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End human trafficking.

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

Tulsa human trafficking operation leads to arrest, recovery of three victims

A human trafficking enforcement operation in Tulsa on Thursday night resulted in one arrest and the recovery of three potential victims who were later connected with victim services, according to the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office. [Click here](#) to read more.

CVSA announces human trafficking awareness campaign centered around soccer

As global attention turns to the upcoming international men's football/soccer competition, the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) issued a press release stating that it is launching a special five-day human trafficking awareness and outreach effort to educate commercial motor vehicle drivers, motor carriers, law enforcement officers and the public about the crime of human trafficking, the signs to look for and what to do if you suspect someone is being trafficked. [Click here](#) to read more.

Wellington man sentenced to life in prison for human trafficking a 16-year-old girl

A Wellington man will spend the rest of his life in prison for human trafficking a teenage girl and forcing her into commercial sex work. Attorney General James Uthmeier announced that 45-year-old Raul Brown received a life sentence after being convicted on multiple charges for trafficking a minor. [Click here](#) to read more.

State Trucking Associations engage in friendly competition to fight human trafficking

From January through July 30 of this year, TAT is running the STA (state trucking association) [Driven-to-Defend Challenge](#), designed to excite and motivate STAs to keep the issue of human trafficking before their membership.



DRIVEN TO DEFEND

January through July 2026

STA CHALLENGE TO HELP END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

AMPLIFY TAT'S ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING MESSAGE IN 2026 BY PARTICIPATING IN TAT'S DRIVEN-TO-DEFEND STA CHALLENGE.

Challenge Dates

January through July 30, 2026
(National Human Trafficking Prevention
Month through World Day Against Trafficking)

Earn Badges

Earn one or earn them all! You choose how you would like to engage from six different engagement areas.

Participant Recognition

Participating STAs will get a certificate and be recognized in a monthly newsletter and highlighted in TAT's annual report!



TAT incorporates Youth on Transportation (YOT) Coalition Build Campaign in a four-event training effort in the Four Corners region

Building on the foundation of relationships TAT began last year with the Tribal Nations in the Four Corners region of Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado, TAT conducted a six-day campaign there in May, holding two YOT Coalition Builds (CB), a Junction Briefing and a community event.

Bernadine Beyale, founder and CEO of 4 Corners K-9 Search and Rescue, explained how the partnership with TAT began. "This work started during searches for Tamicka Platero, who went missing in 2019," she said. "As we worked in different search locations, I started noticing that none of these areas were far from nearby towns. Truck stops, gas stations, roadways and transportation routes ran near and through our tribal communities. These are places people are constantly using. I wondered if we'd ever talked to them ... the transportation industry, drivers, transit systems, the people working in these spaces every single day. When I connected with TAT, I asked if anything like this had been done in Tribal communities before. It hadn't, so we built it."



(L) TAT Training Specialist/Survivor Leader Kelley Marshall received a hug from an audience member after sharing her lived experience.

The campaign began on May 4 with a Junction Briefing training employees at the TravelCenters of America Navajo truck stops in Gallup, New Mexico. Called the "Gateway to Native American Country," Gallup is surrounded by the Navajo Nation, Zuni Pueblo and many other Indigenous communities. At this busy travel center along I-40, with the roaring trains in the background from the Union Pacific, frontline employees learned how to identify potential signs of human trafficking at their location. Many employees expressed the challenges in this area of the county regarding Missing, Murdered and Indigenous Relatives (MMIR). The training they received will enable them to more likely identify a vulnerable person and get them help before they go missing.

The next day TAT hosted a YOT CB in Page, with co-hosts, the Office of the Arizona Attorney General, Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network, Navajo Nation Task Force/4 Corners K-9 Search & Rescue, and Quality Connections-Page Transit Express. The CB brought together 35 leaders from

Tribal Nations, transportation, law enforcement and government, with a shared goal of strengthening collaboration and turning awareness into action across the region. TAT also honored National MMIP Day by wearing red.



Daisy Bluestar, executive director of Native Love, was one of the speakers at the CBs.

“This was a perfect opportunity for TAT to adapt its YOT resources in a way that reflected the realities, strengths and cultural context of Tribal communities, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach,” offered Sara Sefried, TAT director of Strategic Partnerships. “Our CBs here kicked off our Youth on Transportation Safety Month.”

