

KENTUCKY TRUCKER

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“To promote the trucking industry by educating government entities, the general public, customers and related industry groups through advocacy, career development, and the support of value-added programs that enhance industry safety and productivity.”

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Chairman's Corner



David Guess, Ph.D., SPHR, Chairman
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“
In short, I think I speak for all my trucking industry colleagues when I say we're more than ready to keep on trucking! I may only be 52, old by my kids' standards, but young by others, and I can attest to the fact that in my 25 years of being in trucking, never have I seen such industry displacement.

”

What's that, a photo, possibly in a public gathering, and no mask? Oh no, the nerve to dare breathe openly like that. Hello, and welcome to another edition to our quarterly Kentucky Trucker Magazine.

All kidding aside, if you're anything like me, you're more than ready for our lives and our industry to return to whatever resembles the new normal, old normal, or whatever. In short, I think I speak for all my trucking industry colleagues when I say we're more than ready to keep on trucking! I may only be 52, old by my kids' standards, but young by others, and I can attest to the fact that in my 25 years of being in trucking, never have I seen such industry displacement. Early on, as an industry, we felt fairly solid in our business, freight volumes and market shares.

Consequently, it didn't take many weeks following mid-March to see our industry begin to take a hit. As you know, I work within the chemical, petroleum and bulk lubricants sector of the tank-truck industry. Although we remained strong in the chemical division, our petroleum and lubricants divisions fell gravely short of expectations and well below any margins reflecting profitability. In short, when people stopped driving and traveling, the petroleum industry came to a grinding halt. Chemicals continued to

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remain strong in areas of sulfuric acids, caustic solutions, and other hazardous materials.

The reason, of course, was with more people staying home, the consumption of water increased exponentially. For a chemical tank-truck company, that meant more loads to water treatment plants, etc. What about the rest of the industry? What about those pulling flatbeds, dry-vans, refrigerated units and specialized hauling? Each of those segments experienced more than their fair share of hits economically. Over the past two years, we've watched as trucking company after trucking company closed their doors, citing increased insurance rates, litigious societies and depressed freight rates. Along comes COVID-19 to the front door of struggling motor carriers, and, for some, it was coined the beginning to the end.

However, within Kentucky, we're very fortunate to have some of the nation's strongest motor carriers based in our state. While many of those experienced some tough times recently, all have survived, and all will come back stronger than they were before. As you're aware, the margins within the trucking industry are so small, that often the slightest outlier from month to month in financial reporting can strike fear in those trying to keep things going. If you're an owner, CEO, CFO, president, director, or whatever your title has been in leadership, the past few months have more than tested your ability. Your ability to remain steadfast in keeping your people employed all while trying to balance an entirely new world of trucking handed to you, not on a silver platter, but more like being handed a rattlesnake inside a Cool Whip bowl with someone saying, "Don't worry, it's in the bowl; it can't get out of there."

Moving forward, our association continues to see sharp comebacks within our motor carrier fleets. Some have restructured their businesses to accommodate a more demanding economic model, while others have

cut costs through gained efficiencies in operations. In our organization, what we thought might not have been a good idea before, having so many staff members work from home, turns out to be one of the greater efficiencies we've gained from the pandemic.

Our office landscape certainly looks different now. It's almost like we became a smaller version of what we were. However, that's the exact opposite. We've found our support staff in billing, clerical, HR, and some operational functions are more efficient, productive, and focused than in the weeks leading up to mid-March. Maybe you're one of those companies that also experienced this, and if it's working for you, that's great!

In closing, I extend a personal thank-you to each of my industry colleagues within the KTA and throughout the nation's trucking industry. Thank you for your resilience, your unwavering commitment to see your people, your drivers, and your organizations through something we never thought we'd see in our tenure.

We're often asked by insurance professionals, investors, and customers, "Does your company have a business continuity plan?" For many of us, we would candidly reply with, "Of course, we can keep things going." Consequently, what did our version of continuity look like? In all honesty, a business continuity plan existed only in a "what-if" world that we gave little thought to if I had to speculate. Today, however, I bet if someone asked about your business continuity plan, you'd likely be able to serve as a beacon model for that question.

Thank you for all you've done for our industry, all you're going to do, and for the things you do that many people will never see. That's where we, as the trucking industry, shine — behind the scenes. 🚛

Dr. David Guess
KTA Chairman



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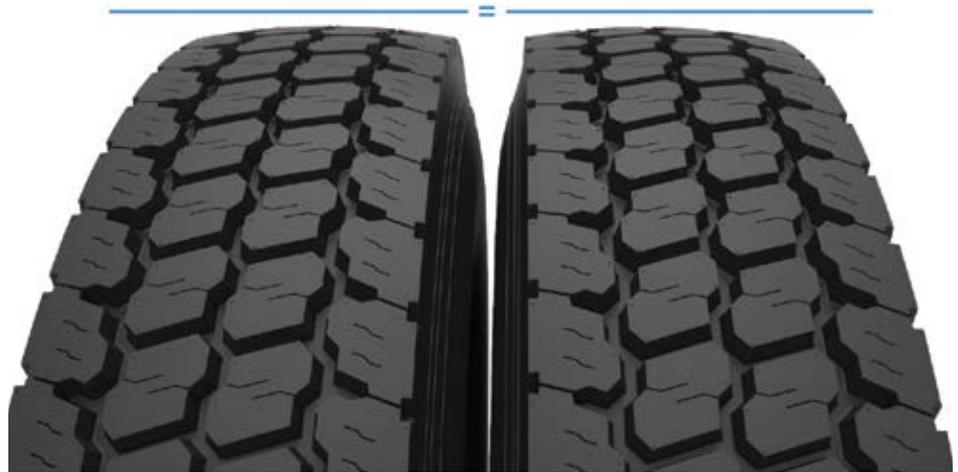


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Message from Rick Taylor



*Rick Taylor, President
Kentucky Trucking Association*

This issue's President's Message is not directly related to the trucking industry, but it is a message that impacts all of us. I could have taken the easy path and written a message about the new hours of service rule (visit www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/hours-of-service for a great summary) or a message thanking all our professional drivers (Thank you!!!). Instead, I decided to address a subject that should be talked about, systemic racism. In the wake of several deaths of black Americans at the hands of the police, protests of police brutality have sparked conversations about systemic racism or white privilege.

