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## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

### Uber Freight, other carriers train drivers to spot signs of human trafficking

A trucking industry push to spread the message about anti-trafficking efforts is gaining momentum. Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) has trained over 1.5 million as of the beginning of 2023, up from 1.3 million a year ago, the organization told Transport Dive. The group provides educational and training materials to carriers at no cost.

### Dallas man gets 25 years in prison for 'brutal' sex trafficking ring

A man convicted of **running a "brutal" sex trafficking ring** was sentenced to 25 years in prison, federal officials announced Thursday. Anthony Johnson, 45, pleaded guilty on May 10 to conspiracy to commit sex trafficking through force, fraud, and coercion, and sex trafficking, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Dallas.

### Virginia explores ways to prevent human trafficking

Experts on human trafficking say the problem is all around us, and a year-long study in Virginia has sparked several recommendations to combat sex and labor human trafficking. The Virginia Commission on Human Trafficking Prevention and Survivor Support, formed last year by Gov. Glenn Youngkin, submitted its final report in January, urging tougher penalties, as well as increased education and training for police, health care workers and teachers, so that trafficked victims can be more readily identified.

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## TAT releases 2022 annual report

Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) has released its **2022 annual report**, showing the impact of the year's work by identifying the actions TAT and its partners have taken through each of the strategic areas emphasized in TAT's mission statement – educate, equip, empower and mobilize.

TAT Executive Director Esther Goetsch said, "In 2022, we saw the culmination of TAT's work over the last 12 years as longtime partners leveled up in significant ways. I wanted to really showcase the depth and intention of those efforts, as well as the tremendous reach TAT now has throughout North America."

In her letter in the report, Goetsch talks about the importance of building public and private sector partnerships to shut down systems traffickers use to exploit victims. She concludes, that through TAT's work, "Industry sectors, modes of transportation, government entities and countries are now working together towards the prevention and intervention of human trafficking."

# TAT'S 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

NOW AVAILABLE



## Local and state human trafficking task force members attend El Paso Coalition Build



*Louie Greek (standing), CB specialist, and Beth Jacobs (seated), survivor-leader and TAT training specialist, interact with a participant at the El Paso Coalition Build.*

The El Paso Coalition Build (CB) held Feb. 15 at El Paso Community College attracted 37 participants, including members from both the El Paso Human Trafficking Task Force and the Texas state Human Trafficking Task Force, in addition to industry members and law enforcement. TAT's co-hosts for the event were the Paso del Norte Center of Hope and the Texas Trucking Association.

TAT Coalition Build Specialist Louie Greek explained, "We held a CB in El Paso in 2014, but, since that time, many of the players combating human trafficking in the area have changed. The border crisis has also added some complications and dynamics to fighting this crime, so the El Paso Human Trafficking Task Force requested we come back to help support their anti-human trafficking efforts. This CB helped open doors to further TAT's work in the West Texas energy industry."

Potential opportunities from the CB include:

- An Empower Freedom CB in Midland/Odessa, proposed by the Texas Human Trafficking Task Force to continue to close gaps in anti-human trafficking resources and information to the energy industry in that area
- The El Paso County Sheriff's office pledging to do more to fight human trafficking and requesting to be on the El Paso Human Trafficking Task Force
- The El Paso Human Trafficking Task Force introducing TAT's School Bus Transportation training in their work with local schools this year
- A Love's district manager planning to use each of eight store locations as a distribution point for TAT materials
- The El Paso County Juvenile Probation Office planning on playing TAT's state agency webinar for their employees

An officer from the El Paso County Juvenile Probation Office said, "I loved all of the information that



was provided. I feel so much more knowledgeable about human trafficking and how to identify it now."

## TAT, Uber team up to provide Canadian law enforcement training

TAT Public Sector Engagement Specialist Dylan Wecht teamed up with Uber Senior Manager of Global Public Safety Nick Pailthorpe to train 70 members of the Edmonton Police Service in Edmonton, Alberta on Feb. 22, Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada.

Wecht presented on human trafficking trends throughout Canada, vulnerabilities of at-risk populations, trafficking intersections with transportation industries and indicators of human trafficking at interdiction stops. He also gave a few case studies of trafficking cases in Canada. Pailthorpe spoke on the structure of Uber's public safety team, how Uber operates during ongoing criminal investigations and critical incidents, including human trafficking, and the new safety programs the company has been rolling out.



*TAT's Dylan Wecht (far right), poses with Uber's Nick Pailthorpe (far left) and Detective Marc Goudreau of the Investigative Response Team of the Edmonton Police Service (center).*

A detective with the Edmonton Police Services commented, "This was an excellent collaboration between TAT and Uber that gave everyone in attendance a deeper understanding of the problem we currently have with human trafficking, what indicators to look for, and how organizations are teaming up in this fight. Thank you guys very much for coming, it was really an eye-opening experience."

The event was hosted by the Edmonton Police Services.

## Freedom Drivers Project scheduled for five UPS truck rodeos this year – YEHAW!

The Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) and TAT staff attended their first of five UPS truck rodeos last month at the UPS Hub in Ontario, California. In these driving competitions, the best UPS drivers tackle obstacles courses in their vehicles, and some of the events attract nearly 1,000 people from across the country.

