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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

'Horrific': North Texas child sex trafficker forced teen girls into prostitution

A 42-year-old North Texas man faces life in federal prison for "horrific" sex-trafficking of teenage girls whom he beat, drugged and raped. Anjum Zafar Mian of DeSoto coerced at least two girls, ages 16 and 17, into commercial sex by threatening to harm their family if they didn't comply, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. He also brought a 17-year-old girl from Oklahoma to Texas to engage in commercial sex and refused to let her return home.

Cartel-backed pot grows linked to human trafficking, inhumane working conditions

Trinity County, Calif. — If you buy weed illegally, you unwittingly could be supporting Mexican cartels and other criminal syndicates that lure workers to farms in Northern California and Southern Oregon, where they often suffer inhumane conditions and sometimes sexual abuse. Or worse. Some disappear, presumed murdered, their bodies discarded within the area's vast wilderness.

Cartersville motel manager pleads guilty to coercing labor, sex acts from worker

Cartersville, Ga. — A 70-year-old hotel manager has pleaded guilty to sex trafficking charges after prosecutors said he took advantage and exploited a vulnerable worker who was trying to get her life back on track.

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Arkansas Coalition Build attracts record participants

TAT's Coalition Build (CB) held June 7 in Lowell, Arkansas in the Million Mile Auditorium at J.B. Hunt Headquarters attracted the largest number of in-person participants at 125 that TAT has had for a CB event. J.B. Hunt, Walmart, Tyson, the Arkansas Trucking Association and the Arkansas Attorney General's Office co-hosted the event with TAT.

Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin provided opening remarks, along with Greer Woodruff, J.B. Hunt senior vice president, and Esther Goetsch, TAT executive director. FBI Special Agent Brenan Despain taught the Human Trafficking 101 segment of the event, while survivor Christine McDonald, an author and consultant, provided a survivor's testimony. Despain; Alison Nguyen, a detective/task force



officer with the Benton County Sheriff's Office; Christi Griffin, the Investigations supervisor for the Washington County Department of Children and Family Services; and Josh Robinson, a senior deputy prosecuting attorney for Benton County, composed the law enforcement panel.

Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin provided opening remarks at the CB and also toured the FDP.

The Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) drew 163 guests through its doors while at J.B. Hunt Headquarters for the CB, including AG Griffin. Walmart hauled the FDP to the event and sponsored the lunch, while Tyson sponsored the coffee time.

"Human trafficking is a critical issue putting the safety of our highways and communities at risk," said Woodruff. "Victims of this crime are often hidden in plain sight at places our employees, especially drivers, frequent daily, such as rest stops and truck stops. As part of our safety culture, all J.B. Hunt drivers are trained how to recognize the signs of trafficking and report suspicious activity.

"The solution to ending human trafficking relies on us working together, and we were proud to help strengthen the coalition led by Truckers Against Trafficking by co-sponsoring the event that brought together several carriers, law enforcement and government officials to collaborate at our corporate headquarters," he added.

Freedom Drivers Project joins an international crowd at Walmart Shareholders Celebration



FDP Specialist Micah Larsen had a lot of activity at the TAT booth during the Walmart Shareholders Celebration.

TAT's Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) joined the featured activities and exhibits for an estimated 4000 Walmart associates, 1000 Sam's Club associates and 1200 international associates from 20 countries who attended Walmart's Annual Shareholders Celebration this year in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Store, club, supply chain, international brands and business unit associates of Walmart are selected by their leadership to represent their facility at the event in appreciation for their hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence. The celebration typically features a celebrity host and musical performances, day-long activities and presentations by executives.

Almost 550 event participants toured the FDP. Hundreds also stopped by the TAT tent to pick up materials and learn more about human trafficking. This was TAT's first time attending this event.

Brandy Belton, TAT's FDP director, commented, "As a former Walmart associate, attending

Walmart Shareholders for the first time as an outsider was a great experience. From getting on the plane in Charlotte, North Carolina, with Walmart Canada and other team members from all over to seeing associates being greeted in Fayetteville, Arkansas, when they arrived at the airport was a mind-blowing experience, as I heard the Walmart cheer on the plane before take-off and then witnessed the celebration of Africa as they had arrived just before me. Walmart associates were proud to participate in fun activities to celebrate all the associates who were being recognized for their hard work and dedication to the company.”

