

# The Diamond Dust

## Meet the Challenge Meets the End

Diamond Transportation System, Inc. is regrettably announcing the termination of the Meet the Challenge program.

The program originally intended to not only reward our owner operators for safety, on time pickups, correct logs and revenue goals, but also to improve upon all of these things. After 19 months of this program, a review of each of these areas determined that there were no considerable improvements.

Another contributing factor to the discontinuation of the program was the apparent lack of interest from owner operators. Diamond conducted phone interviews and sent out questionnaires with minimal response from owner operators. That is not to say that none of our owner operators utilized the program, but they were far fewer than the ones that did not.

We are looking at new and different ways to reward our owner operators without the use of a point system. A couple ideas are an improved safety program or possibly a mileage bonus. We hope to have a decision made by January 1, but no final decision has been made. If you have any suggestions or have heard of programs from other drivers, please relay them to your fleet manager.

In the meantime you have earned your points over the past year and 1/2, so Diamond is giving a grace period to redeem your points.

The final day to fax in your orders will be December 1, 2004. This will allow time for any holiday orders to be fulfilled.



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## Hours of Service: Effective for One More Year!

From the TCA

Congress passed legislation on September 30 that retains the "new" hours of service (HOS) rules in place until September 30, 2005. The provision was contained in H.R. 5183, which was signed into law that same day by President Bush.

An FMCSA spokesperson explained, "Congress's intent was to provide the agency, until September 30, 2005, time

to revise the hours of service rules to work on the concerns voiced by the U.S. District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals...What the FMCSA recognizes is the intent of Congress in H.R. 5183 to avoid widespread disruption in the enforcement of the rules."

There is still a pending U.S. Court of Appeals decision on the HOS

case. On October 4, the FMCSA formally withdrew their earlier motion for a "stay" of the Court's mandate, as did the TCA, ATA and the Distribution and LTL Carriers.

Despite these developments, the Court is still expected to rule at some point on the FMCSA's request to keep the "new" rules in effect.



## Owner Operators of the Month - Elliott, Skillingstad, Simons

Congratulations to Jeff Elliott, Casey Skillingstad, and Roderick Simons who earned Diamond's Owner-Operator of the Month awards in July, August and September, respectively.

Jeff joined the Diamond family in June 2004, and brings with him an abundance of industry experience and professionalism. He also brings his wife Jackie along to keep him company! Jeff and Jackie consider themselves "professional tourists" and use their time on the road to look for just the right property to build a new home on.

Casey has been part of the Diamond team since September, 1998 and this is

his second award in 2004. Knowledge and experience in the specialized freight industry is a huge plus for Casey as well as Diamond. In his spare time, Casey says he gets the most pleasure spending it with family. He has 5 children and 2 grandchildren which should make for very enjoyable family gatherings.

Roderick, a.k.a. "Roody," also came on board with Diamond in June 2004 and has been doing an outstanding job for us ever since. He works very hard and is dedicated to the profession as well as to Diamond. Roderick likes to cruise around on his motorcycle to relax. He also rebuilds cars and remodels homes in his free time.



Elliott



Skillingstad



Simons

# CUSTOMERS AND AGENTS

## Shipper News: What Is Going On with our Customers?

What's going on? Customers are looking for their truck to arrive, that's what!

They're also looking for someone to haul their freight. We are experiencing throughout the country high demand for capacity, that is available trucks.

The need for rgn and step-deck trailers has increased due to a great increase in production. The industry is now in a situation where we are selecting with which customers to do business.

*"We are now in a situation where we as the service provider can choose the customers we want to do business with."*

While this is a role reversal from the norm, and a positive one for Diamond, it is now in our hands to make positive strides on the service end in order to keep those customers.

Customers are increasing their demand for timely pickup and delivery schedules. They also have an increased desire for real-time updates on load progress, which makes prompt call-ins even more important since we have no satellite

tracking systems in place.

When customers call and ask us when their shipment is delivering, we need to respond with a firm answer. The answer is the delivery time that drivers agree upon with their fleet manager.

Fleet managers are held accountable for the times that are set when dispatching a load. Owner operators too must be held accountable for their pickup and delivery times.

We are also continually seeking new accounts, but are becoming cautious that they are the type of customers that fit our type of operation.

## Diamond & Bush Visit Farm Progress Show

The Farm Progress Show and others like it are a large part of Diamond's business. Rebecca Beck represented Diamond Transportation System at this year's show in Alleman, IA.

This enabled Diamond to meet with vendors, pick up product information and obtain pictures of equipment we transport.

Rebecca was also front and center for a historical, Farm Progress Show Presidential visit, where President George W. Bush spoke to over 13,000 people. One memorable quote was, "This is a time that requires firm resolve, steadfast purpose, and a deep belief in the values that make us a great nation."

Also making history at this event was the change of date. The Midwestern Farm

Progress Show was held one month earlier (August 31-September 2) than traditionally scheduled. The dates were changed at the visitors and exhibitors request to avoid peak harvest time at the end of September.



