

TRANSTRENDS

THE TRANSLAW GROUP, INC.

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SELF DRIVE VEHICLE IS ON THE HORIZON SO SAY AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERS



Industry insiders are all abuzz about the latest engineering marvel that will eliminate the need for highly trained, skilled professional drivers, the autonomous truck.

It is the Binford AT 9000 single axle day cab that will bring about the revolution of self drive trucks.

This vehicle is reported to get 22.5 miles per gallon and will attain speeds upwards of 35 MPH without the need of a driver. A simple APP

on your I-phone will do the trick!

Carriers are interested in this new vehicle and expect that they will increase rates thereby capitalizing on this revolutionary technology and sticking it to the shipper.

Google has said that the technology cannot spot potholes or humans, such as a police officer, signaling the car to stop. The vehicles are unable to recognize temporary traffic signals. They have not proven themselves in snow or rain. They are also unable to navigate through parking lots. Vehicles are unable to differentiate between pedestrian and policeman or between crumpled up paper and a rock. Google projects having these issues fixed by 2020. But, why wait, sign up now.

Bottom line: It sounds like the autonomous vehicle is about as reliable as an authentic, live, drug tested, driver qualified, human.

APRIL FOOLS DAY FROM THE TRANSLAW GROUP!

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE: TRUCKS STILL MOVING MOST FREIGHT



The dollar value of freight hauled across the borders by U.S., Canadian and Mexican truckers in December was more than 9 percent greater than a year earlier. That's according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, which also says trucks moved 60 percent of all the international freight, with trains, planes, ships and pipelines picking up the rest.

Four of five modes experienced an increase in commodity value when compared with December 2013. Truck cargo had the highest growth at a rate of 9.3 percent. Rail freight increased 8.3 percent, air freight went up 6.3 percent and pipeline freight improved by 4.0 percent. Vessel freight experienced the only decrease from a year ago with a 22.6 percent reduction in value.

Trucks were responsible for nearly \$3 billion of the \$4.9 billion net increase from December 2013, the largest increase and offsetting losses from vessel freight. Rail came in at second with a \$740 million increase. Trucks accounted for \$28.4 billion of exports and \$28.4 billion of imports.

\$4.8 MILLION IN GOLD STOLEN FROM A TRACTOR-TRAILER



Local police say the theft occurred at around 6:49 p.m. Sunday at mile-marker 114 on the northbound lane of Interstate 95 in Wilson County, N.C., when a tractor-trailer transporting a shipment of gold and silver from Miami to Massachusetts broke down on the side of the highway.

A news release from the Wilson County

Sheriff's Department states that the two armed security guards who were transporting the load pulled over to the shoulder to investigate the mechanical problems with the rig, when they were approached by three armed male suspects in a white passenger van.

The suspects ordered the men to get on to the ground, tied them up, and forced them to walk into the nearby woods, according to the new release. The suspects then reportedly loaded several barrels of gold from the tractor-trailer onto their van before escaping. It will only be a matter of time before the five men are linked!

BOOKER TRYING TO REINSTATE 34 HOUR RULES



New Jersey Democrat Cory Booker plans to restore a recently suspended hours-of-service rule under review by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Last year, Booker and Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) strongly resisted suspending the rule, finding support from key stakeholders.

“I think we have a serious issue, as everybody concludes, about driver fatigue, and it is culpable for many accidents, and many deaths. And this seems like a reasonable evidence-based, data-based rule, and that it should not have been suspended. And I’m going to look to see as soon as possible for us to return it,” Booker said after a hearing of the Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security Subcommittee. He is the panel’s ranking member.

Booker added that he likely will wait and see what the opportunities are to proceed with restoring the HOS regulation, suggesting that could entail waiting until FMCSA presents Congress with a study about the rule’s safety impact. Under a funding law Congress passed in December, the enforcement that drivers take off two consecutive periods of 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. during a 34-hour restart was suspended through Sept. 30. Truckers still are required to adhere to pre-July 2013 hours-of-service regulations. Before the suspension expires, FMCSA is required to complete a review of safety claims stemming from the restart restrictions.

A majority of Republicans who supported the rule's suspension are expected to push back on Booker's efforts.

CONNECTICUT TO REVIEWS NEW TOWING RULES

An effort underway at the Connecticut statehouse addresses concerns about vehicles blocking highways and whether they are a threat to public safety and require immediate removal.

The Joint Committee on Transportation discussed a bill during a recent hearing that would give law enforcement authority to request that a vehicle blocking a roadway be removed by a wrecker service.

Any police or traffic authority personnel would be exempt from liability for damage to a vehicle or its load as long as “reasonable care” was used in the removal process. Wrecker services would also be indemnified from any liability.



Officials with the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association and Motor Transport Association of Connecticut are opposed to including tow truck operators on the protected list.

MTAC President Michael Riley said that people should be held responsible for what they do. Providing blanket immunity could protect bad actors,” Riley testified. “We don’t want to remove incentives to be safe, responsible and accountable.”

The bill, HB6817, awaits further consideration in the committee. A separate bill in the committee covers road cleanup by tow truck operators at wreck scenes. SB505 would require tow operators to clean up debris left behind after a vehicle accident.

In response, McLachlan said the state needs language that clearly outlines the responsibilities of tow truck operators regarding cleanup of debris, and includes fines for wreckers who fail to clean up properly. “We have a responsibility to ensure the safety of our constituents as they travel on public highways, and this legislation would help ensure their safety.”

