

LEARNING

Curve

Volume 5, No. 4
Winter 2004

NETWORKING THE FINEST EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Featured School

Houston Community College

Houston Community College has come a long way in 10 years. After two years of research and development, Van O'Neal began the college's Commercial Truck Driving (CTD) program in January 1995, with just one instructor, four students, and one 1978 Kenworth salvaged from the college's diesel technology program.

Its location wasn't anything to brag about either. The CTD program began in a dilapidated, deserted rice mill with four acres of broken asphalt for a driving range and a classroom facility that had stood abandoned for four years. Today, after much hard work the program has become one of HCC's most respected programs.

As if these initial obstacles weren't enough, perhaps the toughest challenge was to convince school officials of the need for a truck driver-training curriculum.

"When I first approached the administration in 1993 with the idea of opening a driver training program, they wanted to know about the demand for truck drivers," O'Neal recalled. "We were looking for ways to serve the needs of our community. And one of those needs was training for people to go to work in jobs that offered good pay and positive career potential. With the local and state demand at an all-time high, pro-



fessional driver training was a natural fit."

The Roland Smith driving complex — named after a former trustee of the community college system who was dedicated to workforce development — includes eight classrooms, all of which are wired for voice-data compatibility. It features computer simulators and can handle teleconferences and multimedia presentations. Meeting rooms, a central seminar hall, student observation deck, student lounge, truck wash, driving range, and administrative wing, round out the center's amenities.

Perhaps the jewel in the program is a driving range equipped to prepare new drivers for all types of road conditions. The range is a 24-hour, state-of-the-art facility that includes a 10th-mile track, skid pad, and separated docking, backing, and parking areas. Also featured are simulated rail crossings and traffic control systems, plus space to stage other emergency driving simulations.

Since the program's inception in 1995, HCC has graduated more than 9,000 drivers who have been recruited by more than 70 transportation companies. The core course has also earned certification from the Professional Truck Driver Institution (PTDI). "We want our program to reflect excellence in the industry," O'Neal said.

The course has an average of 140 students. Three daytime shifts, with evening and weekend instruction periods are available as well. After its humble beginnings, the program now has a fleet of 30 power units and a staff of 26 part- and full-time instructors. They are all road-proven and average 20 years of over-the-road experience.

In addition to the students enrolled at the Roland Smith complex, the program is also contracted to train drivers for several transportation companies in the state. During its for-

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Las Vegas is National Convention Site Celebrate NAPFTDS! 15th Anniversary

Expressing enthusiasm for the March 7-9 Convention at the Flamingo Hotel, Arlene Kirby, convention co-chair, states, "We



encourage old and new members to come and help us celebrate 15 years of growth. If you know where any past members are, invite them so we can recognize their contribution too!" She says this in light of the relationships that have developed over the years:

To many, the Association has become a family of educators who represent publicly funded schools throughout the country.

Don Hess, co-chair with Kirby, further describes the fellowship. "...this is the one and only time of the entire year that I get to visit with all of the leaders in truck driver training to share ideas, techniques, motivational and recruiting strategies and so much more. You can subscribe to all of the newsletters and magazines you want to, but there is nothing like visiting with other members face to face. Without fail, I leave every convention a better administrator and trainer."



Kirby and Hess have planned a strong agenda. Members will share their own best practices — teaching strategies, use of technology. Forums include: marketing your program; transportation security and safety; a motor carrier roundtable; the FMCSA regulations update; and maximizing the NAPFTDS website.

To register or be a sponsor for this event,
See Page 2 — *National Convention*

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mative period, at least eight companies visited the program to recruit drivers. Now, five times that number seek out graduates, with close to 100% of them getting job offers.

Les Findeisen, director of policy for the Texas Motor Transportation Association, believes that a solid training program, like the one developed at HCC-Northeast, is beneficial for safety and economic reasons. "There's no doubt, the trucking industry has an incredible impact on the economy and today provides a tremendous opportunity for those entering this profession," Findeisen added.

