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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

Indianapolis pimp gets three life sentences for murder, sex trafficking

INDIANAPOLIS — An Indianapolis-based pimp will serve three life sentences in federal prison after being found guilty of murder and running a “violent human and drug trafficking enterprise” he used to exploit vulnerable Hoosier women. [Click here](#) to read more.

SJ: Two women freed from forced prostitution

A 29-year-old man was arrested in San Jose last week on allegations of pimping and pandering, San Jose police said. ... Two women were reportedly taken into safety by police and are being given support services. The operation was carried out by the SJPD's Human Trafficking Task Force, which the police department said was engaging in more enforcement in the lead-up to the Super Bowl in February, which will be held in Santa Clara. The department said in its release that crimes like human trafficking and sexual exploitation historically increase in cities that host such large events. [Click here](#) to read more.

Houston man arrested in Round Rock, charged with compelling prostitution

AUSTIN, Texas — A Houston man is facing charges after being arrested on a prostitution-related charge in Round Rock earlier this week. According to the Round Rock Police Department, officers arrested 39-year-old Brandon Williams after receiving a call reporting possible human trafficking at a residence in the southeast area of the city. [Click here](#) to read more.

TAT attends USDOT FIFA World Cup 2026 Summit on transportation planning

TAT attended the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) World Cup 2026 Summit in Washington, DC., in early December, where Annie Sovcik, TAT senior director of Programs and Strategic Objectives, and Lexi Higgins, TAT director of Industry Engagement for transit, motorcoach and school transportation, hosted a booth. Over 250 stakeholders from the transportation and hospitality industries, government and law enforcement, among others, attended the event focused on transportation planning.



FMCSA Deputy Administrator Jesse Ellison (center) stopped by the TAT booth to chat with Higgins (left) and Sovcik (right)

In his remarks, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy emphasized human trafficking education and awareness in advance of and during the games. He also announced New Jersey Transit, a valued TAT partner, as the recipient of the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2025 Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Impact Award. The award recognizes a new, online, training course New Jersey Transit developed and is rolling out to its employees in advance of the World Cup. The course includes interactive features, New Jersey-specific information, as well as TAT's 16-minute transit training video.

"We're very impressed with the training they developed," said Sovcik, "and pleased our video could be built into their custom course to help their employees understand the realities of human trafficking and why they have an important role to play. Because of the quality of their training and the value of the steps they are taking, TAT provided a letter of support to the U.S. Department of Transportation to endorse their nomination for the 2025 Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Award."

She continued, "TAT's participation in the USDOT World Cup Summit was important because of our unique role in uniting the transportation industry around human trafficking awareness. It was also a valuable opportunity for us to share our **'Shut Out Human Trafficking' materials**, including a game plan for the transportation industry, along with new posters, graphics, webpage and videos, enhancing education around human trafficking as they engage in transportation planning for the 2026 World Cup."



U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy addressed the audience at the Summit.

Support TAT by stocking up on TAT merchandise at TA/Petro locations

Throughout January and February, in honor of National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, TA/Petro locations will again be selling TAT-branded merchandise, with a portion of all proceeds donated to TAT.

Items for sale include Hi-Vis vest keychains, TAT tumbler keychains, 20W PD CD car chargers, 8-foot braided nylon USB cables and RFID blocking smart wallets.

Look for the tall, TAT Everyday Heroes Needed displays in the stores and stock up now!



Haven't signed up for one or more of these new TAT webinars yet? Do it today!

While the fight against human trafficking is year-round, National Human Trafficking Prevention Month (NHTPM) in January is an important opportunity to join a national conversation about the issue and leverage the country-wide momentum gained on the topic during the month. To that end, TAT is offering four new webinars.

"As TAT strives to enhance the breadth and depth of our partners' understanding of human trafficking -- and the many ways they may be coming into contact with both survivors and perpetrators in the course of their work -- we decided to offer a series of educational opportunities focused on different aspects of human trafficking and tailored to a transportation and energy-related audience," explained TAT Senior Director of Programs and Strategic Objectives Annie Sovcik. "The topics of natural disasters, labor trafficking, major events and parents/caregivers center around issues of unique relevance to our partners. And because TAT's goal is always to activate, in response to education, each webinar provides recommendations and resources to empower attendees to make a difference."



NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH WEBINAR OUTLINES

As part of your commitment to address human trafficking, these virtual sessions will help broaden awareness among your employees about the realities of human trafficking, how it affects their communities and industry and how they, both as individuals and leaders in transportation, can actively combat it.

Week 1 - Modern Slavery at Work: Recognizing and Responding to Labor Trafficking

Session Features:

- 45-50 minute presentation by a TAT representative
- Features a video of Kiarri Adubee-Hernandez, labor trafficking survivor and former member of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking for the U.S. Department of State, discussing this crime.
- Take-away resources and action steps

Labor traffickers make \$8 billion in their profits annually through the exploitation of vulnerable individuals in forced labor situations. Labor trafficking survivors have reported a variety of ways during their victimization. Thus, personnel in TAT's partner industries and agencies have opportunities to encounter and identify victims of labor trafficking as part of their daily work.

