

# FLATBED FORUM



A newsletter for small business owners in flatbed transportation.

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

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## Top stories in this newsletter



Get Paid Faster!!



2020 Insurance Cards- Now Available



Accessing Weekly Settlement Statements



Spring has Sprung! And so has your suspension



Spring has the flowers growing, is your revenue?



Contractor Spotlight Steven Bettis

Agent Spotlight Tom Avampato (Almar Agency)

Welcome to CRST!

SBO and Driver Team Member Anniversaries

## Get Paid Faster!! by Scott Burmester, Director of Operations - Birmingham



Over the past month we have piloted a program with a group of contractors in order to pay loads faster. We have worked out the issues in the program and are ready to roll it out to the entire fleet.

With this new program we can pay loads within **2 business days** of the load being closed out and paperwork scanned in. For example, a load closed out and paperwork scanned in on Tuesday will be paid out on Thursday. Weekly deductions are taken out on the first load(s) that are processed by payroll each week. In order to qualify for the program, you must have operated without a deficit for 4 straight weeks and be a consistent earner.

Please contact your fleet manager if you would like more information on this.

## Safety Conference Call —Topic NEW ELD UPDATES

We will be having a conference call on Friday 3/29/2019 at 1pm CST, regarding the changes to your ELD'S . These were DOT mandated and the software on the Qualcom's and T-7 devices were updated . **Call in number is 1-800-675-8395** .

We will have our ELOG Department and our Safety Department speaking on these changes .They in turn will answer any questions you may have .

## 2020 Insurance Identification Cards-Illinois, Indiana, Iowa by Sandra Wright, Accounting



The Illinois, Indiana and Iowa insurance cards for 2020 are available to the contractors on the load board., with operations managers/fleet managers, agent offices and the licensing department.

**Please make sure you have a copy of the new cards in your truck by April 1<sup>st</sup>**. The insurance cards are for April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 to April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Please feel free to contact Rita Welch in licensing at (205)978-8713 or Sandra Wright at (205)978-8710 direct, if you need assistance with getting a copy.

## Accessing Owner-Operator Weekly Settlement Statements by Toni Sullivan, Settlement Department Supervisor



There are several important things to Owner-Operators in trucking: great equipment, great freight, great rates, working with a great trucking company and great pay. Great pay and being able to view weekly statements on settlements day is an important part of understanding, maintaining and operating your business. CRST Malone ensures that statements are available for all owner-operators by US mail or through online statement access.

For those operators who prefer receiving paper copies of their statements, we mail copies to your home address or P.O. box weekly upon request. We also provide the opportunity to view your statements online through the CRSTPAY website. On this website owner-operators can view current and past settlement statements.

Log In  
User Name:   
Password:   
 Remember me next time.

The web address to access the CRSTPAY website is <https://driverpay.crst.com>.

The login screen is shown above and will require for the following information:

USER ID: OWNER PAY ID #

PASSWORD: FULL SSN, EIN OR FID # (enter w/no dashes or spaces)

Once logged on, the website provides a calendar that allows you to select the statement date you want to view. The website provides statement up to 14 months prior to the current date. Statements can be printed from this website or downloaded as a file to your computer. Downloading a file is a helpful way to provide copies of your statements to your bookkeeper or accountant for quarterly, or yearly, tax preparation.

### **DO YOU NEED HELP ACCESSING THESE DOCUMENTS??**

Contact the Settlement or Accounting Departments for help through this process. You may reach us by calling (800) 366-6350 or (205) 978-7475.

We look forward to hearing from you and:

**DRIVE SAFELY ON PURPOSE!!!!!!!!!!**



### **Spring has sprung! And so has your suspension by Burt Gingerich, Safety Trainer**

The winter months have taken a toll, both on your truck and the roads. This past winter has had higher than usual snowfall across the US. To battle the icy conditions that the cold has brought with it, state, federal and local highway maintenance workers have laid a large amount of salt and chemicals to increase traction and reduce the risk of a skid or slide. Road salt is bad for roads, it eats away at the binding compounds used in road surfaces like concrete and black top. This erosion leads to cracks in the road. Water and melting snow seep into these cracks during warmer hours then re-freeze under the roads creating holes, or pockets under the surface. It is only a matter of time before those pockets become pot holes. In addition, we have had an excessive amount of snow and rain fall that has led to roadside erosion as well, making shoulders and smaller roads more susceptible to collapsing.

