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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

Two arrested in Bartow labor trafficking investigation

According to Homeland Security Investigations of Atlanta (HSI Atlanta), two men are facing felony labor trafficking charges in Bartow County. Federal and local authorities executed a search warrant at Wellmade Performance Flooring and several Bartow County residences back on March 26 as part of an ongoing criminal investigation. [Click here](#) to read more.

Danbury brothel raid was biggest in years for city that has battled sex trafficking for decades

DANBURY — The recent raid on Chappelle Street may be the most notable sex-trafficking bust the city has seen since the 2017 arrests of two men accused of operating a years-long prostitution ring, but records show such illicit activity is far from unprecedented in the area. [Click here](#) to read more.

Washington man indicted on 11 counts of sex trafficking children, production of sexual abuse material and forced labor

Richland, Washington - Acting United States Attorney Richard R. Barker announced that on April 2, 2025, a federal grand jury for the Eastern District of Washington returned an indictment charging Jonathan Michael Atkinson, age 34, with 11 criminal counts including sex trafficking children, production and attempted production of child pornography, online enticement of a minor and forced labor. The criminal charges against Atkinson carry a maximum sentence of up to a lifetime in prison. [Click here](#) to read more.

May kicks off Youth on Transportation's (YOT) first annual Safety Month activities

Last year, [TAT's Youth on Transportation Initiative](#) received the USDOT Impact Award, and this year launches one of its stated goals: an annual YOT Safety Month, a campaign dedicated to educating youth about human trafficking and equipping them with tools to protect themselves and their peers from exploitation.

Throughout the month, YOT, which was launched in 2023, will unite transportation stakeholders by leveraging TAT's partnerships with the transportation industry, including transit, school transportation, truck stops and more. A core component of the initiative is mobilizing these partners to educate youth directly about human trafficking in age-appropriate ways, including by distributing postcards and stickers with awareness-raising information when interacting with youth and/or parents (e.g., in schools, at community events, etc.).

"TAT's Youth on Transportation Initiative began with a vision to build community-wide networks that could protect youth from trafficking and exploitation as they move throughout their days, no matter what form(s) of transportation they use," said TAT Director of Industry Engagement Lexi Higgins. "As public transit agencies, human trafficking task forces, state trucking associations, local government agencies and more have signed on to participate in Youth on Transportation Safety Month, we see that vision coming to life. These stakeholders have been united by a commitment to reaching youth directly with the information they need to know about trafficking and exploitation in order to protect themselves and their peers, and I could not be more proud to work alongside them in pursuit of that goal."

There's still time to participate in [Youth on Transportation Safety Month](#), May 1-31! Here's how:

- Contact TAT to coordinate displaying our youth-focused poster designs in public places where youth and parents will see them (e.g., on buses, at bus stops/stations, in cabs/limos, at truck stops/rest areas, lobbies, etc.).
- Order TAT's stickers and postcards to distribute to youth and parents.
- Post on social media throughout the month. (TAT will provide graphics and sample posts.)
- Join TAT for a free webinar May 7 at noon (ET) on 'Discussing Human Trafficking and Online Safety: The Role of Parents and Trusted Adults.' Registration link [here](#).
- Access resources for youth: www.tatnonprofit.org/youth and resources for parents:



The LineHaul Summit raises funds for TAT at annual conference

On April 23-25, the Linehaul News held two fundraising events -- a golf outing and a charity dinner - for TAT as part of their annual LineHaul Summit. While exact numbers are not yet known, the Summit is expected to have raised at least \$100,000, thanks in part to an angel donor.

Held at the Irving Convention Center in Irving, Texas, the Summit hosted over 500 attendees representing more than 300 linehaul fleets and both small and large contractors representing over 7,000 trucks. TAT Senior Director of Industry Training and Outreach Laura Cyrus and TAT Director of Industry Training Heather Fry made presentations, exhibited at the TAT booth and participated in the charity golf scramble. Cyrus also moderated a panel discussion on "Creating a Safety-Driven Logistics Operation."



TAT Director of Industry Training Heather Fry (right) interacted with Summit attendees at the TAT booth.

"The Summit is the one time a year the top contractors and vendors in our linehaul community come together to learn from, share with and meet other entrepreneurs in the industry," explained David Cooper, co-founder of LineHaul News. "It's such a special group of individuals who truly believe in working together to solve the challenges they collectively face. I felt this was the year our community could do something special together, and I couldn't think of a better group to partner with than TAT. Even with our fundraising efforts, I don't think we've touched the impact our community can make in helping TAT combat human trafficking. By spreading the knowledge Laura and Heather presented at the Summit to the collective 10,000+ drivers our contractors employ, Linehaul News is proud to help support and raise awareness of such a noble cause."



