

DAVE FONS MEMORIAL FUND

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

A Constant Reminder



Garrett Fons
President

As the Dave Fons Memorial Fund goes into our 6th year, some may wonder whether we have lost any of our ambition on the ideas we planned to tackle when we started? The simple answer would be no, but things aren't always that simple. There are times when we have to reprioritize our lives because life happens and things don't always go to plan. After Hurricane Ian devastated Southwest Florida, I found myself asking what was really important and whether I could keep the pace I was running in my life. I have come to the same conclusion that I have heard since I was a young man: do your best and that is all anyone can ask.

Every time we hear about an accident involving a truck, it takes us back to when we started out. We instantly feel for the families affected because we have been in their shoes. It almost feels like we know them, like we are connected in a roundabout way. We want to find answers about why these tragedies happen and what we can do prevent them in the future. Also, we want to do what we can to help those involved.

Is your organization against trucks? A question I get asked often which I love to answer. We are an organization that supports those in the trucking industry that make safety a top priority. It is important for us to recognize and support the companies that do things right. A lot of the accidents we look at are not caused by trucks, but rather people that don't realize they are putting themselves and others at risk. We spread awareness that has a positive impact on all vehicles on the road.

The past year was another successful one for our organization. We were able to once again host two successful full capacity events: one being our 5th Annual Dave Fons Memorial Fund Golf Tournament held at Mystic Creek in Milford, Michigan, and the other our 3rd Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament held at The Westin in Cape Coral, Florida. Our

events grow in support and we have so many loyal supporters that show up each year to do what they can.

Some of our accomplishments in 2022 were:

- Continued and increased Scholarship program funding in Michigan and Florida
- Partnered with Suncoast Trucking Academy in Punta Gorda, Florida to provide scholarships to U.S. Veterans
- Continued supporting families involved in truck related accidents
- Initiated a Safe Truck Driver of the Month program in Michigan and Florida
- Promoted trainings
- Held successful fundraising events in Michigan and Florida
- Promoted truck safety through year-long billboards in Michigan and Florida
- Donated truck safety signs
- Continued to promote truck safety awareness campaigns on all of our social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, & Instagram)
- Successfully partnered with similar truck safety organizations

In 2023, we are pushing to make even more strides in our truck safety awareness campaign by devoting more resources to traffic enforcement and public safety education initiatives. We will continue to partner with the Michigan Center for Truck Safety, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Institute for Safer Trucking, and the Truck Safety Coalition, and other like-minded organizations.

With 2022 behind us, we anticipate another successful year in 2023. We will look forward to expanding our outreach and growing our organization each year. Our 2023 goals include:

- Expand our scholarship program
- Partner with additional driving schools to provide scholarships in Michigan & Florida
- Increase Billboard campaign exposure in both Michigan & Florida
- Increase our training efforts
- Grow our fundraising events
- Board members to take more active role in like-minded organizations
- Collaborate with other groups to come up with truck safety action plans

- Support law enforcement
- Be a truck safety resource
- Grow our support network

The continued involvement and trust in our organization has been vital in our journey to bring truck safety awareness to the forefront and making us the successful organization that we are today. On behalf of the Dave Fons Memorial Fund board members, we would like to extend our gratitude to all of you who have been and continue to be the foundation of our organization.

The 2022 Dave Fons Memorial Fund Fundraising Events

Fundraising events are essential to our mission. They serve the important functions of raising funds for our charitable activities, increasing our visibility, and establishing and maintaining relationships with our supporters and donors. This year, we proudly hosted two successful fundraising events across two different states.

Dave Fons Memorial Fund Fifth Annual Golf Tournament



Brendan Fons
Vice President

One of our most anticipated and exciting events the Dave Fons Memorial Fund is our golf outing tournament. On July 30th, 2022, our 5th annual golf tournament was held at Mystic Creek Golf Course & Banquet Center in Milford, Michigan. This was our second year holding the event at this venue. The Mystic Creek staff and personnel were again very accommodating, which is key to having a successful event. As in years past, the event was enjoyed with great weather and sunshine. The Meadows and Lakes courses were played this year, as compared to 2021 in which the Meadows and Woods courses were played. The course conditions for both 9-hole courses were extremely good and the Lakes course turned out to be significantly more challenging than the Woods course. We received very positive feedback from golfers at the event regarding the course change and their overall experience. A very warming and fun atmosphere was enjoyed by everyone involved in the event.

Each year, our board members strive to improve the overall experience for the attendees of the tournament by coming up with new ideas to make the event better. This year, we added multiple side games and challenges for the golfers to participate in. These included a golf cannon, chipping game, and putting game. These additions turned out to be very fun for those who participated. Food and beverages were provided during the day, and a dinner banquet and raffle took place after the rounds were complete in the afternoon. The raffle, which included several great prizes thanks to our generous sponsors, drew significant enthusiasm from all.