One of my biggest fears running at highway speeds was catching a large pot hole, not only for the risk of loss of control but also the damage that impact is doing to my suspension. Our trucks are designed to carry or transport large amounts of products weighing in excess of 80k pounds. When you strike that unexpected pot hole, and more than likely you will catch one or two, it is a great idea to find a safe parking space and do a quick inspection of all effected tires and the suspension components in the area of impact. There are more than 37 different parts in your front suspension alone, be sure you get a good look at all of them, or your truck might be going a different direction than you planned.



## Spring has the flowers growing, is your revenue? by Chris Deschaine, President

Congratulations, we have all survived the winter of 2019! Soon the winter of 2018-2019 will be a distant memory, but for the moment let's look back quickly on some of the unfortunate major events:

- Minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit temperature days in the Midwest
- Snow storms in Las Vegas, state of emergencies
- Polar Bombs, Vortex, and named polar Cyclones
- Flooding on the banks of the Mississippi and its tributaries

All of the above events have led to a disruption in lives and business, CRST Flatbed was no exception. Coming off a record freight year, we did not anticipate the beginning of 2019 to be as robust as June 2018, but it was still a healthy start. We experienced a drop in key areas of our business, average loaded miles per week were down almost 10%, rates led to revenue per truck being down 6%, and average deadhead increased 2.5% for the entire fleet. These statistics are very important to consider and understand as you build your business efficiencies and improve your revenue.

Ask yourself, did you run as hard as you could during the winter? Were you in the right markets at the right time? Were you provided guidance that positioned you well during the winter months? If you can answer YES to all of those questions, then you should have a banner year. If your answer is NO to any of the questions, then you are likely very happy that spring is here, the severe weather is slowly moving behind us and the peak season is within sight.

ATBS ([www.atbs.com](http://www.atbs.com)), an accounting firm used by 25% of our contractor fleet that provides tax and financial management services, recently provided me with a financial study across comparing their flatbed customers (our competitors) and the performance of Independent Contractors at each competing company. CRST Flatbed ranked high in most areas, we were the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in average rates at \$2.17/mile. Again, these are only averages and only representing 25% of the fleet. Quick math will tell you if you're performing higher than the averages, many of our contractors do. When you think about the opportunity ahead of us, the best utilization (miles ran) was 110,000 (42 hours driving/week @50 mph) miles/year, with our "average" rate of \$2.17, the opportunity to gross almost \$240,000/year is accessible and well within reach.

This is the year to take advantage of the great freight rates, a robust peak season and strong earnings. I would like to thank the contractors that are in the market that are maximizing their driving time currently. The contractors that want to learn more about how to maximize their earnings and get to \$240,000/year, please call your Fleet Managers, Fleet Directors, or feel free to call me. Let's partner to you moving, increase your earnings, and build load plans that get you closer to 2,000 miles per week, home often and in/out of markets that provide ample loading opportunities.

**So wash that winter salt off your truck, operate safely, and let's make this peak season the strongest on record together!**

## Driver Spotlight—Steven Bettis



**FBF:** Steven how long have you been with CRST Malone ?

**Steven:** 6 years and 5 months

**FBF:** You are a highly successful Contractor and one of our highest revenue producers , what can you attribute your success to ?

**Steven:** Strong work ethic , treat customers with respect . Pick up and deliver on time. Safely and legally

**FBF:** You and your wife Scarlet have 7 wonderful children . How do you balance your time out on the road along with being home for the family?

**Steven:** I try to route myself where I can get through the house on the weekend . Scarlet helps me with this

**FBF:** What are some of the biggest obstacles you face today in this ever changing industry ?

**Steven:** Regulations ,its harder to manage your time with delays from shippers and receivers

**FBF:** What advice would you give a new Contractor on dealing with these obstacles ?

**Steven:** I try to choose loads wisely . Steer clear of the customers that delay you .

**FBF:** What gives you the most satisfaction about being a Contractor for CRST Malone ?

**Steven:** The freedom of non forced dispatch . Being able to make the amount of money that I want to make . My earnings are in my hand

**FBF:** Ok now be honest what are some of your biggest headaches ?

**Steven:** Wish our Agents would do a lot more reaching out to us . I want to feel more accepted by them . We are more than a truck number .

