


FIRST GEAR

NEW DRIVER NEWSLETTER

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FAMILY OF BRANDS

DECEMBER 2021



Create your own Holiday Cheer

By Kim McDonnell

Truck drivers usually do not work 9-5, nor do they experience a typical weekend, and very often spend holidays on the road away from family and loved ones. This time of year, when everyone else is decorating and making holiday plans, can be challenging when your job takes you away from home. Here are some tips for creating your own Holiday Cheer from a few of our driver friends:

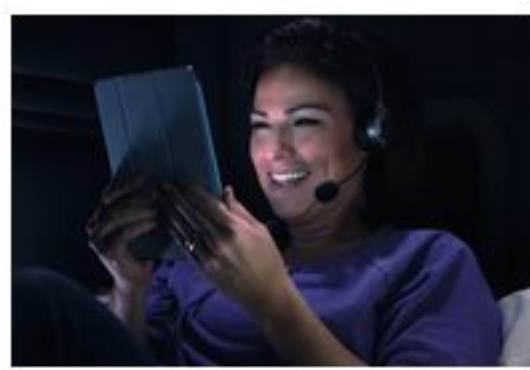


everyone has purchased, so you have the right to dress like Santa!

Decorate your truck for the Holiday season. Wrap the doors to the cabinets in holiday wrapping paper or string lights in your cab. Attach a wreath on the grill of your truck or string some lights on the outside of your cab. Find some holiday window clings to place on the sides of the truck. Wear a Santa hat or other festive apparel; after all, you may be delivering all those holiday gifts



Take photos of your favorite holiday lights and decorations you see along the way as you cover all those miles. Make sure to share them with family and friends back home, especially the kids. They will surely love to see all the creative ways other folks celebrate the season.



Find a truck stop chapel that may have holiday services. If one is not available where you will be traveling, many churches started live streaming their services during the pandemic. One may be a church in your community. You can also ask the store manager or sales associate where you stop if a church is nearby.

Use Facetime or other apps to stay connected to those at home. You don't have to miss out on family events, and you can still see the kids open their presents on Christmas day or be a part of the festivities.

Use SiriusXM, Pandora, or iTunes to listen to your favorite holiday music. You may also find local FM stations where you travel that are playing the classic holiday tunes. During your downtime, use streaming services to watch your favorite Christmas movie or show.



Don't hide inside your truck. While being away from home over the holidays is difficult, remember you are not the only driver in that situation. Get out of your truck and take a look around. Meet other drivers and maybe even share a meal with them. If you are in a new area, maybe talk to the locals and find out their holiday traditions. Plan to meet up with other drivers or friends who may live in the area or travel the same route.



Use a ride-share service and go to a local movie theater. They might be playing a holiday classic or a new release you have wanted to see. There may also be local happenings such as a holiday festival, parade, or concert to check out. Or maybe there is a restaurant nearby that serves an incredible holiday meal.

While being home for the holidays is most likely where you would like to be, you can create your own Holiday Cheer and still enjoy this time of year. Happy Holidays from all of us here at RoadPro! ●





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TOP GIFTS

for Everyone on Your List

As a new driver, you may be wondering when you will have the time to shop for family and friends this holiday season. With all the news outlets reporting that there will be limited inventory and the most wanted items may be in short supply, don't stress your favorite truck stop or travel center will have gifts for everyone on your list, including you!

Check out these finds:

BlackCanyon Outfitters Drinkware

Whether you have someone on your list that loves their coffee, or maybe it's tea, soft drinks, or just water, BlackCanyon drinkware from RoadPro Family of Brands has you covered. A variety of drinkware is ideal for keeping hot drinks hot or cold drinks cold for hours.

BlackCanyon's drinkware selection includes:



- 17-ounce travel mug
- 20-ounce tumbler
- 30-ounce water bottle
- 32-ounce shotshell insulated bottle
- 40-ounce travel cup

All are designed and insulated to keep your beverage of choice at the proper temperature for up to 12 hours. They are also BPA-free.