Belton also expressed her appreciation that Walmart hauled the FDP from North Carolina to Arkansas, to the various TAT events in the state and then back home to North Carolina.



Walmart Road Team Captains (L to R) Ricky Sharp, Scotty Wells and Fritz Keep took time for a photo with FDP Director Brandy Belton during the event activities.

BOTL launches new initiative focused on Youth on Transportation



TAT's Senior Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives Annie Sovcik (center back row) and Public Sector Engagement Specialist Maggie Dawson (far right front row) with members of the Denver Public Safety Youth Leadership Team.

Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) staff have been asking questions like: How can we protect youth from exploitation and human trafficking as they move throughout their days? How can we improve youth awareness about human trafficking via the community transportation systems they are using? How can we leverage local community transportation systems to prevent and interrupt youth exploitation and human trafficking? The solution? BOTL is launching a new initiative focused on how community transportation systems can play a role in protecting youth on transportation.

“It was important to BOTL to include youth voices in the process of answering these questions,” explained Lexi Higgins, BOTL director, “and so the past couple of months have included a variety of strategies to get youth feedback and perspectives.”

First, BOTL launched a survey for youth, ages 13-24, asking them about their use of public transportation, knowledge of human trafficking and what an effective campaign speaking to them would look like. To date, 10 partners who work with youth have committed to sharing (or have already shared) the survey with youth they serve. Those survey results will be analyzed over the summer.

Additionally, on June 22, BOTL met with the **Denver Public Safety Youth Leadership Team**, a group of 14-18-year-olds focused on youth violence prevention, for a deeper discussion on the issues. Through a conversation facilitated by TAT team members Annie Sovcik and Maggie Dawson, the group provided plenty of insight on what an effective campaign educating youth on human trafficking should look like. They emphasized the importance of education on healthy relationships, as well as the need for a campaign to be hopeful and action-oriented.

This youth consultation process will inform the development of a public-facing, youth-focused awareness campaign that can be displayed by our community transportation partners and other

TAT staff completes this summer's Boot Camp

In June, TAT staff completed their strategic and tactical in-person Boot Camp in Tulsa, Oklahoma and took a staff photo to commemorate the occasion.



Front row, L to R: Sara Sefried, Director of Strategic Partnerships; Annie Sovcik, Senior Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives; Lexi Higgins, BOTL Director; Kylla Lanier, Deputy Director and Senior Director of Public Sector Engagement; Esther Goetsch, Executive Director; Louie Greek, Coalition Build Specialist; Micah Larsen, FDP Specialist; Hillary Benanzer, Data Analyst Back row, L to R: Maggie Dawson, Public Sector Engagement Specialist; Dylan Wecht, Public Sector Engagement Specialist; Laura Cyrus, Senior Director of Industry Training and Outreach; Susan Dold, Finance and HR Director; Brandy Belton, FDP Director; Chris Moreno, Industry Training Program Specialist; Molly Griffiths, Corporate Engagement Manager; Amanda Haggerty, Data Administration Specialist Not pictured; Arianne Singleton, Administrative Specialist, and Lyn Leeburg, Communications Director

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 10 - 2023 Southeastern States Pupil Transportation Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC

July 12 - Florida Transit Human Trafficking Response Procedure Template Webinar, virtual

July 13 - International Association of Chiefs of Police webinar on the trucking, bus and energy industries, virtual

July 13-15 - Inland Truck, Pitt Meadows, British Columbia

July 13-15 - Iowa 80 Truckstop Jamboree, Walcott, IA (FDP)

July 16-19 - Trucking Association Executive Council Conference, Newport, RI

July 25-26 - New Jersey State Police Transportation Safety Bureau law enforcement training, Sea Girt, NJ

July 26 - Virginia State Police presentation, Richmond, VA

July 31-Aug 1 - 2023 Hudson Insurance Group Transportation Leadership Conference, Nashville, TN

July 17-19 - Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators Conference, St. John's, Newfoundland
July 18 - Nashville Coalition Build, Nashville, TN (FDP)
July 21-23 - Wyoming Highway Patrol Cheyenne Frontier Days, Cheyenne, WY (FDP)
July 24 - School Transportation Association of Massachusetts Convention and Trade Show, Falmouth, MA



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