What these conversations have revealed, unfortunately, is ignorance around systemic racism and what is meant by white privilege. I took a little time to research this issue because I wanted to educate myself, and I believe others need a better understanding, too. At the same time, I was very uneasy writing this message because I'm afraid I might offend someone, use the wrong language, or accidentally be disrespectful in some way. However, I recognize that if I don't say something, I'm not doing my part to address the issue.

We have to start with definitions. What does it mean to be biased? Or racist? Racial bias is a belief. Racism is what happens when that belief translates into action. For example, a person might unconsciously or consciously believe that people of color are more likely to commit crimes or be dangerous. That's a

bias. An example of racism is when a person crosses the street to avoid walking next to a group of young black men. This is an action based on a belief. What is systemic racism? To understand the meaning, we need to look back in history as it has caused a ripple effect in today's society.

The federal government was not involved in housing until 1934 when the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was created as part of the New Deal. The FHA sought to restore the housing market after the Great Depression by incentivizing homeownership and introducing the mortgage lending system we still use now. The government used residential security maps to decide which neighborhoods would make secure investments and which should be off-limits for issuing mortgages. This process was known as "redlining." Redlined neighborhoods were predominantly black. The result: People of color weren't allowed to raise their children and invest their money in neighborhoods with "high home values." They couldn't buy a home because banks and insurance companies would not do business with them, based purely on race. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibited racial discrimination in lending. However, unfair lending practices continued in the future. In the 1980s, an investigation into the Atlanta real estate market showed that banks were more likely to lend money to lower-income white families than middle-income or higher-income black



We need to acknowledge that systemic racism is real. Don't sweep it under the rug just because it does not affect your life. Listen and learn, but be willing to speak up when someone acts inappropriately.



families. Before the 2008 crash, people of color were disproportionately targeted for subprime mortgages. In 2010, the U.S. Justice Department investigated Wells Fargo and found they used unfair lending policies and used terms like “mud people” and “ghetto loans.” Neighborhood diversity continues to correlate with low property values across the United States.

Historically, school funding is primarily dependent on property taxes. So, schools in lower-valued neighborhoods/black neighborhoods that were redlined would not have funding to properly pay teachers, buy supplies, fund extra-curricular activities, etc. This funding discrepancy resulted in lower student success and a reduced likelihood of students continuing their education. Additionally, legal segregation until 1954 (*Brown v. The Board of Education*) allowed many universities to deny access to education based purely on race. In some states, it took many years to implement this decision.

Owning a home and getting a good education is the easiest way for families to build wealth. Most Black families could not do either because of the real estate market and the lack of educational opportunities. This reality has led to a disproportionate distribution of wealth. The median household income for a Black family was \$41,500 in 2018, 40% less than the \$68,000 for a white family. This gap has remained relatively unchanged since 1967. A two-parent black family's median wealth is \$16,000, while a two-parent white family's median wealth is \$161,300.

Studies have shown that black students who graduate from college are 50% less likely to get a job interview due to their Black-sounding name. The Black unemployment rate is twice that of whites, even among college graduates. Evidence of systemic racism exists in every area of life: family wealth, incarceration rates, political representation, health care and education. The biggest challenge is that no single person or entity is entirely responsible for it.

Going forward, what can be done? We all need to be aware of our implicit biases. What prejudices do you have that you are not aware of? As explained, we need to recognize that slavery and Jim Crow laws still impact equal opportunity now. We need to acknowledge that systemic racism is real. Don't sweep it under the rug just because it does not affect your life. Listen and learn, but be willing to speak up when someone acts inappropriately.

I want to end this message with a quote from John Lewis. “We are one people, one family, the human family, and what affects one of us affects us all.” 🚚

Thank you.

Rick Taylor, President/CEO
Kentucky Trucking Association

GETTING TO KNOW OUTGOING CHAIRMAN, DR. DAVID GUESS



How did you become part of the trucking industry? Was this something that you always aspired to?

I have been around trucking my entire life. My family had a large farm, so large grain and livestock trucks were coming and going. I liked trucks. It wasn't so much of a conscious decision, I think; it was just a natural progression. I got my CDL license and went to work for a commercial carrier driving over the road for a couple of years.

I eventually went to work for Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement, which is really where my career in the industry took off. I hate the word "DOT cop," but that's really what it was. I think once you are in law enforcement, you're in law enforcement; it just doesn't leave, and it's not something you just turn off. Although I did leave

the KVE and went back into the private sector, working for another commercial carrier as a safety inspector. It was strictly a financial decision.

Describe your educational background. What did you study?

I'm way overeducated! As far as my educational background goes, you could say I've made a career out of education, or at least it certainly feels that way sometimes. In short, I've been a life-long fan of higher education and servant leadership.

I have a B.S. in Business, a Masters in Human Resources, an MBA in Finance and two Doctorates, one in Counseling Psychology, and another in Educational Leadership. And if that's not enough, I'm on the backside of finishing yet a third doctoral program in strategic management with a

concentration in transportation logistics.

Education is something that has always been important to me. I think it provides stability in life and, regardless of circumstances, it's something no one can take away.

I am also an adjunct professor in the College of Business at Ivy Tech Community College and Indiana Wesleyan University, where I teach a variety of human resources and strategic management courses.

Are there any specific individuals who had a major impact on your career?

Donnie Carroll. He was the safety director at Landstar Ligon in Madisonville, Kentucky. He recruited me from KVE, and with his guidance and direction, he was responsible for shaping my career. I spent two years working for Donnie as a safety inspector and orientation facilitator. He led by example — he always put people first. Always.

One day he called me into his office, and he told me that I had "more talent than we can use," and that I should consider applying for an assistant safety director job. I asked him if I was being fired, and he said no. He just wanted to see me grow, and I couldn't, so that's where I was. He told me I should apply for the assistant safety director opening at Usher Transport, Inc.



I called Bill Usher, and about a month later, I was working for him.

The next person who had a major impact on my career would be Bill Usher. He's the reason I have seven college degrees. His philosophy has always been, "if you invest in us, we'll invest in you." It's been a great fit. I started at Usher transport as the assistant safety director, and now I'm the CFO. I've had many of my industry colleagues question how one goes from safety to CFO, as it's certainly an odd combination. However, given the years of service, education, and in-house training I've had, it was a natural progression in terms of a new leadership role. The hardest part has been reminding myself that CFO doesn't necessarily mean "super accountant," because an accountant I am not.