Mobile Tech from MobileSpec

Is there a family member that is always misplacing their charging cord for their smartphone? MobileSpec offers several charging cables in hi-visibility colors, making them easy to find. They come in a four-foot length, feature a heavy-braided cord, and provide options for USB-C to USB-A and Lightning to USB-C. There are plenty of other charging cables to choose from, including a selection of charging kits with a single port DC charger and 4-foot cable. Don't forget to check out the other mobile technology from MobileSpec, including dash mounts to keep that cell phone safe and secure, earbuds in various styles and colors, and Bluetooth® wireless headphones.



Scipio Tactical Flashlights



Take a look at the new line of Scipio Tactical Flashlights. With COB LED bulbs and multiple features such as high/low strobe and zoomable beam, they are sure to be a welcomed gift. The biggest and brightest Scipio flashlight available has 4,000 Lumens, a window breaker top for emergencies, rubber grip, and twist focus, and also has a rechargeable battery. There is also a 1000 Lumen headlamp and a smaller 180 Lumen flashlight with a pocket clip.

12-Volt Soft-Sided Cooler Bag

This 12-volt soft-sided cooler bag is a must-have for tailgaters or those weekend road trip warriors. You may even want to gift one to yourself, too, since the cooler bag is perfect for keeping your food and beverages cool in your truck. This well-insulated cooler is big enough to hold 24 12-ounce cans and plugs directly into a 12-volt port giving you enough cooling power to keep things thirty-five degrees cooler than the ambient temperature. It connects with a 6-foot-long, detachable cord and features a 10-amp fuse. An adjustable shoulder strap makes it easy to carry. It can be stowed in the handy exterior pocket.



Toys, Games, and Novelty from Top Brands



For that special child or grandchild in your life, check out all the plush toys, actions figures, games, and novelty items from popular brands like Mattel, Hasbro, and TY. There is a large selection to choose from, and you are sure to find a gift to surprise and delight the kids on Christmas day.

Tools from RoadPro



For those on your list who like to fix things or that neighbor, friend, or relative who is always borrowing your tools, RoadPro offers several options. There are toolsets, tool bags, or individual tool offerings like screwdriver sets or wrenches for every job. Or maybe you want to pick up one of the survival sets that includes a portable lantern, flashlight, pliers, or knife for those campers or those that enjoy the great outdoors.

BlackCanyon Outfitters Apparel and Gear



For those fashionistas, you will find a large selection of quality apparel in most travel centers, including graphic t-shirts, hats, soft fleece joggers, thermal crewnecks, hoodies, and more. There is also a large assortment of travel gear that includes comfortable neck pillows, duffle bags, toiletry bags, and more.

While we highlighted just a few of our favorites, you are sure to find something for everyone this holiday season, including you! And don't forget the stocking stuffers! ●





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GN Making Life Sound Better



Did I Make the Right Choice?

By Craig Daniels

Did I make the right choice? It is a question we all ask ourselves at various times in our lives. We ask this about the location we want to live, our spouses, our jobs, and our chosen career. More importantly, we ask ourselves these questions when we change any of the topics mentioned above.

The news is saying there is a massive driver shortage. Going strictly off of the numbers, thousands are getting their CDL for the first time. Why is there still a shortage? Because thousands don't give driving a real chance after getting conflicting information when making a carrier change.

Trucking is a lifestyle, not a job.

I'll start by saying this, don't chase the money. It takes a little while (and some luck) to get to a point where good money is involved. The long haul over the road lifestyle may not be for you, but maybe the local, regional, or dedicated lanes are. Train up, pay attention, and talk to others. You may find a niche in an area you never thought of.

Like many of you have done or will do, I have also changed many of my original choices, some more than others (I am only on my second wife, and this one has been with me for 29 years). Most of you, like me, have made drastic career changes recently and are looking to drive for a living. The main question you most likely have is, "What type of driving will I be doing"? The answer to this question is what kind of life you want or need to have.

- What will my home time be?
- How will this affect my relationships?
- Where will I be running and in what weather?
- What, if any, specific skills will I need?
- How will I survive tough times?

