

JUST THE FACTS

TMTA partners with industry leaders to form Texas Trucking Alliance



Texas Trucking Alliance

Promoting Best Practices for the Texas Trucking Industry

BY THE STEERING WHEEL STAFF

Texas Motor Transportation Association (TMTA), the state's largest trucking association, has joined together with four companies that serve the transportation industry to form a new alliance focused on Texas research.

Since 1932, TMTA has served its members by promoting the transportation industry, providing training, developing best practices and updating members on new regulations and industry trends. Through the alliance, TMTA and its partners will further these goals by providing ongoing research on the industry. It's a response to members who had expressed

that there was a lack of information about the trucking industry in the state. "The information on the trucking industry that was available wasn't state specific, only national averages," said John D. Esparza, president and CEO of TMTA. The new alliance will fill that void by sponsoring research that focuses exclusively on the Texas trucking industry—comprised of almost 16,000 trucking companies—and the issues these companies face.

Who is the alliance?

Four companies have partnered with TMTA to form the Texas Trucking Alliance (TTA): The Bassett Firm, Business

Financial Group, Lockton Companies, LLC and SelecTransportation Resources.

The Bassett Firm is a Dallas-based civil litigation firm that specializes in working with the transportation industry throughout the state. Its client list includes transportation companies, insurance carriers, and national retailers with large distribution operations. Named partner Mike Bassett and his team of experienced attorneys have tried over 300 cases to verdict in Texas and across the United States. Business Financial Group (BFG) is a San Antonio-based provider of financial and employee benefits services, insurance and risk management, and corporate retirement plan services. BFG has advised thousands of clients across the country and helped them develop financial and benefits plans for business owners and their employees. Lockton Companies, LLC, the world's largest privately held insurance broker, provides risk management services, casualty insurance, merger and acquisition support, and employee benefit planning services. Lockton specifically targets key industry sectors such as energy, health care and transportation.

SelecTransportation Resources is one of Texas's top dealers in heavy and medium duty trucks. SelecTransportation is located in Houston and has additional dealerships in Beaumont and Corpus Christi. The dealership specializes in Freightliner, Sprinter Vans, Sterling, Thomas Built Buses and Western Star. All four partners are committed to promoting the long-term strength and growth of the Texas trucking industry and ensuring that transportation companies have information they need to successfully operate their businesses. "Given the

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state of the economy, every trucking company benefits from the alliance’s research and publications,” Mike Bassett said.

The alliance was formed last year to provide information and continuing research that is useful to the Texas transportation industry. “We wanted something that was specific to Texas, because our trucking industry has specific characteristics and needs,” said Esparza. The alliance will focus on the trends, needs and concerns of all those involved in the transportation industry.

A key component of this research will be its use of feedback and input from industry partners. The alliance will survey trucking company executives, owner-operators, and secondary partners to ensure that the research is focused on the trends and developments that are of most concern

to the industry. “We can guess what a trucking company wants to know, but it’s only the owners who can tell us what is important to them, and what they want to know so they can plan for their business,” said Esparza. In this way, the alliance will provide information that is guided by Texas trucking company executives and that is useful in developing their business plans and navigating the changes in the industry.

Alliance to Provide Research Relevant to the Industry

Research highlights

2011 was the flagship year for the alliance and saw the unveiling of the Texas Trucking Industry Study—the first Texas study of its kind—which profiled the current state of the Texas industry.

Extensive research was conducted which allowed the alliance to gain meaningful data from the Texas trucking industry’s key players. The first phase of the 2011 research project pulled together two focus groups of trucking company owners, CEOs, and senior executive members to discuss hot button issues. In the second phase, random telephone surveys were conducted with owners and senior management of Texas trucking companies statewide.

Once the research phase was complete, the TTA used the data to identify valuable information regarding key practice areas which Texas trucking companies deal with on a day-to-day basis, such as: economic and business environment issues, safety issues, and human resource

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issues. The study identifies hot button issues currently brewing in the industry. Moreover, the study also provides insight to the best, current practices which Texas trucking companies are employing to deal with these hot button issues.

The study is meaningful to companies of all sizes, because it evaluates each issue to reveal the trends among both “large” companies—companies with 11 or more employee drivers—and “small” companies—companies with 10 or fewer employee drivers. In some cases, the findings were insightful. “Small trucking companies have a greater impact on the industry than I suspected,” said David Bishop, CEO of Refrigerated Trucking and Chairman of TMTA. “I found it interesting that 9 out of 10 trucking companies had less than \$1 million in revenue, and 88 percent of the companies had less than 10 drivers.” The research revealed that the size of the company does play a big role in many of the hot button issues due to their structural differences.

Alliance members also participated in providing seminars to top level executives of the Texas trucking community throughout the year.

What to look for in 2012

2012 has been an exciting year. The alliance is continuing its mission to identify and foster the best practices in the Texas trucking industry. The alliance plans to host multiple seminars as it visits TMTA chapters and publishes periodic articles on Texas-specific issues and trends.

The alliance kicked off the year by holding a presentation at TMTA Board of Directors Meeting in February in Austin, Texas. The seminar included a broad range of issues identified in the 2011 Texas Trucking Industry Study—with some in-depth coverage on select topics—and proved to be beneficial for trucking companies of all sizes.

This summer, the alliance will sponsor a second statewide study on financial and operational best practices and hot button issues for the Texas trucking industry. Look for the unveiling of select data from the upcoming 2012 study at the 2012 TMTA Annual Conference in August. Ⓞ

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