

Leading from the Front

Why your membership matters

BY KAREN MCCUMBER, MANAGING EDITOR

The most competitive fleets in Michigan don't just keep up — they lead. And leading from the front is what membership in Michigan Trucking Association offers. MTA connects members to the advocacy, information, and relationships needed to succeed today and prepare for what's next.

MTA remains vigilant, speaking and meeting with representatives, senators, and the Governor's office to share the significant impacts unfair taxes and fees would have on Michigan trucking, especially in such uncertain economic times. The widespread consequences can't be downplayed.

Each July 1, MTA asks for your continued financial support. Why does your membership matter?

ADVOCACY

What a year! Truck-only taxes, a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) tax, cargo theft, CDL reform. All these issues crossed MTA's desk this fiscal year. How did MTA respond?

- As a direct result of MTA's work with Governor Whitmer's office, intense lobbying support, and members' heeding MTA's call to contact their legislators, Michigan's Legislature backed off truck-specific road taxes and a possible VMT tax during the State's budget battle last fall. MTA Chairman and Davis Cartage Company President Glen Merkel said it best: "This legislation would have devastated the [Michigan] trucking industry. It would have been the highest truck tax of any state."
- Cargo theft costs the trucking industry a staggering \$1.8 billion annually. One way to crack down is to stiffen the penalties on cargo crimes. MTA testified before the legislature to endorse House Bills 5125-5126, which would amend the Michigan Penal Code. The bills newly authorize prosecutors to seek an additional prison term of up to 10 years for larceny involving stolen cargo, making it a Class D property felony. The bills passed the Michigan House and as of this writing, have been referred to the Senate's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.
- The April 12th "60 Minutes" segment, "Risk on the Road," investigated "chameleon carriers," trucking companies with poor safety records that shut down only to immediately reopen under a new name and DOT number. To address this issue and other vulnerabilities, MTA last fall, in partnership with fellow state trucking associations, endorsed the Trucking Association Executive Council's (TAEC) comprehensive policy that calls for CDL reform — "The Fight

for Fairness and Safety: Paving the Way for a Trucking Resurgence" — to eliminate those who exploit regulatory gaps, undermine safety, and create unfair competitive advantages in the commercial trucking industry.

"STRAIT AHEAD" MAGAZINE

MTA's inaugural issue of "Strait Ahead" hit mailboxes in early April. MTA has created a new, timely, and informative magazine that helps members set the pace in Michigan's trucking industry. "Strait Ahead" delivers original editorial content tailored specifically for members. Allied members: the magazine offers advertising and advertorial content opportunities. With a reach of 9,000 readers across social platforms, "Strait Ahead" is the place to maximize your advertising dollars.



ADDED TRAINING

In response to your feedback, MTA has added more training classes, which are free thanks in part to state contract funds and your generous membership investments:

- Truck Driver Defense Driving
- What to Expect During a Roadside Inspection
- New Entrant Management Training
- Reasonable Suspicion Supervisor Drug

- Alcohol Training
- Driver Performance Measurement

And don't forget our other popular training:

- New customized hands-on Cargo Securement Training
- Recently updated Periodic Inspection Training
- Hazardous Materials Training
- NATMI Certified Safety Director/Supervisor
- NATMI Certified Director/Supervisor of Maintenance & Equipment

MICHIGAN CENTER FOR DECISION DRIVING

The Michigan Center for Decision Driving (MCDD), known as Michigan's skid pad, is entering its second full year of operation after MTA reopened it in June 2024. Almost 1,000 drivers have trained at the Center, learning defensive-driving techniques behind the wheel in real time. The skid pad is open Monday-Friday, the second full week of each month as well as the second Saturday of each month.

AND THE WORK CONTINUES

This year's state budget already looms large as legislators continue to search for ways to raise funds. Trucking is always in the crosshairs. That's why MTA remains vigilant, speaking and meeting with representatives, senators, and the Governor's office to share the significant impacts unfair taxes and fees would have on Michigan trucking, especially in such uncertain economic times. The widespread consequences can't be downplayed. More than 80% of Michigan's communities depend exclusively on trucks to move their goods — we are essential.

This work is just a part of how MTA membership gives your business the advocacy, insight and tools needed to stay competitive and lead with confidence. We can't do it alone — your membership *does* matter. 🚛