In this session, you will learn how to evaluate the risks of labor trafficking and develop a plan to prevent, detect and respond to it in your industry and community.

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026
3 p.m. ET

[Register here](#) 

Week 2 - Disaster and Exploitation: Understanding the Link Between Crisis and Trafficking

Both during and in the aftermath of natural disasters, the collapse of infrastructure and displacement of populations create a fertile ground for human traffickers. These criminals identify and exploit vulnerabilities created or compounded by natural disasters in order to profit off disaster victims and/or relief efforts.

In this session, you will learn the ways natural disasters increase the risk for human trafficking victimization and action steps to unite public- and private-sector stakeholders to implement anti-trafficking strategies within disaster planning and response.

Session Features:

- 45-50 minute presentation by a TAT representative
- Features a case study of human trafficking that took place during and after Hurricane Katrina
- Take-away resources and action steps

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2026
Noon ET

[Register here](#) 

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Open to TAT partners, their employees and the general public, these webinars are:

Jan. 7, 3 p.m. (ET) -- Modern Slavery at Work: Recognizing and Responding to Labor Trafficking

In this 45-50-minute session, learn how to evaluate the risks of labor trafficking and develop a plan to prevent, detect and respond to it in your industry and community. [Register here.](#)

Jan. 13, Noon (ET) -- Disaster and Exploitation: Understanding the Link Between Crisis and Human Trafficking

In this 45-50-minute session, learn the ways natural disasters increase the risk for human trafficking victimization and action steps to unite public- and private-sector stakeholders to implement anti-trafficking strategies within disaster planning and response. [Register here.](#)

Jan. 22, Noon (ET) -- Shut Out Human Trafficking: Major Sports Events and Human Trafficking

This hour-long session will discuss the connection between major events and human trafficking, explore how the public and private sectors can bolster their vigilance, and feature a case study from UPS on their World Cup preparations in Atlanta and across North America. [Register here.](#)

In this session, learn about the ways you can combat human trafficking in your community, including how to navigate age-appropriate conversations with young people to empower them to identify safe adults in their lives. [Register here.](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan. 6 – Maine Association for Pupil Transportation State Directors Meeting, virtual

Jan. 6 – 2026 Children's Assessment Center Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Houston, TX

Jan. 7 – Modern Slavery at Work: Recognizing and Responding to Labor Trafficking, a TAT webinar, virtual

Jan. 7 – Central Maryland Youth on Transportation Coalition Build, Baltimore, MD

Jan. 7 – Tulsa Rotary, Tulsa, OK

Jan. 8 – Elk Grove Police Dept. and City of Elk Grove Briefing, virtual

Jan. 9 – 2026 Trailways Conference, Reno, NV

Jan. 10-13 – American Bus Association Marketplace 2026, Reno, NV

Jan. 11 – Transportation Research Board 2026 Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Jan. 13 – National Tank Truck Carriers webinar, virtual

Jan. 13 – Disaster and Exploitation: Understanding the Link Between Crisis and Trafficking, a TAT webinar, virtual

Jan. 13 – Iowa Council of Safety Management webinar, virtual

Jan. 14 – FedEx Manager Training, Johnstown, CO

Jan. 14 – San Mateo County DA Office Human Trafficking 101 webinar, virtual

Jan. 15 – Phoenix Coalition Build, Phoenix, AZ

Jan. 15 – 2026 NAZ CDL Examiners Conference, Phoenix, AZ

Jan. 15 – Landstar Monthly Safety Meeting, virtual

Jan. 21 – Association of Mobility Managers webinar, virtual

Jan. 22 – Shut Out Human Trafficking: Major Sports Events and Human Trafficking, a TAT/UPS webinar, virtual

Jan. 22 – Washington Trucking Association's Women's Council webinar, virtual

Jan. 23 – ASSIST Indiana Anti-Human Trafficking Summit, virtual

Jan. 23 – American Trucking Associations America's Road Team Captain Training, Alexandria, VA

Jan. 26 – Wyoming Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Conference, Laramie, WY

Jan. 26 – American Public Transportation Association webinar, virtual

Jan. 26-28 – WEX Ignite Conference, Orlando, FL

Jan. 28 – Greater Northeast Motorcoach Association National Human Trafficking Prevention Month webinar, virtual

Jan. 28 – San Mateo County DA Office Human Trafficking 101 webinar, Session 2, virtual

Jan. 29 – American Association of University Women (AAUW), Iowa Chapter, webinar, virtual

Jan. 29 – Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) press conference, location TBD

Jan. 30 – The Role of Parents and Trusted Adults in Combating Human Trafficking, a TAT webinar, virtual



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