Donnie is 80, and he's retired. He served 12 years as a county judge. People liked him; I think they felt that he liked them. Bill Usher, of course, isn't retired, and I still have him as a mentor. Both Donnie and Bill are good folks. They did well in business because they did well with people. That's a lesson worth learning.

What is the most rewarding part of your career?

The educational benefits have been very rewarding, but I would have to say it's getting to serve as an agent of change and actually seeing the change. I think a lot of

companies say they are open to change, and then nothing happens. I am very fortunate that where I work, it's legit. We're open to being better.

What do you think will be some of the dominant trends within the trucking industry in the next 5-10 years?

Well, first, I think the trucking industry overall is doing better weathering the downturn than other segments of the economy. Consumers are still consuming, and trucking is a big part of the delivery system. The number of trucking jobs is expected to grow by 6% by 2026, so that's a good thing.

I think that COVID has caused some major disruption to our industry's infrastructure — which is not necessarily a bad thing across the board. For instance, I think a lot of administrative jobs went home, and I don't believe that they are coming back to the office environment. I think employee production went up, and a lot of people appreciate being able to work from home.

There may be some shifts in van freight. Amazon has been talking drones for years, but the reality of "neat perks" making a big dent in the delivery of consumer goods is not something that I foresee.

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What is the importance of being a KTA member; what makes it beneficial?

We're a voice for the industry — state and national. We're a direct voice, if you will. KTA is the place to find answers and resources. They go to bat for us on regulatory and economic issues — they are our voice at the Capitol.

Here's the thing; over the years, I've heard some say that they don't see a need to join because they can be the bystanding beneficiary — for free — from KTA's efforts. I bite my tongue because there's some truth to that. When KTA goes to bat for the industry, everyone benefits.

However, I think these bystanders are missing the big picture, which is the relationships that are formed and the resources that come with being a member in good standing. I have used the relationships that I have formed over the years through my membership in KTA for advice, as sounding boards and as mentors. We don't know everything about everything.

What inspired you to serve as a leader within the association?

No one else would volunteer! KTA and I go back to 1996. I attended my first meeting as a guest speaker when I was an enforcement officer with Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement.

After I changed careers, Donnie Carroll suggested I become involved. The KTA has a safety council, and

Donnie suggested that I join and become actively involved. His then-encouragement to me speaks to the heart of why membership is so important, quite frankly. People learn from each other. We gain insights, and we form relationships that will impact us personally and professionally throughout our lives.

I found a professional niche. I like to lead. I like to influence, and being a part of and making a difference in my professional industry is important to me.

In looking back at this year, what stands out for you? Are there any accomplishments that you are especially proud of?

I was just joking about this last week. As chairmanships go, I think it was the worst term ever! Over the last couple of years, we transitioned some association staff and just about got us stable and moving forward, when COVID hit. Events were canceled and as an association, we were dealing not just with the fallout of our internal operations, but with our industry as a whole. Our board didn't get golf tournaments and banquets; we got a pandemic and the opportunity to reinvent a lot of what we do and how we do it.

On a positive note, membership grew — that is good. I can't take the credit, but I am pleased that we're growing.

This past October, PHMSA's deputy administrator invited me to participate as an industry panelist in the agency's inaugural executive leadership program. That was a big honor.

The last year has been unprecedented, to say the least. What are two things that you have learned from past experiences that are helping you navigate now, in your own career and this past year in regard to KTA?

I would have to say, first and foremost, adaptability. I don't think anyone started 2020 with the idea of being where we are now. The second would be vigilance with situational awareness and responding appropriately.

What is the takeaway for you as a small business leader from this extraordinary experience that will guide future business decisions?

The takeaway for me is watching the industry benchmarks — know what others are doing — and don't hesitate to reach out to colleagues. I think this is where membership in KTA is so beneficial — you have industry colleagues to reach out to for information and advice.

I would also say that when you are given advice from colleagues, take it. There's a lot of industry knowledge available from colleagues that make general business decisions easier. There's a wealth of knowledge, and people are generally willing to share it.

Are you involved in any civic or charitable organizations?

I am. I have served on numerous industry boards and committees that regulate the trucking industry.

I teach at a couple of local colleges, and I write speeding tickets on the weekends! In both colleges (Ivy Tech Community College and Indiana Wesleyan University), you'll find me teaching various business courses, marketing courses, capstone courses, and I've taught off-site at Heartland Payment Systems. For Indiana Wesleyan, I teach primarily in the graduate and MBA programs for human resource management.

When I said that once you're in law enforcement, it becomes near impossible to walk away — well, I didn't walk away. I am still on the city police force as a part-time officer in Austin, Indiana.

I am also heavily involved with the Jeffersonville High School Marching Band. One of the great things about Usher Transport is that we support our local high school band. I'm the "truck driver" guy who pulls the band trailer.

If you look back at your career and life, what would be three things that you have learned, that you would pass onto a younger member within the auto industry?

First, I would say, learn to listen. When you are transmitting, you are not receiving. That's a lesson I learned from Donnie Carroll. Next, I would say to know when you are wrong. We all hate to be wrong, but when you are, admit it and move on. And finally, include everyone. People need to be noticed, needed and heard. When the people around you take ownership, it is not just your idea anymore, and everyone wins. That's a powerful lesson in leadership.

If you could describe the best day in this business, what would it look like?

The day I retire and move to St. Augustine, Florida! On a serious note, and this is probably my safety director's background speaking, the best day for me is when everyone returns safely home. Luckily, I have many of those!

Operations wise, I would say zero claims, all customers paying on time and no problems. And sadly, I don't have many of those!

Tell us about your family.

I have been married since 1992, that's 28 years. My wife, Sheila, is a doctor of physical therapy. We have two children: Kaitlyn, who is a freshman at Indiana University, and Christian, who is a sophomore in high school.

Do you have any unusual hobbies?

