



Truckers Against Trafficking

Make the Call, Save Lives!

1-888-373-7888

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In January 2015, an RV pulled into a truck stop in Virginia. Police were soon called to the scene. When they arrived, and after interviewing the occupants of the vehicle, the horrific story made headlines. A young woman, 20 years old, had been kidnapped two weeks prior out of Iowa. She had been beaten, raped, her whole body burned by instruments heated on the RV stove, branded and starved. She was being sold by her traffickers, Laura Sorenson and Aldair Hodza, through sex ads on Craigslist, where men were purchasing her and then arriving at the RV to rape her. She was dying from malnutrition and the torture she was subjected to ... had the call not been made that brought law enforcement out to that truck stop, doctors said she would have died within the next few days. That call was made by professional truck driver Kevin Kimmel, who recognized that something was off -- something was wrong -- and instead of turning a blind eye, he picked up the phone. She calls him her guardian angel. He calls himself a Trucker Against Trafficking.

People ask us, why truckers? And there are actually quite a number of reasons why, but let's start here. At any given time, there are more truck drivers out on the road than there are law enforcement officers. They are the eyes and ears of our nation's highways. Truck drivers are trained to be vigilant, and along with truck stop employees, can find themselves intersecting with victims of human trafficking. Therefore, the trucking industry is critical in this fight!

To date, 300,000 trucking industry members have been registered as TAT Trained on our website. This is up from 174,761 at the end of 2015.

Between Dec. 7, 2007 (when the National Human Trafficking Hotline [NHTH] began) and Dec. 31, 2016, truckers made 1589 calls, reporting a total of 503 cases of potential human trafficking across all types of trafficking and all venues. NHTH staff identified 1098 potential victims from these cases, with 299 of those being minors. (Prior to 2009 when TAT began, the NHTH reports that they had received only three of the total trucker calls.)

TAT held 9 coalition builds across the nation last year including in Kansas.

The goal of a TAT coalition build is to establish an effective and sustainable working relationship between the trucking industry and law enforcement statewide, in order to combat the crime of human trafficking. In April 2016, TAT, in conjunction with the Kansas Attorney General's Office and the Kansas Motor Carrier Association, held a coalition build in Topeka, and as a result more truck stops in your state trained their employees with this life saving information, trucking companies added the training into their orientations and safety meeting, and law enforcement and trucking industry members exchanged contact information to collaborate on any suspicious activity that they may see.

28 states have now adopted the Iowa Motor Vehicle Enforcement model in part or in whole, allowing TAT to utilize the pre-existing overlap between commercial vehicle enforcement units and the trucking industry through ports of entry, weigh stations, interdiction stops and mandatory safety compliance meetings within

trucking companies. This model also allows TAT to activate often overlooked state agencies in combating human trafficking, insofar as the Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Revenue, Department of Licensing and Department of Public Safety now have specific pathways to help equip and educate an industry on the front lines of combating human trafficking. Kansas has implemented almost every aspect of the model including stocking weigh stations and ports of entry with TAT materials, training commercial vehicle enforcement personnel and visiting truck stops and trucking companies within the state with TAT materials.

All 50 state trucking associations have now partnered with TAT. The KMCA has partnered with TAT for years, providing us multiple opportunities to speak with their member companies about our free training, and participating with the Kansas AG's office and TAT in a coalition build last year.

TAT and the Kansas Office of the Attorney General have also forged a strong relationship that resulted in, not only our coalition build which created networks of law enforcement and trucking industry stakeholders to close loopholes to traffickers, but also the opportunity to co-teach a training for law enforcement from around the state on the issue of human trafficking and ways to partner with the trucking industry in the fight. Representatives from the AG's office trained members of multiple Kansas trucking companies, the Kansas Corporation Commission and the Department of Revenue Division of Vehicles Stakeholders on the realities of human trafficking.

Trained, equipped and empowered to recognize the signs of human trafficking and report it, they will continue to save lives.

Who better then to train to recognize the signs of this crime? Who better to equip and empower on how to effectively report it?

As such, Truckers Against Trafficking is very pleased to be here today in support of legislation that would ensure professional drivers would secure this life-saving information and training. Our partners at the Kansas Motor Carriers Association and the Office of the Attorney General, along with TAT believe in the power of the trucking industry to make an impact in this fight against slavery. We are grateful for the Senate Judiciary Committee's leadership in sponsoring this legislation.

Senate Bill 179 is a game changer.

If every driver, prior to ever hitting the road, had this life-saving information and training, imagine how many more calls will be made, imagine how many victims will be recovered out of this horrible reality, how many perpetrators: both the traffickers AND the buyers of commercial sex will be arrested.

If Kansas passes this legislation other states WILL follow your lead ... imagine the exponential effect that will result, and how many more victims will be recognized and recovered.