

TRUCK TALK

A Publication of
Continental Western Group®



FEBRUARY 2011

Top 10 Concerns

The American Transportation Research Institute and its predecessor organization the ATA Federation have been engaged in critical transportation studies since 1954. For the past 6 years, The American Trucking Association has tasked ATRI with conducting a survey to determine critical issues of importance to the trucking industry. ATRI recently released the Top 10 concerns in the motor carrier industry. These issues are most likely to impact motor carriers in the coming year(s). The Top 10 Critical Issues are:

- **The Economy** - As was the case in 2009, the state of the nation's economy was the top concern. However, in 2010 approximately 35% of respondents to the study ranked the economy as #1, as opposed to 51.6% for 2009.
- **CSA 2010** - This issue is near the top due to the fact it impacts each and every motor carrier in the country, along with the uncertainty as to how it will impact motor carriers, drivers, and shippers.
- **Government Regulation** – Legislative issues at both the National and State levels are always perceived as detrimental to the trucking industry.
- **Hours of Service** – FMCSA was ordered by the court to revisit the hours-of-service issue this year. A new rule is due to be completed by July 26, 2011. Again, uncertainty over this new regulation is a major concern to the motor carrier industry.
- **Driver Shortage** – As the economy recovers, will there be an adequate supply of safe, qualified drivers? Will the entry-level driver training/hiring regulations have an impact on the industry?
- **Fuel Issues** – Price volatility over the past years continues to place fuel and its availability as a major concern for the motor carrier industry. Again, as the economy recovers, will prices increase due to increased demand?
- **Transportation Funding/Infrastructure** – Congestion, the deteriorating roadways, and Congress' lack of movement on reauthorizing the Highway Bill combine to make this a nation-wide issue.
- **Onboard Truck Technology** – The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has invested millions of dollars into the testing and evaluation of onboard safety systems. Increasing attention on the role of technology to monitor compliance and increase safety has this issue on the front burner.
- **Environmental Issues** – There are plenty of existing and proposed regulations relating to emissions and greenhouse gases. Recent anti-idling legislation and the issue of cap and trade add to the uncertainty of which direction environmental issues might be heading.
- **Truck Size and Weight** – Current size and weight limitation were imposed in 1991, almost 20 years ago. There are current pilot programs in Maine and Vermont testing the feasibility of increasing weight limits to 97,000# with the addition of a 6th axle. Will increasing truck size and weight help with congestion and environmental issues?

It all seems so simple: Pick up freight here and deliver it there without hurting anyone in the process, get your employee home in the same condition they started the day, keep your equipment in tip-top shape, and make a dollar while doing it. Being aware of issues that might hamper your ability to do this task is very important to you as a motor carrier, driver, or shipper.

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