G. W. Bush speaks

This will set a precedent for future Farm Progress shows as they will be held the Tuesday thru Thursday before Labor Day.

Next year's show will be August 30 thru September 1 in Decatur, IL.

This show has been the outline for other Farm Shows throughout the country. The exhibitors (more on **Farm Progress** , page 4)

### TOP-FIVE AGENTS JULY—SEPTEMBER

1. Frank Lantrip
2. Dale White & Larry Meek
3. Brenda Suttles
4. Darlene Hempel
5. Tim Zimmerman

Diamond congratulates our top producers and thanks all of our agents for a job well done! Agents are a key to our success and we would like to expand our agent traffic whenever possible.

## THE DISPATCH PERSPECTIVE

### COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET, Part 2

Diamond operations has been making great strides to monitor and utilize dispatching data. With that data, some tough goals have been set for the fleet managers.

Some of the areas we are targeting in operations are deadhead percentage, rate per mile (for all miles) and total miles traveled. Fleet managers are provided with weekly data showing individual owner operator's numbers for the past eight weeks and a 13-week average to show trend.

Fleet managers can also compare an individual owner operator's numbers with the rest of the owner operators on his dis-

patch board or against the other fleet manager's boards.

It is important for our owner operators to have individual goals set as well. It is therefore also important that you make sure that you communicate those goals to your fleet manager. Let him know when you are expecting to run more (or less) miles, when your deadhead is too high and what your money needs/goals are.

With these lines of communication open and the data available to our fleet managers, we (Diamond and the owner operators) should be able to work out a profitable relationship. Without communication we will never know how well we can all do.

-Jon Coca, Vice President—Operations



# SAFETY & COMPLIANCE

## STAY SAFE: Safety Is No Accident!

The key to safety in any industry is work, it doesn't just happen, it takes work. Avoiding accidents, cargo damage and personal injury incidents is critical to all of us. Safety affects our safety rating which affects our insurance rates and in turn affects our financial well being.

I say our, meaning Diamond and its owner operators, because it affects all of us. Over the past couple of years we have had good results in all areas. However, there is concern over the trend we have seen in the past couple of months.

Based on the information I have seen, it appears that failure to follow procedure and guidelines is the main cause of claims and accidents we have encountered. Everything from failing to do a thorough walk around inspection of your load to driving too fast with failing to yield the right of way in construction and

not checking mirrors and blind spots for four wheelers, in between.

It is the failure to take the time on the basics which gets us into trouble.

### CHANGING CONDITIONS

We are approaching the time of year when road conditions can change quickly. Each county seems to handle their stretch of interstate differently than the other. Some salt quickly and some seem to wait for who knows what, but they wait.

Bridges freeze faster than other pavement and black ice can appear in a moment, so use extra care when traveling in adverse conditions. Reducing speed by few miles per hour will minimally change travel time and help you get to your destination safely.

-Pat McLeod, Vice President—Administrative Services

## News and Notes

**INSPECT YOUR LOAD 1ST**—Before you leave a shipper make sure you inspect your load. Leave no stone unturned. Make notes on your bill of lading noting all scratches and dents. Have the shipper sign your bill and then call them in to Diane Dahse. This applies to all freight (not just new product). You will be surprised at the headaches you avoid because of this.

**KEEP INFO CURRENT**—Here at Diamond we like to keep our information current. Recently, we have had a few mail items get returned. If you change your address please make sure you contact our records department and get it updated.

**ILLINOIS PLANS TOLL INCREASE**—Gov. Rod Blagojevich is proposing to double tolls for car drivers who pay cash on Illinois tollways and nearly triple rates for large trucks using the system to help fund a \$5.3 billion overhaul of the state's toll roads. The plan calls for rebuilding nearly all of the IL tollway's 274-mile system, widening about half its roads and replacing toll booths with "open road tolling" lanes that allow I-PASS users to drive through barrier-free plazas. Under the new plan, rates would increase for big trucks regardless of I-Pass use. An 18-wheel semi pays \$1.50 at most toll plazas. The new toll would be \$4, but the toll would drop to \$3 if the truck passed through plazas during the period between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.



## Employee News & Anniversaries

Diamond Transportation would once again like to congratulate all of our employees and owner operators for another year of service. We appreciate all the work you do for us.

Diamond also welcomes four temporary employees to our Racine office. Ryan Sheppard, customer service, Jen Edwards, recruiting, Cindi Bohn, sales and Yolanda Gonzales, accounting.

### Employee Anniversaries

- Randy Brown—14 yrs. Oct.
- Terry Peaslee—11 yrs. Oct.
- Mike Barrows—6 yrs. Oct.
- Buck Jenkins—51 yrs. Nov.
- Harvey Jenkins—40 yrs. Nov.
- Chris Linders—14 yrs. Nov.
- John Marr—10 yrs. Nov.
- Jeanie Kuehl—38 yrs. Dec.
- Bill Hall—5 yrs. Dec.

