

Nevada truckers embark on campaign to stop human trafficking

By Sean Whaley, Nevada News Bureau

CARSON CITY – A campaign has been launched aimed at helping truck drivers and truck stop employees become more aware of how to identify underage children being forced into acts of prostitution.

The Nevada Trucking Association and the Nevada Petroleum Marketers Association said the campaign will use materials developed by a national organization, Truckers Against Trafficking, to help truck drivers and truck stop employees identify the behavior of underage children being forced to engage in prostitution so they can report such incidents to the authorities.

“The Nevada Trucking Association and its members are sickened by the evils of human trafficking,” said Chief Executive Officer Paul Enos. “Truckers are the eyes and ears of our highways and truck stops, so we are asking truckers to notify the authorities when they see signs of these activities.”

Peter Krueger association executive with the Petroleum Marketers, said: “The Nevada Petroleum Marketers Association is committed to make this effort our top priority for 2012. Our members can make a difference by spotting and reporting underage trafficking at truck stops across Nevada.”

Kendis Paris, national director of Truckers Against Trafficking, said: “Having the support of Nevada truckers and truck stops will prove vital to the work of Truckers Against Trafficking. This means that thousands more will become educated and equipped about the realities of domestic sex

trafficking and how they can help end it. When the trucking and truck stop associations take the lead in their state it causes their membership to understand the importance of this issue and get behind it themselves.”

The Nevada Trucking Association will distribute informational DVDs to its member companies to use during training, orientation and safety seminars. Wallet-size cards will also be provided to members with information about how to recognize trafficking and what to do when it is suspected.

The Nevada Petroleum Marketers Association will use its weekly email bulletins, quarterly magazine and website to promote awareness. It will also make the materials available from Truckers Against Trafficking to its members.

Assemblyman John Hambrick, R-Las Vegas, who has pursued legislation aimed at strengthening Nevada’s laws against human trafficking, said, “I am very pleased that the Nevada trucking industry and the truck stop owners have entered the war against human trafficking. This scourge must be stopped. All of us have seen the media reports on children as young as eleven being prostituted by men who are making thousands upon thousands of dollars selling the bodies of our children. We now have two allies that can have a direct effective on fighting this war.”

In a telephone interview, Hambrick said there was anecdotal evidence presented at a press conference in Southern Nevada announcing the new campaign that it has been successful in combating the problem.

“I think there will be a new dynamic on fighting this problem,” he said. “Primarily now we’ll have people on the interstates. Many times society always thinks this is downtown, in an urban area, whether it is on the Strip or in Reno. But we always forget that these truckers are going all over the country.

“It’s a team effort,” Hambrick said. “We all have to pull together. Society has to pull together to solve this problem.”

The Department of Justice estimates 100,000 to 300,000 of America’s children are at risk for entering the sex for sale industry each year. Human trafficking is estimated to be the second most lucrative crime in world with annual revenue of \$32 billion.