These are all questions we have all asked ourselves. Take note, though, that they are all centered around you. Trucking is a lifestyle, not a job. You will need a support system of some sort to help when you are out of town. You will need a solid relationship with someone to make this work. Spouse, parent, sibling, or close friend.



I have asked many people what they have thought about the job and career changes they have made, and the majority have all said that even though it seemed like a mistake at first, they pushed through and adjusted and most often succeeded. Even if what they originally chose to do ended up leading to a different outcome.

The anxiety of change affects us all differently. Some people react well and charge into the unknown with enthusiasm and vigor, while others are crippled with fear. Look for your inspiration for change itself and decide if it is for selfish reasons or for the common good of your circle. The chances are that if your change was for the betterment of others, all well as yourself, you will succeed beyond your imagination. Keep your friends close, and don't be afraid to make new ones along the way.


Alexander Graham Bell said, "When one door closes, another opens." ●



Craig "oring" Daniels has been driving for Crete/Shaffer/Hunt for the last seven years. Daniels is an Army veteran who went into heavy equipment repair after serving, and that led to almost twenty years of building roads by running asphalt plants, rock quarries, and paving crews. He tried his hand at his own business as a subcontractor, but he started driving truck when the economy tanked in '09. He has been led to help and guide others along the way in what he calls divine intervention. He has trained and mentored other Crete/Shaffer/Hunt drivers, helping new family members with policies and procedures unique to the company. He has been exposed to some special people who have taught and continue to teach him the force's ways and is proud to call a few good friends he values and takes their knowledge to heart.






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
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Winter Preparedness

Uncertain Winter Weather Makes Planning Critical

By Rich Guida, Brand Manager, Howes

Despite how confident your local meteorologist may sound when you turn on the news, winter weather has always been the toughest to predict. Massive temperature drops, volatile storms, and varying amounts of precipitation are just some of the things that can come about unexpectedly as winter falls upon us.

With that fact in mind, it's crucially important to take the time to develop a winter preparedness plan. You want to make sure that both you and your truck are equipped to take on freezing temperatures, icy roads, and all the dangers of severe weather. Here are five basic things to consider that could make a world of difference when facing the looming challenges of winter.

Monitoring the Weather



When hauling a load, trip preparation is key. So, checking the weather forecast before you hit the road will give you a baseline idea of what conditions lie ahead. Because weather can change in the blink of an eye, it's still important to keep tabs on it both throughout the day and your entire trip. However, knowing in advance where severe weather is set to hit allows you to plan your route more efficiently. For example, you may be able to avoid some bridges and overpasses until the roads are more likely to be salted or avoid less traveled roads that are likely to be plowed later than others. Whether the roads appear clear or not, you should always drive slower and more carefully when there's a chance of ice.

Adding Extra Time



Bad weather slows you down, and road conditions can significantly affect your travel times. Winter is an important season to budget for what can easily become a longer trip. You want to be sure to buffer arrival times to allow for slowdowns without feeling the pressure to unsafely rush your driving. You also don't want to run out of driving hours or hit your driving limit before you can get to a safe place. While the DOT does allow you an "extra two hours of driving for unforeseen weather," this rule only applies if it's completely unexpected. You still need to factor in your slower speed when initially calculating your trip.

Treating Your Diesel



Not being able to start your vehicle in the cold is certainly something you want to avoid. Diesel can begin to gel as soon as temperatures drop below 32°F, and if untreated, can cause your truck not to run. Fuel filter icing, which can occur in freezing temperatures if there's any water in your fuel, can also leave you stranded. As soon as the weather starts to get colder, you want to add an anti-gel additive to your truck's tanks before adding your fuel. This can help you avoid the costly issue of gelling. We recommend Howes Diesel Treat, North America's #1 trusted anti-gel, to prevent gelling in cold weather. Beyond preventing gelling, it safely removes water from your fuel, helping you to avoid icing. But for even more peace of mind, you can add Howes Diesel Lifeline to your supply list so you will have the best defense against unforeseen extreme weather. It can re-liquefy gelled fuel or de-ice frozen fuel filters fast in case of an emergency. Both products are alcohol-free, made with no harmful solvents, and are 100% guaranteed. It's a good idea to stock up on anti-gel additives early in the season because high demand during severe weather could make them difficult to find. It's also smart to always have an emergency backup plan, so keeping a rescue product on hand is essential.

