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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

CVSA Releases 2025 Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative Results

Law enforcement personnel in 50 states, five Canadian provinces and Mexico participated in this year's Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative (HTAI), an annual five-day human trafficking awareness and outreach campaign. During the campaign, participating enforcement and industry members educated individuals about the crime of human trafficking, indicators to look for and what to do when a victim of human trafficking has been identified. [Click here](#) to read more.

Woman sentenced for trafficking 14-year-old girl

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Marilyn Roque was sentenced today to 7 ½ years in prison for the sex trafficking of a child, sex trafficking by force, labor trafficking and endangering the welfare of a child. Roque forced a 14-year-old girl to have sex for money with a 49-year-old man. The defendant also forced the victim to work shifts at a restaurant – turning over the pay to her – and to provide childcare for the defendant's children without pay. [Click here](#) to read more.

Two men arrested for human trafficking of minors

ROSEVILLE, CA — After a months-long investigation, 24-year-old Jonathan Green and 25-year-old Renardo Williams were arrested and booked into jail in Placer County on felony charges for Human Trafficking of Minors (CA PC 236.1(c)). The investigation began the evening of September 30, 2024, when deputies conducted a traffic stop on a Honda Accord traveling westbound on Interstate 80 near Douglas Blvd at approximately 90 mph. [Click here](#) to read more.

TAT Board of Directors elects new member

Jeannie Starr, vice president of Commercial Operations at Volvo Trucks North America, has been elected to the TAT Board of Directors. Volvo, a TAT Platinum-level sponsor, has been a TAT partner since 2014.



Starr has been with Volvo Trucks for more than three decades, with her career progressing through various pivotal positions in Parts, Marketing, Customer Service and National Accounts. She assumed her current role in 2019 and plays a crucial role in steering the strategic initiatives of Volvo Trucks North America. Her depth of experience and understanding of the commercial trucking industry enable her to drive impactful changes, ensuring that Volvo Trucks remains at the forefront of innovation and customer satisfaction. Her tenure at the company has been marked by a series of successful projects, mentoring and initiatives that have significantly contributed to the company's growth and market presence.

Following her election, Starr stated, "Thank you for selecting me to join the TAT Board of Directors. I am excited about this opportunity, committed to fulfilling my responsibilities and look forward to working with the Board to achieve our shared goals."

TAT receives award and participates in keynote panel at National Safe Place Network Focus 2025 Conference

Lexi Higgins, TAT director of Industry Engagement for transit, motorcoach and school transportation, facilitated a keynote panel discussion at the National Safe Place Network (NSPN) Focus 2025 Conference July 22 in Orlando.

Panel members included Barry Michael, training specialist, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART); Lauren Sherry, Community Relations manager, QuikTrip; and Mark Sorine, vice president Safety and Security, Pilot Company. Each have leveraged their roles to protect vulnerable youth and strengthen community-wide responses to trafficking. Their discussion highlighted transportation as a key partner in protecting youth from trafficking and exploitation.



Lexi Higgins, far left, moderated the panel discussion at the Safe Place Network conference.

The following day, Higgins received the NSPN's Essential Voice Award on TAT's behalf for the Youth on Transportation (YOT) Initiative, which Higgins oversees and is designed to prevent and interrupt youth exploitation at the intersection of public transit and school transportation.

The Essential Voice Award "recognizes an individual, spokesperson, organization or media production for contributions to increasing awareness of the needs of youth and those who serve them. The award winner has presented fair and accurate descriptions of youth and/or the youth services field and uses messaging and public communications to create meaningful and lasting change."

"When TAT launched our Youth on Transportation Initiative, we recognized right off the bat that it would be important to



include youth voices in the creation of these campaign components," Higgins said when receiving the award. "We spent over a year engaging directly with youth to learn more from them about what a campaign like this should look like in order to be effective. What I heard from them overwhelmingly during that process was that they were hungry for information about issues like this, and that they had a desire to play a role in the solution. It has been the joy of my career to launch the Youth on Transportation Initiative in an effort to facilitate some of that, and we wouldn't be able to do any of it without partnerships with organizations like NSPN and you all in the audience today. Thank you for honoring TAT with this award, and thanks for everything you do."

