

TRAK RECORD



A Publication of the **Towing & Recovery Association of Kentucky**– FEBRUARY- 2016 Edition

FEB MEETING SPONSORED BY GRA-KAT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, LLC

MONTHLY MEETING WILL BE HELD FEBRUARY 16TH AT 6:00 PM AT:
FIRE FRESH BBQ, 81 JEANIE DR., SHELBYVILLE KY
Mark your Calendars!

TRAK kicked off 2016 with a great meeting in Louisville in January. TRAK officers promised new and exciting times for all members and the January meeting gave us some insight to what we have for the upcoming year. I would like to extend a big “thank you” to trooper Jason Morris from Kentucky State Police for a great presentation regarding laws and rules pertaining to our industry. We have many things on this year’s agenda, I would like to challenge every member to come out and support your association, volunteer in one of the many things the association has going on and let’s make this a year to remember!

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KEVIN ESTES ~ VICE-PRESIDENT ~ 270-765-2331
NICK SCHADE ~ SECRETARY ~ 502-426-4100
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The TRAK Beacon

Associate Member Spotlight



GRA-KAT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, LLC

We have an offices in Shelbyville, Kentucky; Columbia, Kentucky and in Lexington, Kentucky. GRA-KAT has the knowledge and equipment resources to provide environmentally safe spill emergency cleanup within a 3 hour drive from our office locations and for all non-emergency cleanups we can go anywhere we are needed.

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The Association appreciates your membership and dedication, congratulations on being our Associate Member Spotlight!

Towing business destroyed in stockyard fire gets unexpected help

LEXINGTON, Ky. - Days after Dewayne "Slim" Hogan lost his entire towing business in the Blue Grass Stockyard fire, he's getting help from a place you might not expect.

Hogan spent Tuesday looking over the the charred cars in his lot across from the stockyard.

"Right now we're trying to identify what is what, identify to get the exact inventory number," he said.

But he'll be back in business a little sooner than expected.

"He would help me out if it happened to me," said Lee Roberts, of Bluegrass Towing and Roberts Heavy-Duty Towing and Recovery.

"We saw the smoke. I contacted Slim to see if he was okay. He said he was pretty sure that he lost his whole business, that it had burned everything to the ground," Roberts said. "We're competitors. We both do different things in the city but he comes to my place and I go to his place. When something like this happens we go help each other out,"

So, Lee will let Slim use one of his trucks and give him some space in the Bluegrass Towing" Everybody's calling and offering this and offering that, but to offer as much as he offered, as far as a truck and a place to operate. That hit me and I didn't know how to actually take it. I didn't initially respond because I had to swallow it," Hogan said.

It shows the brotherhood in the industry is a lot stronger than rivalries.

"Some people get a bad image of the towing business. They're thinking everybody's bad and they think all the towing businesses are salvages and nobody has hearts, but this right here is an example of people having hearts and feelings, and people do care," Hogan said.

35-mile traffic jam on Interstate 75 in Kentucky

MADISON COUNTY, Kentucky - When a Kentucky state trooper checked April Gilliam-Montesinos' stranded car on Interstate 75 overnight, he gave up his snack so her diabetic father could maintain his blood-sugar level.

It was a small comfort in a miserable situation: She and her family were among hundreds of motorists stuck for as many as 19 hours -- from Friday afternoon into Saturday morning -- along a hilly 35-mile stretch of I-75 in central Kentucky because of the snowstorm hitting the eastern United States. Heavy snow and thick ice led to wrecks and otherwise impassable conditions in the Appalachian foothills from Berea south to London.

Gilliam-Montesinos said she braked her car to a halt at 1 p.m. Friday, with vehicles snaked ahead of and behind her. She, her father and her two daughters -- ages 4 and 14 -- huddled in the car overnight, with no food and water. She used Twitter to ask state police for help.

"They sent an officer out here, but he didn't know what he was

coming out here for, so he didn't bring anything with him," Gilliam-Montesinos said. "So he actually gave my dad his own snacks so my dad's blood sugar wouldn't drop." The jam finally relented after 8 a.m. Saturday, she said, and the family drove off -- 19 hours after they first stopped.

State and local police, firefighters, and Red Cross workers were traversing the stretch, trying to deliver supplies, while National Guard troops helped remove crashed or abandoned vehicles to get traffic moving, state police Trooper Kendra Wilson said.

Road crews had tried to keep the highway clear, but poor conditions apparently accumulated too quickly, she said. "The vehicles are sitting on a solid sheet of ice," Wilson said Saturday morning. **'We've got no food or water'** Police could not say how many people were stranded, but images on social media showed a highway resembling a long parking lot.

"It's truck after truck after truck and cars sliding off the roadway," state police Capt. David Jude said. In the unrelenting snow, Dani Garner sat stuck in her minivan on the highway for at least eight hours. Her husband, their three children ages 2, 3 and 14, and her mother-in-law were in the car.

"We've got no food or water," she told CNN early Saturday. Luckily, Garner and her family had gas in their tank and could run the heater. "Honestly, if my van wasn't heated up I'd probably be boxed in with ice right now," she said. Among those trapped was Caitlin Centner, a reporter for CNN affiliate WKYT.

She'd been on the highway since 5:30 p.m. Friday and had "not moved a single inch since," she told CNN early Saturday morning. Centner said she could see more than 100 cars for about a half-mile ahead of her. People nearby are running out of gas, and many have been without food and water for a long time.

But by about 7 a.m., Saturday -- more than 13 hours after she became stuck -- they were able to drive. She posted video of traffic moving on Twitter. "Unfortunately many are still stranded heading SB. We're still praying that ends shortly," she wrote.

Roads off I-75 also were treacherous, so at least two churches -- in the London and Berea areas -- opened their doors to those who could make it off the highway. State police and emergency management officials spread the word about the shelters on social media.

Gilliam-Montesinos said heat wasn't too much of a problem for her stranded family, because her vehicle had nearly a full tank of gas. She kept the engine off for stretches to preserve fuel, only restarting it when they became cold.

The traffic backup came as a huge winter storm hit the eastern U.S., leaving more than 150,000 customers without power in 13 states. More than 16 inches of snow fell in Jackson, a small city in the Appalachians about 40 miles east of Berea.

Carriers allowed to use wireless rechargeable lights during towing, FMCSA says

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has granted an exemption to allow motor carriers to use rechargeable wireless temporary stop, turn and tail lights during towing situations.

The exemption was requested in August by TowMate, a company that manufactures and sells wireless tow lights. Under current regulations, all required lamps, with the exception of battery-powered lamps used on projecting loads, have to be powered by the electrical system of the truck.

TowMate has requested an exemption to allow carriers to use rechargeable, wireless tow lights to be used in emergency towing situations.

FMCSA said using these wireless systems during towing “will reduce time tow operators spend at the side of the road connecting wired lighting systems between vehicles, thereby reducing their risk of injury and increasing safety.”

In its exemption request, TowMate said that with the improvements in LED technology, coupled with advancements in battery technologies, rechargeable wireless tow lighting systems will meet or exceed the current level of safety achieved without the exemption.

The exemption is good for two years from the date of its publication in the Federal Register, which is scheduled to be Tuesday, Feb. 9.

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