

## inyourcorner

# TIRED TRUCKERS RULE IS CHALLENGED



BY EDDIE FARAH

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All of us who drive down the highway have had a sinking feeling when we are near a semi-truck. The sheer size difference usually has us speeding up or trailing behind the big rigs with blind spots.

And with some carrying a gross weight of 80,000 pounds vs. your car's weight of up to 4,000 pounds — a full-speed crash with a semi is equivalent to colliding with 20 cars all at once.

These enormous trucks present the most serious danger on our highways today, and Florida has the dubious distinction of having the third highest number of highway fatalities in the nation, following California and Texas.

So it's a violation of the consumer's rights and an affront to common sense that our federal government, in its infinite wisdom, has again affirmed a commercial trucking rule that allows big rig drivers to sit behind the wheel for up to 11 hours a day.

Issued by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) in 2003 and 2005, the hours-of-service rule not only increases the hours allowed behind the wheel, it lets drivers stay on the job up to 14 hours a day and up to as much as 84 hours in seven days. That represents a 40 percent increase over the former limits.

Federal statistics show fatigue-related crashes steadily increase after just eight hours of driving.

Studies have shown that deaths resulting from large-truck crashes rose 3.1 percent between 2003-'04. In 2004, there were 5,190 highway fatalities involving large trucks.

It is only logical to conclude that statistic is a result of tired drivers on the road 20 percent longer and those who spend 30 percent more time on duty under the new rules.

Challenging this dangerous ruling with a petition is a group of safety, consumer and labor organizations, including Public Citizen, Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH), Parents Against Tired Truckers (PATT), advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, as well as the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The petition, filed in February, is the first step to a legal challenge, asking the court to review the last hours-of-service ruling the FMCSA issued in August, 2005.

Also omitted from the 2005 rule is the requirement that truckers should use

their electronic on-board data recorders to track the number of hours they drive. It's not unlike commercial aviation's device called the "black box," the trucker's vehicle-on-board radar warns the large-truck driver of vehicles and objects in the immediate vicinity of the truck. Audio tones alert the truck operator to smaller cars to the left, right or front of the tractor trailer.

In fact, one Florida-based commercial trucking company, Comcar Industries of Auburndale, reports a 63 percent reduction in rear and right hand lane-change accidents in its trucks equipped with the collision warning system, over an 18-month period.

The 2005 rule put the trucking industry right back in the Dark Ages, relying on paper logbooks to track driving records.

"This new rule is simply another example of how the agency that regulates truck safety does little or nothing until it is forced to act, and then does the bare minimum to get by," says Joan Claybrook, President of Public Citizen.

To understand the error of this thinking that's resulted in a growing number of highway fatalities, one needs only look back 25 years. Before deregulation, brought about by the Motor Carrier Vehicle Act of 1980, there were fewer than 20,000 interstate motor carriers operating in the U.S. Within 20 years there were more than 500,000.

The increase in competition has been dramatic and well-run, safety conscious companies are being challenged by competitors willing to cut corners to obtain and keep business. A shrinking profit margin has decreased the quality of working conditions. Many experienced drivers have left the business and been replaced by poorly-qualified drivers.

The dangers of driver fatigue have been known for decades; however the industry continues to downplay its role in crashes. Who in their right mind who travels our nation's highways thinks that forcing truck drivers to spend more time behind the wheel is a good public policy?

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**Be sure to catch Eddie Farah's live call-in radio show, noon to 1 p.m. every Saturday on 690 WOKV AM! The call-in number is 340-0690.**

## ARTS

by Sandra Baker-Hinton and John Thompson, pottery by Chris Jones and Mary Lynn Torche, photography by Sandra Baker-Hinton and Paul are on display • 218-A Ash St., Fernandina Beach. 557-1195.

### SECRET GARDEN CAFÉ

The exhibit "Ladies and Landscapes" features paintings by Gala Dugan • 10095 Beach Blvd., Ste. 600, Jacksonville. 645-0859.

### SEE SAW

"Neck Riddles" is on display • The "Black Friday" exhibit features work by Dustin Harewood • 1831 N. Pearl St., Jacksonville. 534-9676.

### SIMPLE GESTURES

Rusty Turner exhibits his mosaics through August • Located on Anastasia Boulevard in St. Augustine. 827-9997.