**FBF:** If you could change one thing about our industry what would that be ?

**Steven:** The hours of service rules . We need more flexibility .

**FBF:** If you could change one thing here at CRST Malone what would that be ?

**Steven:** More Contractor appreciation events . More recognition for the Contractors .

**FBF:** Okay enough shop talk . Let's talk about what you like to do in your spare time ? Do you have any hobbies ?

**Steven:** I restore old muscle cars , riding dirt bikes . I also do my own mechanic work on my truck .

**FBF:** Which restoration is your favorite ?

**Steven:** My 1971 Camaro

**FBF:** I have done some customizing myself

**Steven:** Oh yeah?

**FBF:** I customized an 86 Oldsmobile Cutlass

**Steven:** Really ?

**FBF:** Yeah I customized the original hood ornament with a 3 foot wide by 40 foot tall oak tree .

**Steven:** OUCH (then laughs)

**FBF:** Ok last but not least . Give us Steven's ultimate advice to a new CRST Malone Contractor . What will make them and what will break them ?

**Steven:** You have to be on time , be professional , build relationships with Agents . PREPLAN, PREPLAN, PREPLAN. Not planning properly, taking loads into bad areas with no chance of reloads will kill their week .

## Agent Spotlight— Almar Agency, Tom Avampato



Agent Tom Avampato, pictured above (right )with LP contractor Rodney Boyd

**FBF:** Tell us a little about your agency. 1) How long have you been with Malone? 2) How did the agency start?

**A:** The Almar Agency is a Second Generation Transportation Agent for Malone Powered by CRST. Our story began with CRST International in **June 1973**. Since then we have evolved with CRST into one the premier flatbed companies. . My Dad, Sam Avampato was one of the Cornerstone Agents when Harold Smith first started Cedar Rapids Steel Transportation (CRST). I started my career in November 1991. That being said I have always been around trucks, drivers, freight, customers. I would come to work often with my Dad and hang around learning as much as I could. While we were out and about – he would always point to a loaded truck and “Say there’s a load I missed.” I have been blessed with his sense of urgency and I approach my day every day as though I am missing out on freight opportunities. Many of you know this already. We are exclusive Malone Agent and we plan on staying that way. I look forward to celebrating Almar’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in June 2023! We are proud to be Malone!

**FBF:** What are your primary freight lanes?

**A:** Our primary lanes are flatbed loads into the Midwest , Southeast, Southwest. With heavy volume into VA, OH, GA, SC,NC

**FBF:** Who is your top customer and why?

**A:** I have 2, Steel Dynamics- Pittsburgh, PA and Wheeling-Nisshin Steel – Follansbee, WV.

Both customers ship 24.7 FCFS and have alot of freight that works for our contractors.

Both have driver friendly facilities. They both get you in out quickly!

**FBF:** What is your favorite thing to do outside work? Hobbies and interests?

**A:** When I am not working I enjoy spending time with my family. Working in my yard and traveling.

**FBF:** Tell us three things most people don’t know about you.

**A:** That I met my wife at the annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

That my Son was adopted.

That all my siblins are in the transportation industry.

**FBF:** What advice do you have for other agents?

**A:** Always do what is best for the contractors, not what is best for you. Strive for high rates in volume freight lanes to optimize both your business and the contractors.

**FBF:** What advice do you have for our drivers?

**A:** Stay loaded. Stay in high volume freight lanes. Always take a load home with you. Start your week Sunday afternoon and empty early Monday mornings. Take good care of your health and your equipment.

**FBF:** What is your proudest moment at CRST Malone?

**A:** For me I look back at my career and see the many success stories that I have been blessed to be part of. I have seen many a contractor pay off there equipment, there homes, there farms. I look at the success of Malone and the many people who have helped us become who we are today. I am proud to part of all of it.

**FBF:** What are you most grateful for at CRST Malone?

**A:** My Dad used to say “ our reward is our check we get every week”. I am grateful for the many contractors, customers, employees that have help us earn that check since 1973!

**Welcome the Newest Small Business Owners and Driver Team Members to CRST Flatbed!**



We extend our sincere appreciation to the newest Small Business Owners and Drivers for choosing CRST Flatbed as their team. When choosing CRST Flatbed these SBO's and Drivers have chosen quality freight at above average rates, customer service, reliability and support to be the backbone of their business!