### Owner Operator Anniversaries

- Teresa Albers—1 yr. Oct.
- Jeff Williams—1 yr. Oct.
- Dan Casey—2 yrs. Oct.
- Pete Cheely—3 yrs. Nov.
- Phil Costello—1 yr. Dec.
- Robert Danielczyk—1 yr. Oct.
- Phil Jostad—32 yrs. Nov.
- Jeremy Mathison—3 yrs. Nov.
- Ron Perry—3 yrs. Oct.
- Russ Sparks—23 yrs. Dec.
- Earl Swallow—1 yr. Oct.
- Duayn Tatro—1 yr. Oct.
- Arlan Turk—22 yrs. Nov.
- Arvin Weber—12 yrs. Dec.
- Irvin Woodruff—37 yrs. Nov.

### New Owner Operators

- |                    |                     |                      |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| • Will Atchley     | • Lee Cavanagh      | • Lenny Hughes       |
| • Norman Beean     | • Matthew Edwards   | • Robert Key         |
| • Samuel Blair     | • Mike Emry         | • Tom Killion        |
| • Royce Brower Sr. | • Dicky Featherston | • Elizabeth McCarthy |
| • William Brown    | • David Gilliland   | • Pat McCarthy       |
| • George Burr      | • John Griffin      | • Charles McKenny    |
| • Tom Carmichael   | • Daniel Hawkins    | • John Underwood     |
| • Larry Cavanagh   | • Mark Healy        | • Charlie Williams   |

## THE BACK PAGE

### RECRUITING's Last Word: We need your help

After a strong three months of recruiting, hiring has leveled off, but Diamond Transportation is still committed to increasing our fleet and growing our business.

To do this, we need to get new owner operators in the door, and your efforts in this area are important to our success.

In order to secure additional freight, Diamond needs to supply our customers with more power (i.e. trucks). In other words, the

greater our truck count, the more freight we can accept and this is an big plus for all of our owner operators.

The advantages are obvious. Less time waiting for your next load and less deadheading to your next load means more revenue!!

Diamond is committed to growth and is offering a \$1,000 referral bonus for each O/O you refer who is hired on.

Liz Bruns—Recruiting Director

### The Daily Routine

**CANADIAN FREIGHT**—Diamond has great revenue freight into and out of Canada for those of you that can go in. For some that is not possible. For years there has been this fear of entering Canada and being stopped because somewhere back in history you did something that Canada felt was such that they did not want you in their country. Well we have been involved with working on procedures that will clear you from future problems of this kind. The Canadian Consulate will accept applications for permission to be allowed into Canada. While these applications may take some work on your part to complete, we will work with you to obtain the clearance needed. If the offences are over 5 years ago, you can apply for approval so there will be no further border crossing issues for life. It is interesting that they are very critical of DWI offences no matter when they occurred but we can work to obtain clearance. Please contact Pat McLeod and he will work with you on this issue.

**LOADED MEASUREMENTS**—You must have accurate measurements on all freight. As mentioned previously, Diamond will order permits in advance based upon the tendered load information for your first two states. When you complete loading, exact measurements must be taken. At this time, call in the measurements and the rest of the permits will be ordered. If the measurements change, Diamond will re-order the first two state permits at not charge to you, the owner operator. Thank you for your attention to this very important subject.

**RESOLVING ISSUES**—We tell everyone who walks through the door, "We have an open door policy." That said, it must be understood that there is a chain of command at Diamond. Issues, whether major or minor, are a concern and your immediate supervisor (fleet manager) needs to hear about them. The procedure to follow, if you are not satisfied with the response, is to ask to speak to his or her supervisor. This allows the person in charge to become aware of the issue and handle it in an efficient manner. If issues do not escalate through the proper chain of command, time may be wasted in trying to understand the issue and re-explaining the situation can cause confusion. While we all enjoy talking and discussing your issues and concerns, it is important that if you have a topic for discussion that is not being addressed by your supervisor (Fleet Manager) to follow the procedure above.



### Newsletter by Email

Would like to have this newsletter emailed directly to your computer? Let us know. Simply send your email address to [webmaster@diamondtrans.net](mailto:webmaster@diamondtrans.net) with the subject "Diamond Dust." We will then send you our newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format.

### BUSH APPLAUDS TRUCK DRIVERS

President Bush issued a proclamation for National Truck Driver Appreciation Week, applauding the nation's truck drivers for their strong work ethic and professionalism.

The President said, "Secure, efficient, and reliable freight transportation is essential to our Nation's economy...truck drivers transport approximately 9 billion tons of freight each year worth nearly \$6.7 trillion. America's transportation industry also plays a vital role in protecting our homeland and helping to



Bush waves to the crowd after his speech.

make our roads safer. I applaud America's truck drivers for your strong work ethic and professionalism. Your efforts increase efficiency within the industry and help make America stronger." National Truck Driver Appreciation Week was observed from August 22 through August 28,

### Farm Progress Show (from page 2)

are from the top agribusinesses, local, regional and international manufacturers. They show their latest technology, products and service.

Many of our owner operators make these shows possible every year. Owner operators assist in the set up and tear down of the shows and because of this, vendors speak very highly of them and depend on their experience to complete the job.

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