness of women in the industry and to encourage more of our sisters to join us in fulfilling careers with lots of room for growth.

In 1909, Alice Ramsey became the first woman to drive a car across the United States. Her achievement is noble, and I admire her for it. I often wonder about the other strong women in her life that helped her make that journey. That’s how I see women in this industry: strong women driving the rigs with strong women supporting them in the offices, on the dispatch phones, in the mechanic shops, and elsewhere. Like most industries, we need people in sales, marketing, professional services, clerical work, logistics, accounting – you name it, we need it.

***Insert info on signer’s career and how they got started/upward mobility they experienced.***

I love that my job helps support our country’s truckers, male and female, who deliver our nation’s products. The fact is, more than 80% of U.S. communities depend solely on trucking for delivery of goods and commodities. The old saying, “if you got it, a truck brought it”, is as true today as ever.

There are many reasons why a woman would want to work in trucking. First off, it’s a job that’s needed everywhere. Every one of the 50 states has at least 1,000 people working in trucking, be it on the road or in an office, and many have hundreds of thousands of people working in trucking. Additionally, there’s a driver shortage of about 80,000 so the work is readily available.

The industry pays well. The office jobs are on par with other industries and the average for over the road tractor-trailer drivers is more than $40,000, with many making more than $60,000 and even into the six figures. Since it doesn’t require a degree and the training can be done in less than two months, you can start earning much earlier than you can in many other careers. You need a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL), which you get by passing a skills test and a knowledge exam. There are many state certified CDL schools and, like with college and many trade schools, drivers can often receive loans or grants to attend.

There’s plenty of room for growth in all parts of the industry. Office workers start with entry level positions and earn more responsibility. Drivers earn additional certifications that come with higher pay for specialties like larger vehicles, unique vehicles, or special cargo. Finally, many drivers are able to pick and choose when they work. Meaning a busy mom can choose to work fewer (or no) hours in the summer to spend time with her kids while they’re out of school.

But don’t just take my word for it. Listen to what other women in trucking have to say:

“There are so many opportunities in the industry that offer the flexibility women need to balance careers and raise families.” – Kendra Hems, President, Trucking Association of New York

“It’s not just the adrenaline, but the people I meet, and places I go… I love driving my LVC (long vehicle combo), which is over 95 feet long and weighs 109,000 pounds loaded with fuel. I still get a kick out of when kids see it’s me, a female, behind the wheel and their eyes get huge!” – Patty Lopez, Driver

“In my management role, I help define the company’s strategic direction, and I am involved in many aspects of the business, including budgeting, evaluating acquisitions, and growing customer relationships.” – Anna Faford, Vice President of Strategy, C&K Trucking

For women who want to earn a good living with a rewarding, flexible, and fun career that helps others, nothing beats working in trucking.