I have very little free time, and when I do, I spend it with my family. I will say this, however; I do enjoy the occasional weekend getaway, and I am known for allocating some time to find a great sushi bar. 🍣



GETTING TO KNOW INCOMING CHAIRMAN, DEWELL GOSSETT



How did you become part of the trucking industry? Was this something that you always aspired to?

I was raised in the trucking industry, since I was three years old. My dad was in the trucking business his whole career. He worked for a ready-mix company, and then before he retired, he owned a couple of trucks.

In 2003, the company I was working for established Bulk First in Louisville. I was chosen to oversee the operation, which at the time had eight trucks and 12 pneumatic trailers. Shortly after, one of the partners passed way, and I was able to buy into the company, and in 2008, I bought the other two owners out. Today, we have 81 trucks, in five different states and we drive 5 million miles per year.

Describe your education background. What did you study?

I graduated high school, then I went to work for my dad. I worked my way up from maintenance through dispatch and logistics. I guess you can say that I went through the school of hard knocks.

Are there any specific individuals that had a major impact on your career?

Well, Lowell Gossett, my dad, first and foremost. He was a farm pick-up milk hauler. He often worked seven days a week. He was up early, worked hard and cared about keeping his customers happy. I learned the importance of hard work from him. He's retired now, but he still checks on me and asks how business is.



Another person who had a big impact on me was Joe Newell and his family. I learned the management side of business while working for them from dispatch, logistics, and all other parts of managing a business over the 25 years that I worked there.

What is the most rewarding part of your career?

Taking care of my people. By the end of the week, we've fed 75-80 families by providing jobs. I think anytime you can impact the lives of people by helping them provide for their families, it's a good thing.

What do you think will be some of the dominant trends within the trucking industry in the next 5-10 years?

As an industry, we're going to have to recruit and train younger people into the industry. Our workforce is

getting older. Our industry competes — as do many of the trades — with college-required careers. I think we need to get the word out that our industry has good paying jobs that young people can train for and start early in life.

There's a lot of different job opportunities in our industry.

Do you have family working in your company?

I do. We're definitely a family business. I have my son, my brother and his son — my nephew — all working here. I enjoy working with family, and we're lucky in that we're all pretty level-headed and we think alike. We all get along, and our main focus is having the company succeed.

What advice would you give to family businesses?

Well first, make sure that there is a real place for family; don't hire just because of the family relationship. I think that's the key, plus I think the family that works for the company knows that they are there because of their skills and contributions; that makes a difference.

What is the biggest importance of being a KTA member; what makes it beneficial?

First, one person can't do much, but together, members within an industry, all speaking with one voice, can accomplish a lot. KTA goes to bat for us all on legislative issues that can shape our industry for years to come.

Next, we're all still learning, and I think we can learn a lot from bumping ideas off each other.

What inspired you to serve as a leader within the association?

No real inspiration — we all need to take a turn and step up. By serving as board members and directors of KTA, we all look out for the greater good of the trucking industry.

At the end of this year, what stands out for you? Are there any accomplishments that you would like to focus on? Any particular plans?

Our focus, like the focus of all businesses and pretty much everyone at this point, is just get this virus behind us. COVID-19 is front and center right now; we're all working around it, keeping our businesses

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open, our people safe and our customers satisfied. It's a tricky thing. It's certainly a challenge.

As for KTA, we're running the best we can, without meetings and events. I do think that we will come out the other end of this stronger and smarter.

Speaking of this year, it's been unprecedented to say the least. What are two things that you have learned from past experiences that are helping you navigate now, in your own career and this past year in regard to KTA?

For many of us, this isn't our first rodeo. Back in 2008-2009 things were tough as well. I learned then that finding a large project to generate cash flow is really helpful. It may not be your first choice, but it keeps employees in jobs.

I think we all have to think outside of the box, and we need to be aggressive in taking jobs to supplement the bills.

As a small business leader, what is your takeaway from this extraordinary experience that will guide future business decisions?

Control expenses — don't let things get out of hand; don't get too arrogant, and make smart choices.

If you look back at your career and life, what would be three things that you have learned, that you would pass onto a younger member within the trucking industry?

Be fair and be honest. Always strive to take care of employees and customers. And have attainable goals, so you have something to measure against.

If you could describe the best day in this business, what would it look like?

The best day is always the one that starts and ends with safety. It rolls along just like it's supposed to. No incidents, no accidents and everyone goes home.

Tell us about your family.

My wife, Melissa, and I have been married for 19 years. We have a blended family. Jordan, the oldest, works for me. Payton is a junior at the University of Kentucky and our daughter, Abby is a senior in high school. They keep us busy.

Any unusual hobbies?

We have a vacation home on beautiful Lake Cumberland in Southern Kentucky. I love it there. We boat and golf. Nothing unusual. 🏠

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5 Deadly Sins of Business

By Dr. David Guess, Chairman of the Board, Kentucky Trucking Association



Throughout my academic and business career, there has always been one icon referenced to which so many business management practices point — Peter Drucker. We lost Peter Drucker in November of 2005, but the legacy and managing principles he leaves behind forever fashioned the way many of us developed our leadership style over the years. He was revered as the father of modern corporate management.

With that in mind, I thought we'd take just a few minutes and see where some of Drucker's business applications align with our management styles in the trucking business. Drucker had copious step-by-step processes, programs, and methods all designed to aid in our daily management walk. The key, however, wasn't so much that if you follow 1, 2 and 3, you'll be guaranteed 4, 5 and 6 will work out perfectly. Rather, so much of his

teachings were merely suggestions. Admittedly, Drucker's "suggestions" were really basic rules of engagement for business strategists.

Through all my research, there were always five principles that seemed to stick with me more than any of the others. This was Drucker's "5 Deadly Business Sins" published in a 1993 Wall Street Journal Article. Twenty-seven years later, in 2020, those same business sins continue to flourish in many companies. We only need to look back to the last 18 months, with more than 980 trucking companies closing their doors since January of 2019. Glance at each one of the five listed; I bet you can identify with at least two you've seen in action at your organization. Would I be correct in assuming your two are the same two I've witnessed — #4 and #5?

So, what value does each of these hold in the realm of running a trucking company, particularly the managing of your day-to-day operations?

