

800,000 Women Leave Workforce; Trucking New Beacon of Hope

The COVID pandemic has caused widespread unemployment—especially female unemployment. ATS’s John Kearney urges women to consider commercial truck driving, a profession short on workers and long on opportunity.

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. ([PRWEB](#)) November 18, 2020 -- A full 25% of recently surveyed U.S. adults said they or someone in their household had been laid off or lost a job due to the coronavirus outbreak.(1) While the unemployment rate dropped to 6.9% in October from April’s record high of 15%(2), [John Kearney, CEO of Advanced Training Systems](#), notes that much of the drop was driven not by economic growth but by hundreds of thousands of people leaving the job market—the majority of them female. Of the 1.1 million Americans age 20 or over who left the work force between August and September, over 800,000 were women.(3) “Meanwhile,” says Kearney, “the motor freight industry is suffering from an acute driver shortage. Trucking companies are eager to hire a larger percentage of women drivers, and in many cases are willing to pay for the training they need to get started.”

One reason for the disproportionately high unemployment among women, Kearney notes, is the devastating effect of the COVID pandemic on traditionally female occupations. In March and April, hospitals began furloughing nurses and medical assistants chiefly used for routine or optional procedures. Daycare centers laid off over 250,000 workers. By April, 72% of housekeepers reported being abandoned by their clients. Restaurants laid off their servers, 70% of whom are women.(4)

For these now unemployed or underemployed women, says Kearney, as well as for workers of both sexes seeking stable employment and possibly higher pay, the current U.S. truck driver shortage represents a major opportunity. According to figures from the American Trucking Associations, the industry is short approximately 60,000 drivers. Kearney, whose company is a leading designer and manufacturer of [virtual simulators](#) for driver training, among other applications, notes that to rebuild its ranks, the industry needs to recruit more women, who currently make up only about 7% of professional drivers.(5)

Driver Ambassador Program

To promote the career opportunities trucking offers women, celebrate their accomplishments, and remove obstacles female truck drivers face, the nonprofit Women in Trucking Association (WIT) has launched the WIT Driver Ambassador Program. The next phase of the program, to be introduced this winter, will be a WIT-branded trailer that will tour the country promoting trucking as a viable opportunity for women and offering educational resources.(6)

Among those resources will be an ATS-donated TransMaster simulator, which will give visitors to the WIT trailer both a realistic sense of what it’s like to drive a big-rig truck and a look at the state of the art in driver training. Simulator training, notes Kearney, produces significantly safer drivers(7), and is increasingly understood to be as essential to commercial driver training as it is to aviation.

One of the shared goals of ATS and WIT, Kearney says, is to help accelerate the onboarding of new drivers—including women—to offset the effect of this year’s COVID-shuttered training schools and DMVs. The supply of drivers with newly acquired commercial driver’s licenses is down an estimated 35% from normal; meanwhile, recovery from the pandemic is expected to create excess freight demand and a shipping capacity crunch extending well into 2021.(8) Given these figures, and the realities of a still somewhat

challenging job market, there has never, says Kearney, been a better time for new drivers, especially women, to enter the trucking industry.

“On the technology and training side,” says Kearney, “ATS systems are helping produce better prepared, more confident, and safer drivers. On the human resources side, the motor freight industry is committed to being more inclusive and economically rewarding than it’s ever been. If you’re a woman looking for a new professional home, trucking might be the right place for you.”

About Advanced Training Systems LLC:

Advanced Training Systems (ATS) is a technology and engineering firm that has revolutionized the design and manufacture of high-tech simulator systems to improve training for operators of all types of motor-powered vehicles. ATS, the holder of multiple patents in its field, is dedicated to providing cutting-edge adaptive training at an affordable cost to all involved in the transportation industry, resulting in more qualified drivers/operators and safer streets. For more information, visit www.atstrainingsystems.com.

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