

# LEARNING

Volume 10, No. 3  
Fall 2009

# Curve

NETWORKING THE FINEST EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY

## Featured School

## Meridian Community College



There have been plenty of new things happening at Meridian Community College

The commercial truck-driving program at Meridian Community College (MCC), part of the Mississippi Junior/Community College system, is located in the east-central part of Mississippi in the city of Meridian, adjacent to Interstate highways 20 and 59. Facilities consist of a building that houses offices and classrooms and a large concrete practice pad. **Otis Gowdy** is the program director.

MCC's L3 Communications Truck Driving Simulator, purchased in 2005, was one of the first in the Southeast and, until recently, the only in Mississippi. Since obtaining this simulator, instructors have noticed that students are able to grasp the essentials of shifting and

handling the trucks much quicker than they could before.

The simulator, while important, isn't MCC's only recent initiative. Fender-mounted video cameras (from Gearmaster) have recently been added to the tractors. Additional equipment has been updated through purchases and donations, including a tractor and trailer from an Interstate drug bust.

Staff changes have also occurred in recent years. In May 2005, **Irven Skinner**, the Work-Based Learning Coordinator at MCC, was moved from the main campus to the truck driver-training center to assist Mr. Gowdy. In addition, **Jimmy Rigdon** was hired as an instructor that fall.

Each classroom is capable of using PowerPoint and video presentations. The commercial truck-driving program consists of 8 weeks of classes in each session, with two sessions in the fall and spring semesters and one during the summer. Day and evening classes are offered, as well as an 80-hour refresher course. Students receive 12 semester hours of credit for the 8-week period.

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## Welcome New Member!

Full Membership:  
**Century College**  
White Bear Lake, MN



Check your Region —  
Contact your Region Coordinator.

### NAPFTDS FALL REGION CONFERENCES

Offering high-quality, workshops/seminars on national and regional issues for truck driving instructors and support staff. Free of charge to attendees. Allow about 1 1/2 days per conference. **Check your Region - Contact your Region Coordinator**

#### Region #3

Date: Sept. 2-3  
**Rob Behnke**, Coordinator  
Fox Valley Technical College  
Appleton, WI Ph. 920-996-2889

#### Region #4

Date: Oct. 15-16  
**Jared Starks**, Coordinator  
Crowder Community College  
Neosho, MO Ph. 417-455-5404

#### Region #5

Date: Sept. 24-25  
**Don Hess**, Coordinator  
John Wood Community College  
Quincy, IL Ph. 217-224-5362

#### Region #6

Date: Nov. 12-13  
**Laura Kingsland**, Coordinator  
Pinellas Technical Center  
St. Petersburg, FL Ph. 727-893-2500 x 2209

#### Region #7

Date: Oct. 8-9  
**Mary Beth McCollum**, Coordinator  
College of Southern Maryland  
La Plata, MD Ph. 301-934-7870

Vendors are encouraged to exhibit products or services at Region Conferences. Cost to exhibit is \$150 at each Region.

### National Convention

— Dates & Hotel Site TBD —

Las Vegas, NV

## In This Issue

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In addition, in fall 2008 students were eligible to take an 8-week internship class. The extra 7 semester hours enable students to apply for Pell grants and Federal student loans. Currently, 10 major carriers are participating in the internship phase of the course. The interns are employees of the company and receive the same pay and benefits as other student drivers.

In addition to CDL classes and refresher courses, the program also offers forklift safety training and fleet safety classes. Moreover, two MCC instructors are certified by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety to administer the skills portion of the Mississippi Commercial Drivers License exam.

MCC students also received real-world training immediately following Hurricane Katrina. The Mississippi Trucking Association requested assistance from MCC to move relief supplies from the cen-

tral warehouse in Jackson to affected areas along the Gulf Coast. Classes had just started and continued throughout the relief effort. Students received classroom instruction each morning, and then traveled to Jackson to pick up supplies to deliver that afternoon and evening. This effort went on for several weeks. Eagle Express and MCC even delivered hay donated by farmers in Mississippi and Alabama. As stated, this was unique training not offered in classrooms!

Finally, the MCC commercial truck-driving program is a "Professional Truck Driving Program" and a proud member of the NAPFTDS.

For more information, contact Otis Gowdy, [ogowdy@meridiancc.edu](mailto:ogowdy@meridiancc.edu), 910 Highway 19 North Meridian, MS 39307, (601) 485-5118 or fax (601) 482-8385.

Special thanks to our ad sponsors in this issue of

LEARNING  
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Please consider their quality products and services. For information on advertising, contact Robert McClanahan, call 918-770-6446

**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:  
Tina Frindt, Treasurer, NAPFTDS  
1900 Corporate Center Drive East, Suite 100  
Tobyhanna, PA 18466  
Fax: 570-839-3534

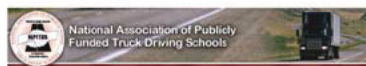
Questions about membership may be directed to:  
Robert McClanahan, Executive Director, NAPFTDS  
Phone: 918-770-6446

## NAPFTDS Workbook Available

Help drivers work through lifestyle changes with family members and friends with a new workbook — and a portion of the sales benefits NAPFTDS.

The workbook, *A Workbook for Professional Drivers and Their Families* written by Ellen Voie, author of *Marriage in the Long Run* and other numerous articles, is being offered in conjunction with [www.lay-over.com](http://www.lay-over.com). Ellen's graduate research, "The Diverse Identities of Women Married to Professional Drivers," focused on the challenges faced by couples in trucking marriages. This book provides students with the resources they need to work through many of the issues their families will deal with while the driver is on the road.