1. **Worshipping high-profit margins and “premium pricing.”**

How far in your organization would you have to look to unearth evidence that profit margins supersede the real value of your organizational strategy, safety culture and business plan? Often, premium pricing in the form of cheaper rates equates to increased production demands on the workforce. In other words, do more with less. Or, as some [unsuccessful] leaders might say, “Once we reach economies of scale, we can only be profitable from that point forward.” I vehemently disagree, of course. When owners, CEOs, and presidents tell me they’re now doing more with fewer resources, the first thought that comes to mind is to ask for the year’s financials showing me what that looks like. More often than not, doing more with less simply means an organization practiced “job enlargement” on their staff without any thought to “job enrichment” to accompany the theory. Time and time again, I’ve seen in companies where economies of scale were reached by merely exhausting the existing staff to the point of burnout.

2. **Mispricing a new product by charging “what the market will bear.”**

Now, think with me for just a minute here. In recent months, what new initiatives have we seen take place in our industry that pushes the limits of what our “market” will bear? Moreover, how have these initiatives impacted the bottom line in your organization? Think in terms of insurance rates, litigious and unfavorable trucking environments, and other factors that diminish our ability to operate efficiently and profitably.

Considering our market may not bear the brunt of such inflated cost-sharing, the compromise ends up being not moving forward or being able to execute on plans for sustainable growth. I know, that was about as clear as mud, but managing your business on the heels of what the market will bear is almost paramount to what we do daily. To borrow a phrase from a family patriarch in our company, “The sweet taste of a cheap rate pales in comparison to the bitter taste of poor service.” (Bill Usher, Sr.) You see, in our business, poor service isn’t about what the market will bear.

3. **Cost-Driven pricing.**

This is an easy one to answer because this is one we drive home in our management meetings, talk about at



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conventions, and seem to share a common bond over. You’ve heard the tagline: “Well, it may cost X amount of dollars now, but do you know how much it could cost if we don’t do this?” That’s our life, though, always justifying expenses with the possibility that what we do saves thousands, even millions of dollars. Cost-driven pricing in the trucking industry is one of two things. First, it’s overly complicated by convoluted accounting practices, or second, it can be easy, based on a firm understanding of your cost of goods sold as applicable to the trucking industry. In the case of our company, COGS is nothing more than a service. Service is the only measurable “goods sold” that we build upon.

4. **Slaughtering tomorrow’s opportunity on the altar of yesterday.**

Here we go; probably everyone is smirking on this one. How many times have you personally witnessed a great opportunity being slaughtered on the altar of yesterday? In the business of safety management, we sometimes pivot our decisions or reactivity based on the good ole “loss run.” I recently watched a LinkedIn podcast where an industry-respected Safety Director

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advised his colleagues on producing great results. It went somewhat like this: “First, get your loss runs, that’ll tell you where your problems are and from there develop a program, and you’ll end up with great numbers next year.” Now, there is a tiny bit of faith to that statement, I suppose. I couldn’t help to wonder, “Wow, that advice is going to give you a bad outcome in the grand scheme of things.” It’s established that those losses are future predictors of behavior among some drivers. The key, though, is to derail the behavior before it becomes quantifiable in a loss-run.

5. Feeding problems and starving opportunities.

And finally, one last business sin we’re all guilty of. That is, not really knowing when to just wash our hands of an issue and move on.

We’re often faced with trying to bring 20% of bad players in compliance while the remaining 80% keep us in business. When, in reality, it’s the 80% we should focus our attention to and thus weeding out the less desirable

20%. Many of the situations we face and the decisions we make are more complicated than need be.

At least in my experience, the older I get and the more I observe, listen and watch, the more likely I am to make a better decision based on the fact that a new opportunity arises from it. Attacking the current problem head-on, forming an opinion, and making a ruling is what new managers do. Listening to the issues, looking again, and then lastly, listening to facts is what trucking industry professionals do.

I hope this quarter’s column has been of some value to each of you, and your feedback is greatly appreciated each quarter. These 5 Deadly Business Sins are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of things we “shouldn’t do.”

There’s certainly no shortage of those that are quick to tell us the error of our ways or point out our managerial faults. However, I believe a tipping point in our leadership and management isn’t so much in recognizing mistakes; instead, it’s within our ability to understand how those mistakes were made. 🚛



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USHER TRANSPORT PROMOTIONAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Succession Planning



JESS STAGGS
DIRECTOR OF SAFETY
USHER TRANSPORT'S

Usher Transport is pleased to announce the promotion of Jess Staggs to the position of director of safety. This promotion is a testament to proper succession planning and illustrates the value of hiring top-tier individuals for critical positions within a company.

In early 2017, Usher Transport recognized the need for a safety manager in its southern region. This position was created specifically to provide legal oversight and to instill a culture of safety. The new position would require a candidate with an extensive background in state and federal law enforcement, leadership and interpersonal communication. Usher Transport found these qualities and many others in Mr. Jess Staggs.

Following his graduation with distinction from Morehead State University, Jess served with the Kentucky State Police for eight years. In 2017, Usher Transport asked Jess to join their team of professionals and manage safety efforts in the southern U.S.

Jess was promoted in mid-2019 and became the assistant director of safety at Usher Transport. His influence now reaches all of our employees and contractors. Since this time, CSA scores and safety-related claims have

reached historic lows. Jess' attention to detail and proactive approach continually helps Usher Transport reach new milestones in safety.

In addition to his current role at Usher Transport, Jess serves the tank-trucking industry as a voting member of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) and the Cooperative Hazardous Materials Enforcement Development (COHMED). His contributions have resulted in favorable changes to the Out-of-Service manual and operational policies that govern all commercial vehicles nationwide.

The education, experience and leadership that Jess brings to his new role perfectly align with Usher Transport's emphasis on safety, and we are excited for what we will be able to accomplish with Mr. Staggs at the forefront. 🚛

Sincerely,

Ryan Usher



NATIONAL TRUCK DRIVER APPRECIATION WEEK

Nearly every aspect of daily life is made possible because a truck driver delivered the goods and resources needed for our daily lives. During the past few months, as COVID-19 ravaged the U.S., truck drivers took on an even more important role.

America recognizes National Truck Driver Appreciation Week during the second week in September, and it's an opportunity to honor all professional truck drivers for their hard work in one of the nation's most demanding and vital jobs. The American Trucking Associations estimates that there are 3.5 million truck drivers in the USA.