Checking Coolant Systems



You want to be sure your truck's anti-freeze system is strong enough to handle colder temperatures. It's good practice to pressure-test your coolant system and radiator cap on a cold engine to recommended levels. It's also a good idea to check all heater and water hoses for wear, cracks, hardening, or softening. Finally, you want to be sure to tighten any loose hose clamps you find to prevent future issues.

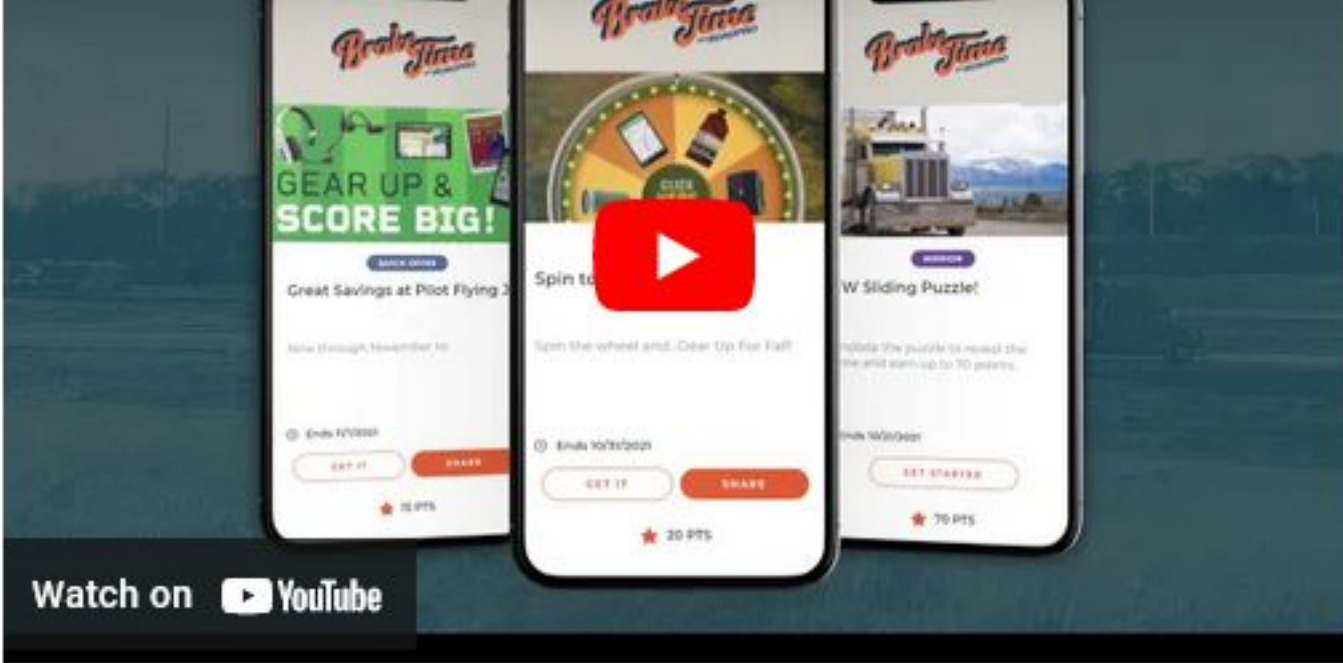
Stocking the Right Equipment



It's good to have proper chaining equipment and a good quantity of various-sized bungees stocked in your cab. You always want to pack sturdy, waterproof gloves, a reflective vest, boots with good traction, a flashlight, and a kneeling pad to be prepared for any job at hand. As the weather begins to turn, you also want to start packing extra warm bedding and winter clothes such as hats, gloves, and scarves. These can help with your own safety and comfort or be of great assistance if you ever encounter a fellow driver in need.

Winter can be a challenge, but getting prepared can help make the season a lot less difficult. Being aware of your needs along with those of your vehicle can help ensure your safety and keep you both rolling along. ●





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