### SPEAR HOUSE

Rosamond Parrish exhibits her collages-and-paintings series titled "Georgia and Frida Have Lunch" • 143 Cordova St., St. Augustine • Hours: 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 823-9722.

### STELLERS GALLERY AT SAN MARCO

C. Ford Riley exhibits his landscapes. Other featured artists include Henry VonGenk III, Hallie Walker, Peter Pettegrew and others • Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Sat., 10 a.m.-3 p.m. • 1409 Atlantic Blvd., Jacksonville. 396-9492.

### STELLERS GALLERY AT MANDARIN

Painting, prints, glass art and photography by regional and international artists are on display • Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat., 10 a.m.-3 p.m. • 115 Bartram Oaks Walk, Jacksonville. 230-4700.

### STELLERS GALLERY AT PONTE VEDRA

Painting, sculpture and prints by local, regional and international artists are on display. Artists include John Bunker, Enrique Mora, Steve Williams, Suzanne Magee, C. Ford Riley, Jim Draper, Henry VonGenk, mactruQue and others • Hours: Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. • 240 A1A N., Ste. 13, Ponte Vedra Beach. 273-6065.

### STUDIOS FOR CREATING

A nude figure study class is held from 10 a.m.-noon every Tue. • 2449 University Blvd. W., Jacksonville. 730-9897.

### THE STUDIO: ART AND MOVEMENT

Visual art by Jennifer Dournaux, Robert Schuh, Paul Behnke and others is on display • Eight artist studios, a movement room and a gallery are featured • 142-A King St.,

St. Augustine. 540-0308.

### SYDNEY McKENNA GALLERY

McKenna's art is featured along with Rob Mitchell's pottery • The Salt Run Kiln is open • 5 Inlet Place, St. Augustine. 824-2414.

### THOMAS HAGER FINE ART

Botanical studies by Thomas Hager are on display • Hours: Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-6 p.m. • 1837 Dewey Place, Jacksonville. 399-1969.

### TIMES UNION CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

A new public art installation, a glass-and-stainless-steel sculpture created by Jacksonville University students, is on display in the lobby • 300 W. Water St., Jacksonville. 256-7033.

### TRIPP HARRISON GALLERY

Harrison's art is on display along with works by Thomas Arvid and Art Fronckowiak • 9 King St., St. Augustine. 829-2120.

### TROOPS OF TIME

Original military art and prints by Keith Rocco, along with limited-edition prints by William Dietz and John Paul Strain, are on exhibit • Hours: Mon., 1:30-5:30 p.m., Tue.-Fri. 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and weekends by appointment • 1602 Copeland St., Jacksonville. 381-6828.

### TWISTED SISTERS GALLERY

Jenny Henley exhibits her work on Aug. 9 • 1266 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville Beach. 261-6453.

### UPTOWN SATURDAY NIGHTS

Various galleries along San Marco Avenue in St. Augustine offer multi-media exhibits and performances from 5-9 p.m. on the last Sat. of every month • For a list of participating galleries, call 824-6635.

### VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA

Jaume Plensa's large-scale outdoor work "Talking Continents" is on display • 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd., Jacksonville. 358-3600.

### VILLAGE GALLERY & FRAMING

Paintings by Beth Haizlip, etchings by Hope Barton, collages by Toni Charneco, beaded jewelry by Noni McGee and stained glass by Pat Holden are on display • Hours: Tue.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. • 964 Park Ave., Orange Park. 264-7151.

### THE WALL ART GALLERY

"Equus" features the work photographer Darlene Wohllart and sculptor Armand Gilanyi through Aug. 20 • 122 S.

Eighth St., Fernandina Beach. 491-6303.

### WORLD PORTRAITS BY NanC

"Human Home," an exhibit of recent acrylic paintings, is on display at the Midwives of St. Augustine, 215 W. King St., St. Augustine. 392-8318.

To have your event listed, send all the vitals — time, date, location with street address and city, admission price and contact number — to John E. Citrone, 9456 Philips Highway, Ste. 11, Jacksonville FL 32256 or e-mail jcitrone@folioweekly.com. Photos will not be returned. Deadline for submissions is three weeks prior to the event. ☺