They not only deliver our goods safely, securely, and on time, they also keep our highways safe.

Truck drivers have been around since the end of the 19th Century. Alexander Winton invented the semi-trailer in Cleveland in 1898. He was an automobile manufacturer who developed the trailer truck as a way to deliver his cars.

Did You Know?

- Truckers deliver about 10 billion tons of freight, or about 70% of all the freight moved in the U.S.
- The average trucker will drive over 100,000 road miles per year. That works out to nearly 40 trips across the United States.
- The average age of a truck driver is 49.

- About 6% of the nation's truck drivers are women. The number is trending upward, about 10% a year.
- 41% of the nation's truck drivers are minorities — compared to 22% in all other jobs.
- Walmart runs one of the largest staff of truckers. The company maintains one of the largest fleets of trucks in the nation and employs 8,600 drivers who earn \$88,000/year, according to a CBS News story.
- Truck drivers can have many talents. These truckers went on to be actors: Sean Connery, Elvis Presley, Charles Bronson, Viggo Mortensen, Liam Neeson, James Cameron, Chevy Chase and Rock Hudson.
- A survey by Atlas Van Lines found truck drivers are big country western music fans. Nearly half of the truckers on the road are listening to country-western music. One third listen to classic rock, and the rest listen to sports or talk radio.
- The career field remains open for heavy truck drivers and tractor-trailer drivers. The BLS estimates 108,400 more will be needed by 2026.
- The career field for light truck and delivery truck drivers is expected to grow more slowly. The BLS predicts about 55,000 light truck and delivery drivers will be needed by 2026. 🚛



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NEW KYTC REGIONAL OFFICE IN LEXINGTON SHOWS THE FUTURE OF DRIVER LICENSING IN KENTUCKY

FAYETTE COUNTY FIRST TO TRANSITION CDLS, OTHER DRIVER LICENSING TO KYTC

The recently opened Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Regional Driver Licensing Office in Lexington is ushering in a new way by which Kentuckians will obtain commercial driver's licenses, other operator licenses, learner permits and state identification cards.

Over the next two years, starting in Fayette County, all operator licensing and official ID functions will transition from the circuit court clerk in each county to a network of KYTC regional offices across the Commonwealth.

"This transition allows us to offer top-notch customer service and assistance in every region of the Commonwealth, building on the great work our circuit clerks have done over the years to get Kentuckians on the road safely," said Gov. Beshear. "I'm grateful to all state and local staff members who have helped us get these services ready and all offices in compliance with Healthy at Work guidelines."

The transition, which has been planned for years, officially launched with the passage of House Bill 453 during the 2020 Kentucky General Assembly and will be completed by June 30, 2022. The KYTC regional offices, already the exclusive issuers of REAL ID-compliant licenses and IDs, will also be the place to get CDLS, standard driver's licenses and ID cards.

In July, the Office of the Fayette Circuit Court Clerk became the first



to hand off in-person and mail-in driver's license issuance, renewal and replacement to a new KYTC regional office at 141 Leestown Center Way in Lexington.

"In the months ahead, the circuit clerks in more and more counties will be making the same transition," KYTC secretary Jim Gray said. "When the transition is completed, license issuance will be entirely within the Transportation Cabinet. And the new regional offices, once fully staffed, will offer state-of-the-art customer service, including online appointment scheduling as well as walk-in service. I want to thank Fayette Circuit Court Clerk Vince Riggs for the excellent driver licensing services he and his team provided Lexington residents over the years."

Doug Hall, circuit court clerk in Floyd County and president of the Kentucky Association of Circuit Court Clerks, said the association was pleased to see the transition in Fayette County going smoothly

despite the "inevitable hurdles brought on by COVID."

"The regional issuance model originated under the previous administration, but Secretary Gray has done a yeoman's job in navigating the final stages of its implementation. Circuit court clerks will continue to assist KYTC during the transition of credential issuance back to the executive branch, as we have always supported whatever is best for the citizens of the Commonwealth. Customer service is our highest priority," Mr. Hall said.

To date, in addition to the new office in Lexington, the cabinet has regional offices operating in Paducah, Madisonville, Elizabethtown, Frankfort, Somerset, Morehead and Prestonsburg. More offices are being opened — or reopened after a closure caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic — as conditions permit. The network eventually will comprise about two dozen offices, covering all sections of the Commonwealth. Despite



Despite their regional character, there is no restriction on which office a Kentucky resident can use; each office can serve customers from anywhere in the Commonwealth.



their regional character, there is no restriction on which office a Kentucky resident can use; each office can serve customers from anywhere in the Commonwealth.

Because of the pandemic, and restrictions in keeping with Gov. Beshear's Healthy at Work guidelines for protecting employees and customers, the other regional driver licensing offices open to this point offer only a limited menu of services besides issuing REAL ID-compliant licenses and IDs.

But the Lexington Regional Driver Licensing Office, even at less than full capacity, will issue all credentials previously issued by the Fayette Circuit court clerk, including — but not limited to — standard operator's licenses and IDs, CDLs and permits.

When fully deployed, the Lexington office will offer 21 camera stations, more than doubling the number of customers who previously could be served at one time in Fayette County. Also, customers will have a 4-year or 8-year renewal option for most credentials.

Kentucky State Police officers will be on-site to administer driver testing, with kiosks for the written tests for a license or learner permit. Questions about testing, including scheduling and current operational status under COVID-19 guidelines, can be found at <https://kentuckystatepolice.org/drivers-testing/>

At this time, however, space inside the new office is not fully occupied to help protect employees and customers in keeping with Gov. Beshear's Healthy at Work guidelines for coping with COVID-19.

There is easy access to the office on and off New Circle Road and ample free parking. The office is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET. Customers are encouraged to make an appointment, which can be done online at <https://kentuckystatepolice.org/drivers-testing/>.

Walk-in customers also will be served but are encouraged to arrive early and be prepared to wait, as walk-in spaces tend to fill up quickly.

However, KYTC strongly recommends the use of a temporary mail-in option for those who need to renew or replace a standard Kentucky license or ID and who do not need State Police driver testing or retesting. The mail-in option is good for holders of licenses that have expired — or will expire — from March 1 to Sept. 30, 2020.

