

Subject: Address obstacles to encourage women to enter careers in the trucking industry
By Ellen Voie, CAE, President/CEO Women in Trucking, Inc.

Part of the mission of Women In Trucking is to address obstacles that might keep women from entering the industry. One of the first questions often asked is, "what are these obstacles?" While there are numerous things that might limit the number of women who consider careers in trucking, the most crucial one is about image. From the outside, we don't appear to be very female focused. Not only does the trucking industry have a very male dominated culture, we haven't always reached out to women to invite them to join us. Look around you at any public event and then start asking the women there if they would like a job as a professional driver, mechanic or safety director. The typical reaction is one of disbelief.

We've heard comments ranging from, "I'm not mechanically minded," to "I'm not strong enough," to "I can't drive a stick shift." While men might often have the same response, our goal is to tell women that they CAN drive, fix, own, sell or dispatch trucks and that the industry wants and needs them. In addition to getting this message to the potential driver population, we need to show the non-trucking public that women are already doing these jobs - and have been for many years. How does Women In Trucking Association work toward changing this image? Here are some of the ways we've been successful in reaching women who might not have considered a career in the trucking industry.

First, by being a resource about women in the industry, we are often asked for quotes or to contribute to articles in the mainstream media. On many occasions, our staff or members are given the opportunity to appear on television or radio and reach beyond our own trucking community. In April 2010 Chicago's CBS Channel 2 interviewed Pat Sterling of Diva Trucking to talk about her status as a minority business owner-operator. In 2007 WIT board member and professional driver, Maggie Peterson, was interviewed for a Wall Street Journal article about truck driving championships. In 2008 WIT member Daren Baird appeared on the Today Show where she gave Meredith Vieira a ride in her big rig.

WIT member Shannon Smith was featured in a book, *Hidden America* by Jeanne Marie Laska, who read about Smith in an article from Women In Trucking. Oprah included a story about her in the May 2012 O Magazine with a circulation of 2.5 million readers. The article then led to an appearance on the Ricki Lake Show, where Smith gave Ricki a driving lesson aired to nearly 100,000 viewers. Events such as the "Influential Woman in Trucking Award" sponsored by Navistar provide great exposure for the women in leadership roles in our industry. The annual Salute to Women Behind the Wheel event held each March in Louisville, Kentucky, highlights the accomplishments of hundreds of female professional drivers.

Sporting events give us the chance to reach a greater audience, especially when they are broadcast on national television. In 2010, the LA Sparks held an event to honor Lisa Leslie's mom, Christine Leslie-Espinoza, who supported Lisa and her siblings as a professional driver. The Minnesota Lynx held a special Women In Trucking night in 2011 and this year the Cleveland Indians hosted a Women In Transportation event during a game against the Texas Rangers. Sports fans might have seen the Women In Trucking "Salute to the Women Behind the Wheel" commercial that was aired on ESPN during the Humanitarian Bowl in 2010 and the Famous Potato Bowl in 2011.

The WIT President/CEO is often invited to speak at non-trucking industry events, such as the Pinellas Technical College graduation ceremony in Florida. Voie has addressed high school girls in Indiana during a Wider Opportunities for Women day and college aged women at the University of Iowa Logistics Conference. Voie speaks to civic groups such as the Rotary, Lions and Zonta International organizations. The exposure WIT has brought to the need for more women in transportation careers has resulted in roundtable discussions with regulatory officials and legislators. Recent White House invitations include the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, panel discussions to encourage women to seek careers in transportation, meetings to address harassment issues and joint meetings with the

departments of Labor and Education to define skill sets for teenagers to steer them into transportation related jobs.

In July of 2012, Women In Trucking received an award from the White House for being a "Transportation Innovator Champion of Change." U.S. DOT Secretary LaHood praised the organization for, "thinking outside the box" in promoting careers in the trucking industry to women. This honor gave the WIT mission both credibility and immense exposure on a national level.

The Women In Trucking Association's reach extends beyond our borders, as speaking invitations come in from officials in other countries trying to attract and retain more women in transportation. Voie shared best practices at the Transport Women Australia conference in Melbourne in 2012 and at the Elmia Lastbil Truck Show in Sweden the same year.

Our Canadian neighbors lag behind the U.S. in the involvement of women in trucking careers, but invite Voie to speak at Logistics Quarterly events, Truck World trade show and exhibit and OTR's Recruiting and Retention Conferences.

In order to educate women (and men) who are still unfamiliar with the trucking industry and have never considered it as a career, we need to continue to show them that there are already women working as drivers, dispatchers, managers, safety directors and more. We need to help them by changing their perceptions, or their image of these careers. Women In Trucking Association is working hard to do that so we can all benefit from an increased presence of women at all levels in the trucking industry. We invite you to join us in this mission.

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[Women In Trucking, Inc.](http://WomenInTrucking.com)

P O Box 400 Plover, WI 54467-0400

Ellen@WomenInTrucking.org