O'Neal continues to weigh other opportunities. He is considering the need for an

expanded curriculum to encompass fleet management, dispatching, safety, and other areas.

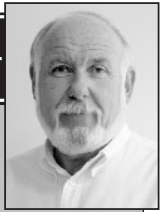
"We didn't build this facility strictly as an entry-level driver training program," he said. "We developed it to address the needs of the trucking industry — and to serve national interests of this important industry as it impacts our daily lifestyles and quality of life for every individual and business in the U.S."

Plans are underway to offer continuing education training for trucking professionals in the area of extreme driving conditions. ♦

For more information, contact *Houston Community College, 555 Community College Dr., Building B, Houston, TX 77013; 713-718-8200.*

President's Message

Bill Fath



Response to our seven, fall Region Conferences has been outstanding. I'd like to thank each of the regional coordinators for all their hard work and dedication in putting these meetings together. This year's coordinators are: **Wade Westphal, Dennis Hogue, Dave Gillespie, Sid Allen Jr., Don Hess, Bob Weining and Arlene Kirby.** Look for their reports in both this issue and the next issue of *Learning Curve*.

It was my privilege to attend a number of the conferences, as many as our budget allowed. My goal was to try to have an Executive Board member at each event. Another goal was to get all publicly funded schools in each state to participate in the regionals. We have met that goal in some states.

I would like to thank all of the board members and past presidents for making the Board Retreat in Appleton, WI a big success. Participants included five past presidents: **John Hale, Van O'Neal, Chuck Collins, Don Hess, and Robert McClanahan;** and retired past board member **Russ Hillenbrand.** Thanks also go to **Chuck Collins and Pat Spillane** for their hard work in putting this together; **Fox Valley Technical College** for hosting the event; **J.J. Keller** for the tour and lunch; and special thanks to **Chuck and his wife** for their hospitality in providing brats, cheese, and beverages at their house.

Last, but certainly not least, don't forget the NAPFTDS National Convention is only a few months away. It will be held March 7-9 at the beautiful Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. Keep in mind that Feb. 16 is the cut-off date to qualify for the hotel group rate. Many thanks to co-chairs **Arlene Kirby and Don Hess** in planning this big event.

Don't forget that a registration form is inserted in this issue. There is also a space on the form for anyone who wants to be a convention sponsor. Finally, we are most grateful to our loyal sponsors that support our Association.

Talk to you again in the next *Learning Curve!*

National Convention — from Page 1

please complete the form inserted in this issue. Note: February 16 is the cut-off date for the

Monday, MARCH 7

5:00-6:30 p.m. **Board Meeting, Convention Registration, Vendor Displays**

6:30-8:00 p.m. **Reception:** Welcome to all attendees!

Tuesday, MARCH 8

8:00-9:30 a.m. Registration, Continental Breakfast, Welcome from **Bill Fath** NAPFTDS President, Introductions with **Carol Colwell & Tina Frindt**

9:30-11:45 a.m. **Chuck Horan, FMCSA, Chief Enforcement Officer** (awaiting confirmation), Presentation: FMCSA regulations update

11:45-12:00 p.m. **Nomination of officers**

12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00-2:00 p.m. **Transportation Security & Safety, (Speaker TBA)**

2:00-2:30 p.m. **Carol Colwell, Maximizing the NAPFTDS website**

2:30-2:45 p.m. Break

2:45-4:00 p.m. **Motor Carrier Round Table**

4:00 p.m. **Board nominees: presentations**

7:00 p.m. **Recognition Dinner**

Wednesday, MARCH 9

8:00-8:45 a.m. Continental Breakfast,

8:45-9:30 a.m. Report from Executive Director, **Chuck Collins**

9:30-10:30 a.m. **Marketing your Program to Industry & Students, (Speaker TBA)**

10:30-10:45 a.m. Break

10:45-12:15 a.m. **Sharing Best Practices, all attendees**

12:15-1:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30-2:00 p.m. **Election of officers**

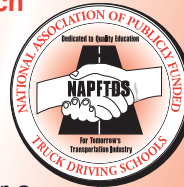
2:00-3:00 p.m. **New Technology Round Table with Vendors/Sponsors**

3:15-4:00 p.m. **Open Forum:** Idea-sharing among membership, vendors, sponsors

4:00-6:00 p.m. **Final Board Meeting**

hotel group rate. Then, mark your calendars and look forward to some excellent speakers and features! The agenda follows.