BIG PAYDAY FOR ARKANSAS TRUCKERS



A federal judge in Michigan has ordered an Arkansas motor carrier to pay a dozen of its former drivers back wages along with compensatory and punitive damages following a disability discrimination lawsuit.

PAM Transport Inc. was sued by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2009. The agency alleged that PAM violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by requiring all of its drivers to notify the

company whenever the driver had contact with a medical professional, including routine physicals, according to a release issued by the EEOC on March 4.

Judgment in the amount of \$477,399 was entered against the company on Feb. 26. The court

order requires PAM to pay \$225,998 in back wages and interest; \$49,114 in compensatory damages; and \$202,287 in punitive damages to 12 of its former truck drivers.

The company's overly broad medical inquiries violate provisions of the ADA, which bar employers from making medical inquiries of employees unless the inquiries are job-related and consistent with business necessity.

HISTORY



The year was **1952** and the month was March, and the day was the 24th, a 17-year-old Elvis Presley was issued his first driver's license.

Presley, who was living in Memphis at the time, would spend about 14 months following in his father Vern's footsteps as a truck driver, before rocketing to iconic status in the music world.

The original driver's license is one of several items the Presley estate auctioned off in January.



The year was **1925**, the month was March, and the day was the 2nd when US Sec. of Agriculture, Howard M. Gore appointed 21 State Hwy. officials and three Federal Bureau of Public Roads officials to form the joint Board of interstate highways.

The board would begin implementing the American Association of State Highway officials plan to build and designate the first US interstate system.

The group was responsible for coining the phrase "US Highway" as a route designation and for developing the highway shield logo.

It was Dwight Eisenhower who is often credited with the establishment of the Interstate System, however, the idea was in the works for many years. Such as government was/is.

Sold! Australian firm buys Indiana Toll Road operator for \$5.7 billion

An Australian pension fund has purchased the company that operates the Indiana Toll Road for \$5.72 billion.

The deal is subject to government approvals, but the purchaser, IFM Investors, says that if it goes through the company would assume control of the toll road and toll collection for the remaining 66 years of the now infamous lease.



According to company information, Australia-based IFM Investors is owned by 30 major pension funds. Part of their portfolio includes infrastructure investment.

The company that had been running the Indiana Toll Road since paying \$3.85 billion for a long-term lease in 2006 – the Indiana Toll Road Concession Co. – declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy in September 2014. A bankruptcy court in Chicago

has allowed the ITRCC to sell to the highest bidder to help pay down approximately \$6 billion in company debts.

How can anyone reasonably think that another investor paying almost 2 billion dollars more for the road than the original owner of the lease make a go of it? Tolls on the 157-mile Indiana Toll Road have increased each year since former Gov. Mitch Daniels signed the 75-year lease agreement in the summer of 2006.

Truck tolls that were \$14 prior to the lease were allowed to more than double to \$32 during the first five years of the agreement. Subsequent toll increases are tied to the rate of inflation each year for the entire duration of the lease, according to the original agreement. The current rate for a five-axle truck is \$38.70, an increase of 176 percent from the pre-lease rate. **Now TRANSTRENDS understands how they will make money, they will just keep upping the tolls.**

CARRIER SAFETY FITNESS DETERMINATION PROPOSAL ON THE MOVE



Today would be a good time to make that decision and have your operations audited to ensure compliance with all rules and regulations having jurisdiction over your operations. Please read on to see how your company would benefit from such a review.

A proposal to tie a motor carrier's safety fitness to the Compliance, Safety, Accountability Program has been submitted

to the Office of the Secretary of Transportation for approval.

Currently, motor carriers only receive a safety fitness rating of satisfactory, conditional or unsatisfactory within 30 days following a compliance review. Motor carriers who have not been

through a compliance review are unrated under the current system. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is proposing to change the way the agency does that in a notice of proposed rulemaking submitted to the DOT on March 2.

The agency wants to adopt revised methods that would determine if the motor carrier is not fit to operate in interstate commerce and subsequently assign the motor carrier a "safety fitness determination." To arrive at the determination whether a motor carrier is fit to operate, the agency is proposing to review motor carrier performance in CSA BASICs, an investigation or a combination of on-road safety data and investigation information.

The BASICs – short for behavioral analysis and safety categories – rank a motor carrier's compliance against peer groups. The peer groups are based on the number of inspections or motor carrier size depending on the BASIC. Based on those comparisons, the agency assigns a compliance ranking relative to the others. Motor carriers who are ranked above pre-determined thresholds in the BASICs face intervention from the agency. Those rankings are calculated about every month.

HEAD ACHES FOR TMSI LOGISTICS



A truck stuck underneath a railroad overpass on River Street near Park Street in West Springfield, MA caused traffic tie-ups as police were detouring traffic from the area, police said.

River Street was closed to traffic, and cars were having to take detours.

The road was expected to be closed for several hours while the contents of the truck are off-

loaded to another vehicle, police said. No injuries were reported.

The truck, listed to TMSI Logistic Transport of Buffalo, New York, was firmly wedged under the bridge. The roof was peeled off and the trailer was bent in the middle. Markings on the side of the truck said the truck trailer was 13 feet, 6 inches high. A "low clearance" sign at River and Park streets warns the bridge is 12 feet, 4 inches high.

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