REAL ID

While Kentucky will continue offering the option of a standard driver's license, a REAL ID or another form of verified identification, such as a passport or military ID, will be needed as of Oct. 1, 2021, for passing through airport security and boarding a U.S. commercial flight, visiting a military base or accessing a federal building or facility that requires verified identification. More information is available at realidky.com. Obtaining a REAL ID requires extra documentation, so be sure you have the proper documents by checking <https://drive.ky.gov/RealID/Pages/default.aspx>

To maintain the safest possible environment, employees and customers of the KYTC regional driver licensing office are required to adhere to Gov. Beshear's Healthy at Work standards, which include wearing a mask and observing social distancing. Surfaces are cleaned and touchpad equipment sanitized after each use. A video explaining the new Healthy at Work procedures is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBL2j9n1fAY&feature=youtu.be>

Keep up with information from Gov. Andy Beshear and his administration about the COVID-19 pandemic at governor.ky.gov, kycovid19.ky.gov, and on the Governor's official social media accounts Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. 📺

SHERMAN MINTON RENEWAL ANNOUNCES PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR CONSTRUCTION

FULL CLOSURE OF THE BRIDGE WILL BE VERY LIMITED



Launched in 2018, the Sherman Minton Renewal is a \$90+ million bridge rehabilitation and painting project that will significantly extend the service life of the 57-year-old bridge. The project team has spent nearly two years coordinating with public officials, community leaders, business owners and the general public to determine a plan that allows for maximum access to the bridge while providing a safe environment for drivers and contractors working on repairs.

The Sherman Minton Renewal Project Team's focus on public involvement included feedback from multiple open houses and input from its Community Advisory Committee and Environmental Justice Committee members to create the Preferred Alternative.

This is a design-build best value project, which means the price is not the only criteria that will determine which contractor is selected. The project delivery method invites innovative solutions that will potentially further reduce construction time and impact on the public.

Work Ahead

The project includes replacement or refurbishment of all bridge decks, rehabilitation or replacement of structural steel elements and hangar cables, new lighting, drainage repairs and painting of the steel components.

Many remember the full emergency closure of the bridge in 2011. A crack was discovered during a routine inspection, and the bridge was closed for nearly six months. During

that time, significant repairs were made, and the structure was able to reopen.

This rehabilitation and repair work has undergone significant coordination with the Project Team, including INDOT, KYTC and other officials. Unlike the 2011 emergency closure, the Sherman Minton Renewal team has time to plan for repairs and prepare the public accordingly. Construction is expected to begin in 2021 and take approximately three years to complete.

Preferred Alternative

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federally-funded projects like the Sherman Minton Renewal to draft an Environmental Document and conduct an analysis of temporary social, economic and environmental impacts.

The Environmental Document was available for public review and comment at several locations around the project area and remains available online for review. To learn more about the Environmental Document, see <http://shermanmintonrenewal.com/environmental-docs/>

The Preferred Alternative will ensure at least one lane of traffic in each direction will remain open for nearly 95% of the estimated three-year construction process. Closures will not be in one consecutive period but will be limited to nine consecutive days per direction in a calendar year and up to three 3-day weekends per direction per calendar year.

Traffic Patterns and Planning

To minimize impacts on cross-river commuters and freight companies in the area, the project team has recommended a plan that will limit full closure of the bridge to only 54 total days of the estimated 843 total days of work.

The recommended approach reflects the public's preference for maintaining access across the bridge to the fullest extent possible during construction while providing a safe environment for the driving public and the design-build contractor's team.

- Cross-river traffic will be maintained with two eastbound and two westbound travel lanes open during the majority of construction.
- Temporary crossovers and additional temporary widening to ramp lanes will be implemented to facilitate the movement of traffic during construction.
- One eastbound and one westbound lane will be closed throughout construction.
- Existing access ramps will remain open during the majority of construction.

- Two eastbound and/or two westbound lanes and associated access ramps may be closed nightly during construction for up to 180 nights per calendar year.

What's Next

A design-build contractor will be selected later this year, and construction is expected to begin in 2021. The contractor will be permitted to work 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Changes in traffic patterns and full closures will not be allowed during certain holidays and other approved exceptions. The project website and social media channels will be updated regularly with construction and traffic information for the duration of the project.

After considering all comments, the states will confirm the Preferred Alternative later this year. Final approval of the Preferred Alternative will come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in winter 2020.

To learn more about the Sherman Minton Renewal, visit www.ShermanMintonRenewal.com and follow the project on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. 🚛



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Pat Mattingly, Inc.

time to drive, farm and do the things he enjoys without dealing with the excess pressure of day-to-day operations.

- Mary Anne began working in the company when it was still in the growing stages. She is currently in charge of billing and payroll; she is strongest when handling the business's clerical side.
- Jason returned to join the family business after completing his degree at the University of Kentucky. He is in charge of dispatch and everyday operations. He spends his days communicating with drivers or customers and bidding on new business.

Getting Started

Trucking was not Pat Mattingly's first career. He spent time in many different jobs during his life. However, it wasn't a complete surprise that he ended up starting a trucking company, either. Pat's dad drove a gas truck, and Pat always liked being around equipment and trucks.

Pat's first career started when he joined the military and served in the army. He was stationed in Colorado, where Pat met his first wife, Judy. After he got out of the service, Pat worked as a lineman. But when his first wife died of cancer, Pat moved back to his hometown, Springfield, Kentucky, with his two children,

Jim and Mary Anne. Later, he met and married his second wife, Elaine, a widow whose husband died in Vietnam. She was an elementary school teacher. They had two more children, Eric and Jason.

In Springfield, Pat had different jobs, including one as a DOT officer in the 1960s. That was a stable job with benefits, but Pat was a bit of a gambler. He wanted to try something else. The "something else," at first, was a lumberyard business Pat ran with his sister and a cousin. It turned out to be less profitable than he had hoped. The lumberyard business had a couple of trucks that were used to haul lumber to and from the mill to the yard that Pat used. When the lumberyard business dissolved, Pat used one of these trucks to go out on his next journey.

