

**Remarks by Anne S. Ferro
FMCSA Administrator
Women in Trucking
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Introduction

Thank you, Ellen Voie, President of Women in Trucking, Fred Andersky of Bendix and Mark Shapiro of the Cleveland Indians for inviting me to join you.

Ellen has been a true champion for women in the trucking industry and Bendix is a great supporter.

I'm delighted to be here at Progressive Field – home of the Cleveland Indians – to talk about safety in transportation and the important role of women in trucking.

First, it's really neat to be here at Progressive Field. Twenty-eight years ago, I helped recruit a Cleveland Indians minor league team to Southern Maryland. Well, the Indians didn't need Maryland as much as Maryland needed them, with their rich history as a charter member of the American League.

Ohio has a rich baseball history for women. Remember the movie, "A League of Their Own," about women breaking new ground in professional sports and on baseball fields like this one?

During World War II, major league players were in short supply. Dorothy "Dottie" Kamenshek, a native Ohioan, and over 600 women of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball league stepped up to the plate.

Dottie played from 1943 to 1953 for the Rockford Peaches, starting as an outfielder but soon taking over at first base.

During her 10-year career with the league, she played for seven All-Star teams, held the league's put-out record, and struck out only 81 out of nearly 3,800 times at bat.

Dottie is a great example of a woman who achieved success in her career and helped level the playing field, quite literally, for women.

The groundbreaking work of women like Dorothy has helped women in all fields.

When we have the opportunity and seize it, women can achieve anything.

Women in Transportation

I am proud to be part of an Administration that's doing so much to put the rights of women at the top of our national agenda.

One of President Obama's very first official acts was to sign the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act – seeking an end to pay discrimination for women. And early on, he established the White House Council on Women and Girls.

At DOT, we're doing our part. We're working to highlight opportunities to bring a new generation of women into the transportation industry as engineers and diesel mechanics; as airline pilots and maritime ship pilots; as highway designers and truck drivers. And we need them in operations roles so they're also represented in the board room.

We need to keep up the call for women to seek new and better opportunities in transportation.

By having a greater presence in the workforce, we can address any challenges facing the industry and encourage more women to join us.

Safety and Success

A strong transportation system is supported by safety conscious, qualified, and skilled drivers and safety managers.

Women not only belong behind the wheel, they belong in other operations roles. And they belong in policy roles where they can make the trucking industry *safer, stronger, and smarter*.

One example I can give you – close to home – is the story of Linda Gilliam, the FMCSA Division Administrator for the state of Ohio. Linda started out as a secretary and through hard work and persistence, rose to become Division Administrator. That is a remarkable climb for an outstanding safety leader who also happens to be a woman.

Often I get questions about what it takes for a woman to be successful in the transportation industry. There's no clear-cut answer.

In my experience, success has everything to do with hard work and the decisions we make in our careers and in our lives. And it also has a little to do with good timing and making yourself available to new opportunities.

For transportation, success is also directly linked to safety performance.

Safety on the road has everything to do with the decisions we make when we're behind the wheel or when we place others behind the wheel. Those who put safety *first* are poised to be successful.

We need to think about safety not as it applies to one task or one job but as an overarching integrated culture. Safety in the logistics supply chain means all of us affect the change.

My role as FMCSA Administrator is to ensure that we're doing all we can to make our roadways safer – for motor carriers, commercial motor vehicle drivers and everyone they share the road with.

The most important thing FMCSA can do for this industry is to do our job – and to do it well, listening to key users and bringing in new voices. Let me give you an idea of where we are:

FMCSA Safety Agenda

Because there is no higher priority than safety, we have taken action to reduce fatigued driving by fully implementing new hours of service standards earlier this month.

Our new hours-of-service rule makes sensible changes that give drivers a better chance to rest behind the wheel and reduce the risk of fatigue-related crashes.

On a related front, we are moving forward with a new rule on Electronic Logging Devices to improve hours of service compliance and meet the requirements placed on DOT by Congress.

Safe roadways depend on responsible employers and drivers that comply with the Agency's drug and alcohol testing requirements.

FMCSA is completing a rulemaking that proposes a Commercial Driver's License Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse that would record positive drivers' test results for controlled substances and alcohol and other violations of the testing regulations.

FMCSA is also proposing a rule that will save the industry about 1.7 billion dollars per year, without adversely affecting safety. This proposed rule does away with the requirement that truck drivers submit and trucking companies retain paper vehicle inspection reports when there were no vehicle defects found.

The savings from each report may be modest but when you consider that it will provide almost daily savings for millions of drivers – it will have a large impact.

Compliance, Safety, Accountability or CSA remains a cornerstone in our efforts to increase the overall safety of the industry. This year, we are focusing on a number of Safety Measurement System or SMS-related initiatives.

These government initiatives compliment the great work industry is doing to prevent crashes and save lives. Bendix is an outstanding innovation leader and I encourage you to checkout their truck for a demonstration.

A few closing thoughts:

I would like to leave you with a few things to consider.

Women are more visible at all levels in transportation industry, but the number of women who are professional drivers is still only about five percent of the industry. The numbers are just as small for women in fields of diesel mechanic, highway engineer, and safety manager.

Women have made profound changes in organizations and industries. We owe it to ourselves to expand their role in the transportation sector.

So my challenge to you: To the new kids on the block, learn what you can while you can.

Align yourself with those who will make a positive impact on your career – watch, listen, and learn. Ask questions.

Find out the how and more importantly, the why. You are working with living, breathing, walking, talking examples of how to get it done.

There's nothing quite like the opportunity to learn from the person who actually wrote the book you're trying to read.

To those who've been around the block a time or two, become a mentor. If you're not mentoring, you're cheating the next generation. Teach them what you did to lay that foundation of safety.

Setting goals and breaking barriers isn't easy. Stay focused. Keep your passion. Remember what brought you to where you are and what you want to learn going forward.

You may find you're still the only woman in the room. Don't be afraid to speak up. But also know when to pick your battles.

Not every situation you find yourself in will be a homerun – but when you work hard and don't compromise your standards – success can be yours.

Conclusion

Eleanor Roosevelt said it best, “You must do the things that you think you cannot do.”

Working hard, sticking to “it,” and using good common sense – never go out of style. Positive rules to live by can help keep up the work that is necessary when we feel as if we have an uphill battle to climb – like Dottie Kamenshek did taking the field during World War II or Linda Gilliam did by becoming FMCSA’s Division Administrator in Ohio.

I want to thank Women in Trucking and Bendix for inviting me to speak about the role of women in transportation.

As members of the transportation community – whether you are a driver, fleet manager, dispatcher, technician, or CEO – the most important thing the American people count on us to deliver is safety.

With your help, we can open more doors for more women, open minds, inspire great achievements and make safety everyone’s top priority. Thank you.

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