We Welcome Each Sponsor to our 2005 National Convention



Your contribution includes space for a display booth at receptions. See Registration Form in this issue or contact **Chuck Collins, call 920-739-9786**

Gillespie Gives His All

Congratulations to **Dick Gillespie!** He was honored with the Outstanding Voluntary Service Award at the National Truck Driving Championship held in Salt Lake City in August.

From *Transport Topics*: "If there is a legend in this industry or championships, [he's] it," said **Tommy Thomas**, NTDC committee chairman. "He never fails to give it his all." Thomas had more praise, describing Gillespie as someone the drivers "know and respect."

Involved in the championships since 1973,

Gillespie won national championships as a driver in seven different classes. Then, his volunteer work began in 1992; he feels that his experience with the championships made him a better volunteer.

Gillespie is now a part-time teacher in the entry-level and customized training programs at a member NAPFTDS school, Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount, MN. There he joins his brother **Dave Gillespie**, who is the program director at the College.

Dick Gillespie can take pride in this, too: He has three million accident-free miles during his 35-year truck driving career!

Retreat Highlights *FROM THE LAND OF THE CHEESEHEADS*

With twelve Board members in attendance, **President Bill Fath** welcomed them to the NAPFTDS Board of Directors Retreat held in Appleton, Wisconsin, August 26-28.

Officials of **Fox Valley Technical College** generously provided facilities for the Retreat while Treasurer **Pat Spillane** made the arrangements.

Board members appreciated a tour and lunch at **J.J. Keller & Associates**. **Deb Meyer**, Sales Supervisor, graciously arranged this at the respected publishing company.

NAPFTDS Secretary **Tina Frindt** says that she feels the highlights of Board accomplishments during the Retreat are twofold: 1) The revised bylaws centering on the updated mission statement; 2) The ideas for member recruitment and retention.

The Mission Statement follows: *The National Association of Publicly Funded Truck Driving Schools is an organization established for the promotion of professionalism and quality education within the trucking industry.*

The membership project includes: Phase I—invite all public schools to join as Full Members; Phase II—increase Associate Members; Phase III—retention of members. Currently NAPFTDS has 20-30 state captains. Executive Director **Chuck Collins** is working to get 50. He requested help from Board members to look within their states and identify/recruit publicly funded schools that may not yet be members.

Russ Hildebrand, past Board member, offered his services as a volunteer on the

Membership and Recruitment Committee. He plans to contact 15 states, identifying all the public truck driving schools in each state; following this, he will invite each school to join the Association.

Bob Weining, Don Hess, and Chuck Mosqueda join Russ Hildebrand as members on the committee.

A Membership Benefit Sheet, developed by **Carol Colwell**, will be used, not only to ignite the interest of schools and allied industries to join NAPFTDS, but also to encourage members to maintain their memberships. It outlines benefits such as website information, member discounts, and professional growth opportunities.

With appreciation to Tina Frindt, Retreat Minutes

Regions Hold Informative Conferences

What: Region # 1 Conference

Where: Bates Technical College, Tacoma, WA

When: November 4-6

Speakers/Attendees: Included **Bill Fath**, NAPFTDS President; **Linda Nodland**, Conway Western Express; **Rob Sharpe**, Washington Trucking Association; **Rick Flint**, Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad; **Jerry Amato**, FMCSA.

What was Discussed: Flint spoke about Operation Lifesaver and railroad crossing certification. Sharpe discussed Highway Watch certification, while Nodland spoke on women in transportation. Additional topics included a DOL Hazmat and CDL update, school challenges and teaching strategies, shippers' issues, and state funding issues. Industry carriers also held a roundtable discussion.