That was in 1972. Pat hauled miscellaneous goods and eventually leased to Ligon; he later went out on his own and hauled livestock for various cattle companies. Pat incorporated his trucking business two years later, in 1974. He had 2-4 trucks at the time. When Jason was in high school and college, Pat went to the bank and borrowed money to buy 10 cattle trailers to haul for a cattle company out of Lexington. He used leased trucks and his trucks to haul as many loads of cattle as he could. Jason remembers his dad paying off those trailers. "From

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At its core, Pat Mattingly, Inc. is a family business that is currently being run by Pat, who turned 79 in September 2020; his daughter Mary Anne Fallis; and his youngest son Jason. Pat's older sons, Jim and Eric, are retired military and have continued with other careers. Jim is a computer systems contractor, and Eric is a pilot for UPS.

According to Jason, the company has survived as a family business because all three have distinct strengths and responsibilities:

- Pat still works every day, including driving. He is the overseer and takes

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a business standpoint, Dad always paid his debts. As a young kid, that stuck with me,” Jason said.

Those were difficult years financially. Pat relied on Elaine’s income to stay afloat and keep food on the table, but he hasn’t borrowed to buy equipment since then.

How Jason Got Involved

Jason did not initially plan to join the family business. When he graduated from high school in 2000, he thought it was a good idea to get a degree and then decide what to do next. Jason had aspirations of being a lawyer. What he didn’t like was the thought of additional years of school. Shortly before Jason finished school, Pat began to have heart trouble. Jason offered to leave school immediately to help, but his dad insisted that he finish his university education.

Jason also began to realize that the family business made sense for him. At the time, he was dating his high school sweetheart, Amanda, who he later married. Joining the family business was a logical step. “Home means something to me. Being able to work where I grew up means something to me. I grew up watching Dad work hard. He would never tell a customer, “No.” I was

changing tires and oil in trucks at 12.” He committed to being part of the family business on a long-term basis.

When Jason joined the business, Pat insisted that Jason start by driving because he wanted Jason to understand the company better. Jason learned that trucking involves working with many different personalities, including customers who expect the world and drivers who need to be kept happy. After gaining the initial experience he needed, Jason moved to the office and gradually took on more business responsibilities.

Working with his dad and his sister made the transition easier for Jason. He said, “When I first came back, working next to Mary Anne, I learned that the amount of paperwork, even for a small business, is astronomical. Being able to learn from her and dad softened the process.”

It hasn’t always been easy. Even though Jason was Pat’s son, he was still coming in as the new guy. There was definitely a transition period. Sometimes they still have difficult conversations, disagreements and arguments as they try to make the business better. But despite disagreements, all three have a good family relationship. “Above everything else, we are family,” Jason said. Part

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of the secret behind that is having different responsibilities and giving each other space to work. They have the same goal but focus on their strengths as individuals.

The Benefit of Being a Small, Debt-Free Business

The company is a hands-on business that has grown from 2-4 trucks to 30 trucks. They have hauled for large and small companies, moving everything from auto parts and grain to race cars. Being diverse with their customer base has helped to grow the business.

The strength of a family business is the fact that it is small. There is a personal touch. When a customer calls, they will talk to one of three people who have extensive knowledge of the operation. Most of the drivers live within 20 miles of their central location in Springfield. That is something larger companies sometimes can't offer.

Being financially stable has made the company very flexible. Having no debt was a blessing when COVID-19 shut everything down. Jason says, "Our costs are strictly operational. If I had had truck payments or trailer payments, I can't imagine having that hanging over our head." After COVID-19 hit, manufacturing plants went into shutdown mode, and Pat Mattingly, Inc. almost came to a standstill. Jason said, "We had 25 trucks at the time and dropped down to 12. I had to lay a bunch of people off. We were fortunate, though. We still had some trickle-in business. We were diverse, and our eggs weren't all in one basket. Livestock and fertilizer still needed hauling, so we weren't totally shut down".

Pat had many opportunities with the business that would've caused him to gamble while going into debt. The problem was, taking on more debt could have gotten the company in trouble. "One thing I've learned about the trucking business," said Jason. "Yes, you have contracts, but when it gets right down to it, if a customer discontinues something, or if anything changes, you have to be ready for the unknown. Business is ever-changing. You think you've got everything figured out, but the next day, it's a roller coaster."

Jason continued, "You try to do your job to the best of your ability, but in business, you are only as good as your weakest link. From a business standpoint, we try to treat everybody well. Making everyone happy is a very difficult thing, but we do our best. I've realized it is different when your family name is on the truck.

You have more pride in what you are doing because "Mattingly" is across the door.

Looking to the Future

Jason thinks automated trucking will probably arrive at some point. He said, "In business, you are always trying to make something better and more efficient. When elogs were first mandated, they were a hindrance from a small-business standpoint because we didn't have the resources that larger companies have. They made our job harder on the support side. Things have changed over the years. For years the only way to communicate was with cell phones, text messaging wasn't huge, and it took a phone call to find out where a driver was. Now we can look at our computer, see our elog system, and see our drivers' exact location. It shows us everything except the color of their shirt." He added, "You ride the wave of the economy and technology. The military flies drones now. Who is to say we won't have automated trucks operated from a desk? Never say never. Large companies shape the way small companies have to compete. If a large company finds a way to do something cheaper, the new approach dictates the freight market for all of us."

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Pat Mattingly, Inc. is a trucking company with a good central location. Jason feels fortunate to live in an area with so much industry. On a regional level, it hauls in a Midwest corridor bounded by Virginia, Michigan, Mississippi, the Dakotas and Colorado.

Appreciating the Present

Another family member working in the business is Pat's nephew, Glenn Harmon, who works in the shop. Trusting their employees to get things done is a huge asset to Pat Mattingly, Inc. "I can't say enough about our team members, from top to bottom. From drivers, to support people, it takes all those men and women who sacrifice time away from their family to make our business successful," Jason said.

Pat Mattingly, Inc. is a trucking company with a good central location. Jason feels fortunate to live in an area with so much industry. On a regional level, it hauls in

a Midwest corridor bounded by Virginia, Michigan, Mississippi, the Dakotas and Colorado. Most hauling is within a 500-mile radius, especially with the van and flatbed freight.

Jason is especially glad that Pat is still able to work. "I'm very thankful that his health still allows him to work every day," said Jason. "He doesn't sit well. He doesn't have to work, but he is doing exactly what he wants to do. Maybe he works harder than his children think he should, but he wouldn't have it any other way, and we wouldn't either." 🚛



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