Two days later, TAT hosted a second CB in Gallup, New Mexico, co-hosted by Navajo Nation Task Force/4 Corners K-9 Search & Rescue, Gallup Express Transit, New Mexico Transit Association and Gallup Police Department. Forty-five leaders from the Tribal Nations, transportation, law enforcement and government attended and discussed the importance of recognizing the signs of trafficking, responding effectively and building coordinated, survivor-centered, local solutions. Indigenous youth face disproportionately high rates of vulnerability to exploitation, trafficking and violence, making collaboration, awareness and prevention efforts critically important in this region.

Throughout both CB events, participants actively connected, exchanged ideas and explored opportunities to strengthen partnerships. In addition, 28 people in Page and 53 people in Gallup toured TAT’s Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) mobile exhibit, providing an immersive, educational experience designed to equip frontline professionals with practical tools to identify and report trafficking.

“What we’re building isn’t just an event. It’s a connection. It’s a partnership,” declared Beyale, “because every person in this room sees a different piece of the same problem. A bus driver sees something. A teacher notices something. Law enforcement responds to something. Advocates support something. But rarely are all of those perspectives brought into the same room.”

The final stop of the campaign -- Ignacio, Colorado on the Southern Ute Nation -- on May 9, featured a walk/run for MMIR. While participants walked the 14 miles, TAT hosted a human trafficking awareness training for local drivers from Durango Transit, with Ann Rajewski, executive director, Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA), providing opening remarks on this intersection. She shared that rural transit in Tribal communities can play a vital role in preventing and recovering missing relatives, with frontline drivers possibly identifying a potentially vulnerable relative on their routes before they go missing or provide help to get them back home to their community with the support they need.

TAT’s FDP, as well as many other community services and exhibits, were at the finish line, along with prayer, song and stew and fry bread. Native Love, Four Corners K9 Search & Rescue and CASTA all took part in this event, and Sky Ute Casino, owned and operated by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, covered all costs in hosting this event at their location.

TAT participates in World Cup ACT (Action Collaborative against Trafficking)

On the last weekend of May, the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking hosted a two-day event called the **World Cup ACT (Action Collaborative against Trafficking)**, ahead of the World Cup games in New Jersey and Philadelphia. This two-day, survivor-informed call to action brought together communities, organizations and individuals to raise awareness and take meaningful steps to prepare for the increased risks of human trafficking associated with large-scale events.



While TAT has worked with the New Jersey Coalition and Coach USA for years, Kwami Adoboe-Herrera, a member of TAT's Advisory Committee, made the connection between the New Jersey Coalition and TAT specific to this event and also suggested the possibility of having a bus donated for the event.

Coach USA did provide a bus on the second day of the event to bring survivors and other volunteers traveling from northern New Jersey down to Cherry Hill and back. They also wrapped the bus with a co-branded graphic for the trip. Lexi Higgins, TAT Director of Industry Engagement for Transit, Motorcoach and School Transportation also rode the bus and manned a table with TAT materials and resources.

Derrick Waters, Coach USA CEO, said, "Coach USA is honored to participate in the ACT events, sponsored by the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking, leading up to the commencement of the World Cup matches. It is crucial to raise awareness that major events, such as the World Cup, unfortunately, correspond with an increase in human and sex trafficking. At Coach USA, we are committed to combating and preventing human and sex trafficking through comprehensive training provided by TAT for all our coach and bus operators, as well as customer-facing team members. We trust these efforts and events will garner the necessary attention to effectively address and help eradicate human and sex trafficking."

"While the fight to end human trafficking is an everyday and everywhere challenge, we know that major sports events can provide increased opportunity to recognize and report both sex and labor trafficking," said Esther Goetsch, TAT executive director. "Simultaneously, the need for the services provided by transportation professionals increases significantly, as communities prepare for an influx of people to their region for these events. With additional eyes and ears on the roadways and in communities, transportation professionals who are trained on how to recognize and report human trafficking can play a strategic role in preventing and disrupting this crime before, during and after major sports events. We are proud to work alongside partners like Coach USA and the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking to raise awareness within the transportation industry and beyond about the realities of human trafficking and how we can all play a role in combating this heinous crime."



