Dear friends,

Just like all of you, the Nebraska Trucking Association and Truck Services, Inc. are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation, both in the state and nationally. Clearly, the impact of this pandemic is going to be far reaching and long lasting. As always, the well-being and safety of our members, staff and the public are of vital importance to us. We have many channels of communication and information that are providing up-to-the-minute information. The one constant is how the information is changing and the pandemic is growing at an incredibly rapid pace.

Following today’s emergency declaration by President Trump, we understand that FMCSA will soon issue an emergency proclamation suspending federal hours-of-service (HOS) regulations for operations engaged in emergency relief related to COVID-19. We expect FMCSA to post the specific criteria of this proclamation on their website, including clarifying information about the types of loads and work covered. Motor Carriers and drivers remain responsible for ensuring that drivers are receiving sufficient rest and are not operating fatigued. We will continue to monitor any emergency proclamations and will notify you as soon as they become available.

Several of our members and supporters are reporting that their companies are temporarily halting travel along with a moratorium on meetings and gatherings of any size. This, as much as anything, is having an impact on some of our events that we have scheduled in the next few weeks. Accordingly, and out of an abundance of caution, the following events are being postponed until after the current crisis has passed:

- Asset Protection Planning Workshop (March 26 in Omaha)
- Level 1 DOT Inspection Workshop (April 9 in Grand Island)

At this time, all of our other events currently on the calendar will proceed as planned. However, I encourage everyone to watch your emails for future updates, as well as keeping up with the latest event information on our website, or on our Facebook page. As the crisis continues and we wait for the pandemic to peak, we can certainly expect many things to change.

We continue to recommend employers consider strategies that can protect their workforce from COVID-19 while enabling operations to continue. This is an opportunity to review relevant company policies and procedures. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has posted guidance for the business community, which details strategies employers can use. The CDC’s Coronavirus website has more general information about the virus, as well as travel advisory information. In addition, the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has posted Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19.

We also want to share with you this information that has recently been received from our partners at the American Trucking Associations:

**Economic Update:***

A few key notes from ATA Chief Economist Bob Costello are below.

Freight volumes of staples, like bottled water and non-perishable foods, are surging because Americans are stockpiling in case we are quarantined for an extended period. However, this spike will be short lived and there will be payback in softer volumes for these goods later.

Volumes at the ports, particularly the West Coast ports, are plummeting. So far this quarter, 58 ship sailings from China have been canceled. Compare that to a year earlier when the trade war was raging when 33 were canceled.

In China, travel restrictions have prevented many workers from returning to work – they are easing some of these restrictions, but apparently travel is still difficult. As a result, labor shortages are holding back Chinese production levels. And even when they are producing goods, the supply chain is not back up to normal and some of the products aren’t getting to the seaports for export. Many truck drivers are not back to work there. This is important because many Chinese goods are inputs to US manufactured goods.

In the US, the travel and hospitality industry are getting pummeled from canceled business and personal trips. According to the US government, US travel and tourism is nearly 10% of GDP, so it is a significant industry. The reduction in travel will lead to fewer truck freight volumes for this industry.

A few economists are now saying that the US is in a recession. Even for those that aren’t (yet), many are forecasting very little GDP growth this quarter (~1%) and a negative reading next quarter. I still think it is too early to make that call, but the trends are pointing in that direction.

The EU just waved the requirement that budget deficits cannot exceed 3% of GDP. That means not only Italy, but the entire continent can do a large-scale fiscal stimulus. The Germans, who have a budget surplus, are expected to do a large fiscal response as well.

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There is a hangover effect that will take a while to overcome - to get containers back to China, it could take up to June to get all the containers needed back to China. Estimate 3.8m vehicle sales wiped out due to COVID-19 in 2020 alone, worldwide.

**ATA Member Feedback:**

We have received feedback from ATA members regarding procedures that many shippers are putting into place for delivery by the professional driver. Some shippers are prohibiting drivers to enter their dock area or use their facilities or asking a series of questions prior to letting them enter. Others are requiring paperwork stating the driver hasn’t had the flu, fever or cold in the last 30 days before admitting them onto their premises. Several companies are asking the motor carrier for business or continuity plans. A number of companies have shared with us their communications to their workforce, all which include tips from the CDC on preventing the illness. We encourage you to check with your customers on their procedures and policies prior to dispatching your drivers.