Brayhan Murillo, Mar 1st	Brarick Pender, Mar 1st	Terry Schaefer, Mar 1st	David Thompson, Mar 6th	Timothy Love, Mar 6th
Jesse Detrick, Mar 6th	Kenneth Bell, Mar 7th	Randy Hunt, Mar 7th	John Davis, Mar 13th	Charles McGill, Jr, Mar 13th
Clyde Thompson, Mar 13th	Rondrickas Buckner, Mar 13th	Winfield Scott, Mar 13th	Steven Robertson, Mar 14th	Matthew Bible, Mar 20th
Michael Lineberry, Mar 20th	Michael Moore, Jr, Mar 20th	Antonio Willaims, Sr, Mar 21st	Duran Aaron, Mar 21st	Alden Backensto, Mar 28th
Frank Cowans, Mar 28th	Michael Green, Mar 28th	CJ Rand, Mar 28th	Maurice Stephenson, Mar 28th	Gerelle Washington, Mar 28th
David White, Mar 28th	Anthonie Tate, Mar 28th	Daniel Eichelberger, Mar 28th	Paul Henderson, Mar 28th	Mark Owings, Mar 28th
Michael Sluzenski, Mar 28th				

**Our Agents and Owners would like to Welcome their new drivers:**

Marvin Griffith, Mar 6th (Copeland Trucking)	Antonio Moran, Mar 6th (Copeland Trucking)
Fred Genaw, Mar 14th (Brad Hammack)	Andre Mathis, Mar 14th (BRAM Heavy Haul)
Kendrick Persley, Mar 15th (BRAM Heavy Haul)	Michael Guy, Mar 22nd (BRAM Heavy Haul)
Stasey Gregory, Jr, Mar 20th (Rodney Gaskin)	Deandre Stewart, Mar 28th (Carlos Garza)
Lorenzo Romero, Mar 28th (BRAM Heavy Haul)	

**CRST Flatbed Small Business Owner and Driver Team Member Anniversaries**

Name	Anniversary Date	Years of Service	Name	Anniversary Date	Years of Service
Rodney Gaskin	3/23/2005	14	Mikel Allen	3/23/2006	13
Mark Green	3/16/2006	13	Rodemick Hanks Sr	3/28/2012	7
Brian Hartley	3/29/2012	7	Eric Westman	3/21/2013	6
Dwight Bishop	3/27/2013	6	Johnnie Hartinger	3/19/2014	5
William Henley	3/28/2014	5	Daniel Mauldin	3/26/2015	4
Ryan Leopold	3/17/2016	3	Craig Mccarty	3/24/2016	3
Jose Torres	3/24/2016	3	Jeremy Johnston	3/24/2016	3
Corey Vanya	3/25/2016	3	Clifton Simon	3/25/2016	3
Jeffrey Clark.	3/29/2016	3	Jerry Feightner	3/30/2016	3
Paul McMahan	3/31/2016	3	Robert Schmieder	3/31/2016	3
Thomas Sauer	3/16/2017	2	James Henry	3/16/2017	2
Alan Johnson	3/16/2017	2	Timothy OHare	3/24/2017	2
Jesse Barker	3/27/2017	2	Jeffrey Ball	3/29/2017	2
Ronald Legree Sr	3/29/2017	2	Jose Cintron	3/29/2017	2
Jorge Zayas	3/29/2017	2	Cedric Charles	3/30/2017	2
William Thornton	3/16/2018	1	Milton Kabia II	3/19/2018	1
Gary Brackin	3/21/2018	1	David Baker	3/21/2018	1
Rodney Boyd	3/21/2018	1	Alejandro Sanchez	3/21/2018	1
Julius Neither	3/21/2018	1	Mack Lester Jr	3/22/2018	1
Mark Park	3/26/2018	1	Joe Robertson	3/28/2018	1
Charles Barnard III	3/28/2018	1	Charles Brooks	3/28/2018	1
Charles Jackson III	3/28/2018	1	David Nesbitt Jr	3/28/2018	1
Eric Palmer Sr	3/29/2018	1	Ronald Hill Jr	3/30/2018	1

**Thank you to Agent Copeland Trucking and driver Matthew Shippers of Truck M601 for providing this month's cover truck!**

*Would you like your truck to be the newsletter cover truck? Send us a picture of your truck and trailer, sideview, loaded or empty to flatbedforum@crst.com! #GOFLATOUT*

Is there information you would like to see in the newsletter? Anything that would be beneficial to you or your family? Send requests, comments and suggestions to flatbedforum@crst.com. We're looking forward to hearing from you!

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