Brandy Belton, FDP director, related that Ryan Ybarra, one of two UPS drivers who haul the FDP (the other is Wayne Ponschke), requested last November that the FDP return to their Ontario rodeo this year, because "it was vital for them to have TAT and the FDP there to educate their community and families."



*Leo Ramirez (left), UPS Global Community director and a TAT advocate, is all smiles with Brandy Belton, FDP director, in spite of the rodeo weather.*

Belton continued, "For both Ryan and Wayne, whether speaking to a driver or a traveler along the road at a truck stop/rest area, TAT is their language of choice, and they are ecstatic to relay the message of TAT's mission and why they support TAT."



*Maggie Dawson, FDP specialist, guided guests through TAT's mobile exhibit on a rainy day at the UPS rodeo in Ontario.*

“We are very passionate about combating human trafficking,” said UPS South Feeder Operations Manager Trina Norman. “At UPS, we are change agents in the community we serve and ask others to join us as we combat, educate, equip, and empower our trained drivers behind the wheel to speak up, report and make the call to save lives. Human trafficking is modern-day slavery. With your support, together we can make this world a better place for victims of human trafficking.”

In addition to the Ontario rodeo, the FDP, along with selected TAT staff members, will attend UPS rodeos April 15 at the UPS SMART Hub in Atlanta, Georgia, April 19 at the UPS Hub CACH in Hodgkins, Illinois (the largest UPS Hub for ground delivery packages), June 17 at the UPS Hub East Regional Zone in Middletown, Pennsylvania (the newest Hub facility), and Nov. 11 at the UPS Hub in Goodyear, Arizona.

## TAT recognized by the Attorney General Alliance with Sword and Shield Award

At its Global Anti-Human Trafficking Summit in Park City, Utah, earlier this year, the Attorney General Alliance (AGA) awarded Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) its Sword and Shield Award, recognizing TAT's work among NGOs in the anti-trafficking movement.

Sara Sefried, TAT's director of Strategic Partnerships, received the award on TAT's behalf from event co-hosts Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes and Heather Fischer, senior advisor for Human Rights Crimes at Thomas Reuters Special Services. Sefried attended the event at the invitation of AG Reyes to participate in a panel discussion focusing on the power of engaging the private sector in the fight against human trafficking. Other panelists represented Airline Ambassadors, the American Hotel and Lodging Association and Philip Morris International.

The AG Alliance (AGA) serves as a bipartisan forum where Attorneys General work in cooperation to share ideas, build relationships and foster enforcement through meetings, panels, working groups and social activities.



*Sara Sefried (center), TAT's director of Strategic Partnerships, received the award from event co-hosts Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes and Heather Fischer, senior advisor for Human Rights Crimes at Thomas Reuters Special Services.*



# STAT OF THE MONTH



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**March 1** - Green Worldwide Shipping, HT 101 training webinar, Laura Cyrus, TAT senior director of Industry Training and Outreach, presenting

**March 2** - The Southern Illinois Criminal Justice Summit, Effingham, IL, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director and senior director of Public Sector Engagement, and Kelley Alsobrook, survivor-leader and TAT field trainer, presenting

**March 2** - Aon HT/TAT 101 training webinar, Laura Cyrus, TAT senior director of Industry Training and Outreach, presenting

**March 3** - 57/70 Task Force, HT 101, Effingham, IL, Sara Sefried, TAT director of Strategic Partnerships, presenting

**March 6** - Pipeline Steward School Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Annie Sovcik, TAT senior director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives, presenting

**March 8** - Zonta Club virtual presentation, Maggie Dawson, FDP specialist, presenting

**March 8** - California Highway Patrol, Calexico, CA, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director and senior director of Public Sector Engagement, presenting

**March 8** - The Surface Transportation DEI Alliance Presents: Celebrating Women: Stories of Survival and Empowerment, Amazon (corporate), virtual, Liz Williamson, survivor-leader and TAT training specialist, presenting

**March 8** - Price Gregory International Safety Conference, San Antonio, TX, Annie Sovcik,

**March 20** - Western South Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force, virtual, Louie Greek, TAT Coalition Build specialist, presenting

**March 21** - Central Christian Church HT 101, Decatur, IL, Sara Sefried, TAT director of Strategic Partnerships, presenting

**March 21** - Linde, Activating Supply Chain for Social Good: Combating Human Trafficking through the Transportation Industry, virtual, Laura Cyrus, TAT senior director of Industry Training and Outreach, presenting

**March 28** - New Jersey Transit Police training, Trenton, NJ, Lexi Higgins, TAT BOTL director, presenting

**March 29** - Maine State Police training, Augusta, Maine, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director and senior director of Public Sector Engagement, Dylan Wecht, TAT Public Sector Engagement specialist, and Kelley Alsobrook, survivor-leader and TAT field trainer, presenting

**March 29** - FedEx, Louisville, KY, Brandy Belton, FDP director, attending

**March 20-April 1** - Mid-America Trucking Show, Louisville, KY, TAT staff attending

TAT senior director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives, presenting  
**March 9** - Hewlett-Packard Logistics University, HT 101 webinar, Laura Cyrus, TAT senior director of Industry Training and Outreach, presenting  
**March 11** - Putting the Brakes on Human Trafficking, South by Southwest Conference, Austin, TX, Esther Goetsch, TAT executive director, presenting



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