Notable: Coordinator, **Wade Westphal** appreciates his advisory committee for its full support of this conference.

Submitted by Wade Westphal

What: Region # 3 Conference

Where: Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount, MN

When: October 14-15

Speakers/Attendees: Included **Jay Sletten**, Minnesota State Patrol; **Colonel John Rogers**, American Trucking Association; Attorney **Michael Glover**; **Rick Bayes**, Werner Enterprises; NAPFTDS President **Bill Fath**; former NAPFTDS President **John Hale**, **Bill Wise** and **Tom Gierok**, Southeast Technical College; **Paul Foster**, Lake Superior College; **Dave Keays** and **Bob Loughan**, Chippewa Valley Tech; and **Ray Raske** and **Lynn Marsh**, DMACC.

What was Discussed: Sletten spoke on state regulations including Hours of Service; Rogers discussed the Highway Watch program, and Glover talked about truck driver instructor and school liability.

Notable: Coordinator, **Dave Gillespie** said the unique subject matter of Glover's presentation drew audience interest.

Submitted by Dave Gillespie

What: Region # 5 Conference

Where: John Wood Community College, Quincy, IL

When: September 30 — October 1

Speakers/Attendees: Included **Kent Price**, **GearMaster**; **Rick Bayes**, Werner Enterprises; **Angie Simon**, account representative with J.J. Keller; eInstruction, "the clicker guys"; **FHA's Operation Highway Watch**; **Joyce Simpson**, assistant professor with Quincy University; NAPFTDS President **Bill Fath**, JWCC President **Dr. Bill Simpson**, V.P of Instruction **Larry Fischer**, Dean of Instruction **Nancy Schneblin**, and Foundation Director **Barb Holthaus**.

What was Discussed: The Operation Highway Watch addressed the industry's role in anti-terrorist activities. Simpson presented an extremely interesting and beneficial daylong seminar on adult learning styles and strategies, incorporating information from the "clicker guys" into her presentation. The clicker guys' demonstrated how teachers can obtain instantaneous feedback from students. A demonstration on fire science was also held.

Notable: "This program was fantastically well received," stated Don Hess. The conference was very well attended, with more than 40 attendees. The staff

NAPFTDS MEMBERSHIP PRE-APPLICATION

Organization/Company: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____

FAX: _____

E-Mail: _____

Mailing Address: _____

FULL MEMBERSHIP (\$175): Any publicly funded school or representative employee of that school engaged directly in providing truck driver training.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (\$350): Any industry or representative employee of that industry which indirectly supports public truck driving schools, limited to agencies such as trucking companies, insurance companies, publishers, and equipment manufacturers interested in the welfare of publicly funded truck driving schools.

AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP (\$250): Limited to administrators or staff at a publicly funded school interested in the trucking industry or administrators in schools that contract with proprietary organizations to provide truck driver training.

THE NEXT STEP: Application for membership shall be made on an application form as may be required by the Board of Directors. A majority vote of the Board of Directors is necessary for the acceptance of an application for membership. All applicants who have been accepted into the membership of the Association must submit a fully completed and signed application form that, by doing, signifies their adherence of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of said Association. Membership in the applicable class shall be complete upon application of the Association, approval of the Board, and payment of the appropriate dues.

Return form to:

Pat Spillane, Treasurer, NAPFTDS
1825 N. Bluemound Drive, P.O. Box 2277
Appleton, WI 54912-2277
Fax: 920-735-4862

Questions about membership may be directed to:
Chuck Collins, Executive Director, NAPFTDS
Office Phone: 920-739-9786
Cell Phone: 920-205-4259

of JWCC would like to thank all of those who took time from busy schedules to attend. We hope that everyone took something useful home from the conference."

Submitted by Don Hess

RULES & RIGs

Voicing Concern About Entry-Level Training

In announcing the beginning of a multi-year review project, FMCSA Administrator **Annette M. Sandberg** stated, "Now is the time to look at every aspect of our safety program — how we use it, how we can improve it, and how we can add to it — so we can be ready for the future."