Lexi Higgins received the Essential Voice Award on behalf of TAT for the YOT program, which she oversees.

Participation in the Walcott Truckers Jamboree successful despite bad weather



Iowa State Patrol (ISP) Trooper Aaron McMurrin (left in uniform) was one of several ISP volunteers who handed out TAT materials and talked to Jamboree attendees about touring TAT's mobile exhibit.

In spite of weather challenges, including heavy storms, flooding and a tornado, 346 people toured the Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) during the 47th Walcott Truckers Jamboree held at the Iowa 80 Truck Stop, July 10-12 in Walcott, Iowa. This is TAT's seventh year attending the event that Iowa 80 hosts to thank and celebrate the men and women "who work hard day in and day out to deliver the goods we use every day and the food we put on our tables."

Both Walmart and the Iowa State Patrol (ISP) provided volunteers for the event, giving TAT 104 volunteer hours. ISP walked the grounds with wallet cards, handing them out and telling people to tour the FDP.

"We had great help from Dan Hansenmiller of Iowa 80 getting the FDP moved in," TAT Director of Mobile Exhibits Brandy Belton said, "and the volunteers from both Walmart and ISP were invaluable and provided me time to speak with a number of organizations about TAT training."

"The Freedom Drivers Project is a great educational tool," contributed Heather DeBaillie, Iowa 80 vice president of Marketing. "We're happy to support TAT's mission and training efforts targeted to drivers and the local community."

Walmart volunteers included Antoine Sadler, Jerry Beckmen, Randall James, Chad Turner, David

Burch and Brad McDonald, while the ISP volunteers were Lt. Neil Suckow and Troopers TJ (Thomas) Allen, Aaron McMurrin, Russ Engstler, Zach Tharp, Tom Runge, Hunter Gehrke and Austin Brase.

Canadian National Railway (CN) private police force take part in TAT law enforcement training

TAT Director of Public Sector Engagement Dylan Wecht conducted a virtual law enforcement training session for the Canadian National Police Service (CNPS), which had officers attending from five provinces and three states. CNPS officers serve on Canadian National Railway's (CN) private police force to protect the property, personnel and rail structure in both Canada and the United States. The two-hour virtual training covered both Canadian and U.S. laws, statistics and trends, as well as red flag indicators of human trafficking, the victim-centered approach and several case studies. TAT and CN's partnership has led to several initiatives, events and training sessions.



"Training the Canadian National Police Service (CNPS) on human trafficking is a crucial step to closing gaps along national and international transportation corridors," Wecht shared. "By giving CNPS officers the knowledge and tools to identify victims and disrupt trafficking networks, they will be enhancing safety across the entire rail system and helping to protect vulnerable individuals."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug. 5 – Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) CDL Roundtable, virtual

Aug. 5 – International Motorcoach Group 2025 Strategic Alliance Meeting, Richmond, VA

Aug. 7 – Hillsborough School District School Bus Operators Training, Tampa Bay, FL

Aug. 13 – Ignite the Momentum Summer Sales Meeting with National Truck Protection, Winston-Salem, NC

Aug. 14 – UPS (FDP), Chicago, IL

Aug. 15 – Travel Centers of America Charity Golf Outing, North Olmstead, OH

Aug. 18 – Travel Centers of America Oklahoma City Junction Briefing, Oklahoma City, OK

Aug. 19 – Loves Oklahoma City Junction Briefing, Oklahoma City, OK

Aug. 20 – National Truck Driving Championships (FDP), Minneapolis, MN

Aug. 20 – Denver Anti-Trafficking Alliance Education Summit, Denver, CO

Aug. 19-20 – CH Robinson Logistics Summit: Fueling the Future, Dallas, TX

Aug. 20 – American Bus Association Bus Industry Safety Council Summer Meeting, Minneapolis, MN

Aug. 26-27 – Southeastern Region Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit (CVSS), Tuscaloosa, AL

Aug. 27 – Transit Anti-Trafficking Strategies Ahead of World Cup 2026 discussion, virtual

Aug. 28 – National Fusion Center Association (NFCA) Webinar, virtual



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