### A Workbook for Professional Drivers and Their Families



Order one for each of your students. Contact: Ellen Voie, Women in Trucking, (920) 312-1350 or [ellen@womenintruckng.org](mailto:ellen@womenintruckng.org).

### 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.



# Jet Express Donates Tractor to School

The Ohio-based Clark State Community College recently received a pleasant surprise when Kevin Burch, president of Jet Express, Inc., and chairman of the Truckload Carriers Association, personally drove a used tractor to the school's "practice course." He turned over the title and keys to the school for use as part of its Commercial Transportation Training Center (CTTC).

"2009 has been a challenging time for all companies, industries and even for us 'truckers' this year," said Burch, who obtained his Commercial Drivers License last summer after taking a five-week training course at Clark State. "This is just a small way of helping the college teach our future men and

women to become professional truck drivers."

Burch added that he hopes the publicity generated from the donation of the tractor will also help to heighten interest and awareness of the job opportunities available within the trucking industry, especially for potential drivers in Ohio.

Thomas Hicswa Jr., director of Clark State's CTTC, said, "This donation will enhance the CTTC program and provide the opportunity for students to be trained on a smaller student-to-instructor ratio, which will allow for more behind-the-wheel time."

Clark State Community College's CTTC has been training entry-level drivers for class "A" and "B" Commercial Driver's



Licenses for the past 21 years. It currently trains between 150 and 200 students per year in a 184-hour program that covers safe driving practices, log books and hours of service, trip planning, and more. For more information, visit the CTTC website at [www.clarkstate.edu/truck\\_driving.php](http://www.clarkstate.edu/truck_driving.php).

## Uniform CDL Standards Among Ideas Being Proposed

*By Robert McClanahan, Executive Director*

The American Trucking Association recently released an 18-point plan to reduce truck-involved crashes. The ATA is calling on Congress and the Department of Transportation to support this plan. One point of interest to schools proposed by ATA is a formation of uniform commercial driver licensing standards and a study of a graduated licensing program for entry-level drivers.

I think we all agree that licensing standards are needed. In my travels around the country I have seen the many different CDL tests that each state has. When the CDL was put into place back in the early 1990s we all thought this was going to be a uniform test. That has not happened. Some states do not even rec-

ognize another state's test. For instance, if someone wants to transfer their license due to relocation, some states require that person to retake the CDL. This especially happens to entry-level drivers that may have been trained in a different state. When they go back home to transfer they have to retake the test. This makes no sense. If uniform standards were in place each state would recognize the other.

The graduated license idea has been out there for quite some time. In the mid-to-late 90s the TCA proposed a plan for a pilot program to train younger drivers and use the graduated license as part of this program. The Federal government (FMCSA) turned this idea down and said they would not allow a pilot

program. Their issue was safety and using younger drivers (under 21).

Now, the ATA is proposing the concept of the graduated license again. I have mixed emotions on this issue. It is a good idea to gradually introduce a new driver to the profession. However, it can also cause some restrictions to the new driver that may limit the ability to be employed — and if employed by a carrier it may also reduce income until the driver has reached full license status. I have other issues, both good and bad, but will have to discuss later. I applaud ATA on their concern for safety and their 18-point plan. We must now wait on Congress and DOT to act. As we all know, that may be a long wait!





As I settle into my role as president of NAPFTDS, I want to express how honored I am to be working with all of you. The level of dedication and commitment to education and safety makes me proud to be a member. In my term, I hope to make NAPFTDS a stronger organization while maintaining our commitment to education and safety. Some ideas toward that goal are:

> **Increase membership of all types:** Full members, Affiliate members, and Associate members. This is an ongoing challenge and I could use everyone's help. If you know of a school or business that might be interested please let me or another board member know. (Use the message board at [www.napftds.org](http://www.napftds.org))

> **Improve the website:** This is a terrific tool that we can use for communication, education, and to provide more professional development opportunities.

> **Increase membership benefits:** By increasing associate membership we would increase products and services available to all of our members. This would be a great

partnership for schools and businesses.

NAPFTDS will again hold region conferences this fall. Dates and locations appear on page 1 of this issue of the *Learning Curve*, with additional details on the remaining events to be posted on the web as they become available. Not all members can attend the National Convention due to the cost of travel and registration. As a result, the regional meetings offer a great opportunity to participate due to the closer proximity — plus there are no registration fees! (So bring your entire faculty and staff.)

Skipping ahead to spring, the 2010 National Convention will be held in Las Vegas. The convention committee has been working very hard to finalize dates and hotel accommodations. Again, details will be provided in a future issue of this newsletter, and posted online at [www.napftds.org](http://www.napftds.org).

In closing, I hope everyone is enjoying the summer and I am looking forward to working with you in the future.

**September 18** is the deadline for the next issue of *Learning Curve*. Questions about article submissions should be directed to Robert McClanahan, 918-770-6446

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# Make Your Nominations Now

The nomination process for next year's election of Officers and Board Members to the National Association of Public Funded Truck Driving Schools (NAPFTDS) is being changed. In an effort to allow members attending the National Convention more time to get to know the nominees running for office, we will be asking for nominations *before* the conference.

If you wish to nominate someone for office, or if you want to run for an office yourself, submit the name, picture, and a brief biography to Irven H. Skinner,

[iskinner@meridiancc.edu](mailto:iskinner@meridiancc.edu). Please include contact information in the nomination.

Once nominations have been received, members of the nomination committee will contact the nominee to verify their interest in running for office. A list of nominees and their bios will be published in the association newsletter prior to the National Convention.

Individuals may also be nominated from the floor at the convention. Three board members will be elected at the spring convention in Las Vegas.