The U.S. DOT's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration then held a series of six listening sessions this past autumn. The agency wanted to get feedback on how it can best monitor the safety of motor carriers and ensure their compliance with federal regulations.

Receiving notice of these sessions, and realizing that they would likely be a good forum in which to bring up the issue of entry-level training, **Michael O'Connell**, Executive Director of CVTA, (Commercial Vehicle Training Association) contacted NAPFTDS. Both Associations are proponents of improved training programs, with minimum training requirements of major concern.

NAPFTDS Board members agreed that Association representation at the FMCSA sessions would be appropriate. Some of their comments follow.

President **Bill Fath**: "I feel that we need to work with CVTA, especially on issues like entry-level drivers and any other issues that are crucial to the safety of our industry and the motoring public."

Past-President **John Hale**: I agree that this issue is of the utmost importance. It is my belief that we should make every effort to be in attendance at all the sessions."

Phil Steinkamp: "These sessions will be a good place to re-state our position but, the purpose of these meetings is 'how to better monitor motor carriers' so we may not get the type of discussion that we want."

Chuck Mosqueda: "We need to do whatever it takes to help inform the FMCSA, so they can make wise decisions for the safety and the future of our industry."

Tina Frindt: "We must be able to offer alternatives to the rules when we are given the opportunity to speak. This issue is much too important to ignore."

Arlene Kirby: "I believe NAPFTDS should make whatever steps necessary to join this group [CVTA] with a unified voice regarding the entry level driver training issue..."

At the time of this writing, NAPFTDS planned to be represented at three of the six FMCSA meetings: **Van O'Neal** in Dallas, TX, **Arlene Kirby** on the east coast, and **Bill Fath** in Chicago.

TCA and NAPFTDS to Work Together

At its September meeting, the NAPFTDS Board of Directors voted to become members of TCA (Truckload Carriers Association). Although the NAPFTDS membership type will have no voting privileges, it can still play an important role in nurturing communications between the two groups. The Association selected **Robert McClanahan**, Past-President of NAPFTDS and Director of Central Tech Transportation & Safety Education in Drumright, OK, to be its representative to TCA.

McClanahan, after speaking with **Rich Clemente**, PTDI Program Director for TCA, reports that Clemente is happy about NAPFTDS membership in TCA and is looking forward to working with NAPFTDS on issues that concern us all.

Important notice to those who are not yet members of NAPFTDS

If you are not a member of the Association, and you would like to continue receiving the *Learning Curve* and other benefits of membership, please complete the **MEMBERSHIP PRE-APPLICATION FORM** in this newsletter and return with your payment of appropriate dues. While we have generous supporters, member dues are the backbone of our Association.

Mosqueda Named to TCA

Chuck Mosqueda, NAPFTDS Board member and administrator of the commercial drive education program at Wichita Area Technical College, was recently named to the Board of Directors of the Truckload Carriers Association (TCA).

According to Mosqueda, the appointment is a win-win situation for both organizations. He said the TCA would benefit from Wichita Tech's involvement with training technologies and in gaining additional perspective from a training school. He said the NAPFTDS would gain by obtaining current information about national issues within the trucking community.

"Since the truck companies are the customers we serve, it is important we stay tuned to their needs," Mosqueda said. "By staying involved with the TCA we find out about the strengths and weaknesses of our students and we can address these matters."

Special thanks to our ad sponsors in this issue of

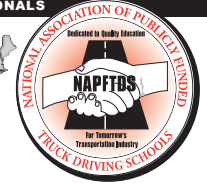


Please consider their quality products and services. For information on advertising, contact **Chuck Collins**, call 920-739-9786

NETWORKING THE FINEST EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY

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NEWSLETTER FOR PROFESSIONALS



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National Association of Publicly Funded Truck Driving Schools

An association of nonprofit, post-secondary, public schools whose purpose is to encourage member schools to promote high standards and ethical principles in the creation and/or administration of training programs.