TAT accepting nominations for its Harriet Tubman Award

TAT is accepting nominations through Aug. 15 for its most prestigious award, the Harriet Tubman Award (HTA) presented by WEX®. The award, which includes a \$5,000 check and a trophy, is given to honor a member of the trucking, bus or energy industry whose direct actions have either helped save or improve the lives of those exploited or prevented human trafficking from taking place. The incident must have taken place in the U.S. or Canada, and nominees need to reside in one of those countries.

If you know someone who deserves to win, [check out the nomination process for the award](#) now. If you have no idea whether anyone in your company qualifies, TAT has a short survey for all employees – both frontline and drivers – that you can obtain and use in-house, as well as push out to driver devices or into driver comms, by contacting info@tatnonprofit.org.

“Please, share your story if you’ve taken any action to help someone you think might be a trafficking victim or a potential trafficking victim,” said Laura Cyrus, TAT senior director of Industry Training and Outreach, “even if you’re not sure what you did is ‘award worthy.’ The stories of our Harriet Tubman Award winners are important, as are other cases we hear about and retell in our TAT in Action reports, like the story of ABF Freight Systems driver Bob Bramwell, who helped a young woman he saw on a stretch of rural road while he was in the car with his family, only 50 miles from his home. She, too, turned out to be

HARRIET TUBMAN* AWARD NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!

Have you or someone you know made a call on behalf of a victim of human trafficking?

You could be in the running for TAT’s prestigious *Harriet Tubman Award*, which includes:

 PRIZE PACKAGE &  \$5000

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Let your company and TAT know today!



Scan for more information and to fill out the nomination form:



*The award is named in honor of Harriet Tubman, the famed abolitionist credited with using the Underground Railroad to transport enslaved people to freedom.



a human trafficking victim. These stories serve to encourage others in the industry to stay vigilant around this effort.”

TAT created the award in 2013 and named it to honor famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman, whose courageous personal actions resulted in the transportation of 70 slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad and whose overall role in the freedom movement was instrumental in the freeing of thousands more. Born into slavery in 1820, Miss Tubman was the first African American woman buried with full military honors and the first to have the inaugural Liberty ship named after her – the SS Harriet Tubman – by the U.S. Maritime Commission.

The HTA was presented for the first time the following year to a travel plaza general manager in Washington. Since that time, winners have included truck drivers, other travel plaza employees and bus employees. You can read the stories of all the past winners [here](#).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 1 – Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) Spring Summit, Quebec City, Quebec

June 1-3 – International Risk Management Institute Transportation Risk Conference, Dallas, TX

June 1-5 – 2026 international Fuel Tax Association (IFTA) Educational Forum, San Diego, CA

June 1-5 – Walmart Shareholder’s Meeting, Fayetteville, AR

June 2 – YOT Coalition Build, hosted by TAT, the Office of the Florida Attorney General, the Florida Public Transportation Association, the Florida Highway Patrol and the FREE Network, Tampa, FL

June 4 – New York State Forest Ranger Academy Briefing, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, virtual

June 4 – Uintah Basin Technical College Regional Energy Company Meeting, virtual

June 5 – Mississippi Trucking Association Annual Convention, Orange Beach, AL

June 7 – Transportation Marketing & Sales Association (TMSA) ELEVATE Conference-Community Giveback, Englewood, CO

June 9 – Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Our Roads, Our Safety® Week, Washington, D.C.

June 10 – UPS Airport Hub FDP Event, Philadelphia, PA

June 10 – The FREE Network Task Force Meeting, virtual

June 15-17 – American Trucking Associations Women in Motion Symposium, Springfield, MO

June 15 – Georgia Association for Pupil Transportation Annual Conference, Jekyll Island, GA

June 16 – Illinois Association for Pupil Transportation Conference, East Peoria, IL

June 18 – Delaware Basin Association of Pipeliners Lunch N Learn, Carlsbad, NM

June 28 – Texas Association for Pupil Transportation Conference and Trade Show, The Woodlands, TX

June 30 – Wyoming Pupil Transportation Association Conference, Casper, WY

June 30 – Washington Association for Pupil Transportation 48th Annual Conference and Trade Show, Kennewick, WA

June 30 – Utah Petroleum Association Lunch N Learn, virtual



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