In one of her presentations, TAT Senior Director of Industry Training and Outreach Laura Cyrus explained the TAT wallet card.

Cyrus said, "We're incredibly grateful to David Cooper and the entire team of leaders behind the Summit. What a fantastic few days to network with the linehaul community, an untapped space for TAT. Being able to get in front of these contractors and help share the vision of our work and the resources we provide was immensely valuable to us. The fundraising component was an incredible added bonus. What an amazing gift to TAT! Thank you to every sponsor of the golf outing and the charity dinner event, every person who made a private donation, and especially to our angel donor, who truly went above and beyond to see that the goal of a \$100K donation was reached. Your compassion and generosity are an inspiration, and we are so excited to engage with this community further. I am encouraged by the level of commitment and interest that was expressed by everyone we spoke to. Thank you for inviting us into your community and joining us in this effort!"

TAT holds law enforcement training in Montana

The Motor Carrier Services Division (MCS) of the Montana Department of Transportation hosted TAT for a law enforcement training on April 1 in Helena, Montana.

"The MCS's commitment to combat human trafficking throughout their state, as well as that of the five other agencies who attended, has been outstanding," opined Dylan Wecht, TAT director of Public Sector Engagement. "Since receiving their first TAT law enforcement training in 2019, MCS officers have observed red flag indicators of human trafficking, and in one case, started a human trafficking investigation with the Montana Department of Justice: Division of Criminal Investigation. The officers involved in this case stated that 'the [TAT] training gave them the tools and knowledge needed to identify the trafficking situation and utilize the proper resources.' This was evident in their professional and empathetic demeanor during the traffic stop, along with working in cooperation with other agencies, and ultimately removing the victim from a dangerous situation."



Dylan Wecht, TAT director of Public Sector Engagement (left),

Wecht and TAT Training Specialist Kelley Marshall conducted the training for 130 officers from the MCS, the Montana Department of Justice: Division of Criminal Investigation, the Montana Department of Corrections: Probation and Parole Division, U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services, the Helena Police Department and the Ravalli County Sheriff's Office.

Officers took a wide selection of TAT materials to distribute to members of the commercial vehicle industry within their jurisdictions and expressed interest in taking the TAT law enforcement modules.

Do you know someone who should win TAT's Harriet Tubman Award?

Each year, TAT presents its most prestigious award – the Harriet Tubman Award – along with a \$5,000 check and a trophy to 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.

Do you know someone who deserves to win this award? If so, check out [the nomination process for the award now](#). TAT is receiving nominations between May 1-July 30, which is World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

TAT created the award in 2013 and named it to honor famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman, whose courageous personal actions resulted in the transportation of 300 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 Harriet Tubman Award was presented for the first time in 2014 to a travel plaza general manager in Washington. You can read the stories of all the winners [here](#).

Are your drivers/employees
TAT-Trained and making calls
that save lives?



They could be eligible for our prestigious Harriet Tubman Award that includes:

 \$5000 &  PRIZE PACKAGE

www.tatnonprofit.org/awards



**HARRIET
TUBMAN
AWARD**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 1 – Oklahoma City CB, Oklahoma City, OK

May 2 – Commercial Vehicle Training Association Spring Conference, Cape Coral, FL

May 3 – Ivan Armstrong Trucking Group Driver meeting, virtual

May 5 – Daimler Day of Awareness, Fort Mill, SC, with nationwide streaming

May 6 – Sapp Bros. Travel Center Junction Briefing, Cheyenne, WY

May 7 – Loves Travel Stops Junction Briefing, Cheyenne, WY

May 7 – CDL Coordinators and IT meeting (AAMVA and FMCSA), Orlando, FL

May 7 – Penske Corporate Event with FDP, Reading, PA

May 7-9 – Tenstreet User Conference, Las Vegas, NV

May 7 – Discussing Human Trafficking and Online Safety: The Role of Parents and Trusted Adults, virtual

May 8 – Central California Intelligence Center Law Enforcement Training, Sacramento, CA

May 8 – Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking webinar, virtual

May 14 – Justice Seekers: Street Grace, virtual

May 15 – May American Public Transportation Association Safety Spotlight webinar, virtual

May 15 – UPS, Jacksonville, FL

May 19 – New Jersey Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association Conference, Atlantic City, NJ

May 21 – TAT Task Force Lunch N Learn, virtual

May 23-25 – Indy 500 – Bridgestone/Firestone, Indianapolis, IN

May 29 – CN Railway/CNTL's FDP Event, Ontario, Canada



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TAT



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