Board members with the 2022 golf tournament winning team



2022 Best Dressed Team: Ajax Paving Industries of Michigan

As in past years, we had excellent turnout of golfers, volunteers, and sponsors. The support from our sponsors was even greater in 2022. We are so incredibly grateful to our loyal sponsors, who donate year after year, as well as the new sponsors who entrusted us with their support this year. The help we receive from the sponsors, volunteers, guests, and participants at our events allows us to meet our goals as an organization. We are always seeking communication and feedback from those who help or want to help our organization raise awareness for truck safety. We have seen great strides over the past five years with a flourishing interest in our organization and a growing number of people who want to help our mission.

The golf tournament this year was held on my dad's birthday, which holds great significance given that it is our fifth successful outing. My dad would be extremely enthusiastic about the success of our annual golf tournament. He would also be very proud of what we have achieved and the growth we have seen year after year. A sincere thank you to the sponsors, participants, and volunteers of 2022 golf tournament for their support. We would not be here without you, and we look forward to seeing you all next year!

Third Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament



Michelle Fons
PR Volunteer

Well, I may have jinxed our tournament with always boasting about "tight lines & sunshine." We did have a little bit of rain this year, but the anglers still brought in those fish and didn't seem to mind the scattered showers. Our 3rd Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament held September 16 & 17, 2022 was once again a huge success thanks to our outstanding group of sponsors, volunteers, donors, and participants. This year, due to popular demand, we decided to keep our tournament's venue in the Southwest Florida area with the location being once again at The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village in Cape Coral, Florida.

With 102 anglers and over 200 guests, our event continues to grow and remain a fun-filled time for the entire family. With all the overwhelming support, we were able to hold an Adult Inshore & Offshore Tournament, as well as an Inshore & Offshore Junior Angler Division.



First Place Adult Division Inshore team: Team Ajax Paving Industries of Florida, LLC Ajax Area 2 with 94.5" Total Length



First Place Adult Division Offshore team: Team United Rental with 20.95 Ib Total Weight



First Place Jr. Division Inshore: Santino DeMarco with 80.5" Total Length



First Place Jr. Division Offshore: Julih Krull with 1.90 Ib Total Weight

TACO Materials was kind enough to once again highlight our tournament in their blog, and we had the honor of once again having The Reel Chase, Monika Urbanski, supply our official tournament shirts. We couldn't possibly host a tournament without the lovely Captain Leiza Fitzgerald from the CCA as our officiate. Every year she brings her expertise and amazing personality to our tournament, which has been such a huge help over the years. This year Chandan Bangar, owner & operator of CabCreates, was chosen for the task of capturing our professional photo needs and he really wowed us with his skills.

We simply cannot begin to thank all of our guests, participants, sponsors, and volunteers. Every year just keeps getting better and better, and it is all of you who have made that possible. Our gratitude goes beyond what we could ever express, and we truly are so very thankful for your continued support. Whether you shared our posts on social media, fished, donated, sponsored, or joined us a guest, it is all of you who continue to make our events successful and memorable. We look forward to seeing everyone at our 4th Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament in September 2023. Further details to be released on our website and social media platforms soon.

Annual Financial Report



Craig Fons
Treasurer

Looking back on 2022 and looking forward to 2023, I am happy to report that The Dave Fons Memorial Fund is still in a very sound financial position. I am confident that we will be able to continue our mission well into the future, as we seek new ways to promote the cause of keeping safe trucks and drivers on the roads in Michigan and Florida.

This year brought us even more involvement in helping military veterans afford truck driving schools by paying tuition not covered by GI Bills. I have had a lengthy association with truck drivers in my years in the heavy equipment/highway construction industry, and have seen firsthand the quality of the people who pilot these big rigs we all interact with every day. As a group, our board agrees that U.S. Veterans are prime candidates for truck driver training. If we can make it cost neutral to the folks we owe our freedom too, it becomes a two-fold benefit - safe truck drivers and an awesome career path for all of them. If you know of a veteran who could use our help, don't be shy about sharing our information.

Our CPA firm has conducted a review of our financials from 2019 through 2022 and given us a clean bill of health on our functionality as

a tax exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The final report is not complete as of press time for this newsletter, but the initial review has shown our fundraising and our charitable outlays to be well within the guidelines of how a nonprofit is to be operated. A big thank you to Pfeffer, Hanniford, and Palka CPA for their efforts and donation of their time in helping us with the review and filing of taxes.

The Dave Fons Memorial Fund billboard campaign is alive and well. We continue to fund billboards in Florida and Michigan to spread our message of safe interaction between big trucks and cars on our highways. A popular misconception is that whenever there is an interaction between the two, the truck driver is at fault. Educating the average motorist that this is not always the case, helps to create awareness with these interactions and that makes every penny we spend on these campaigns worth it.



Dave Fons Memorial Fund billboard design for 2022 in Florida & Michigan

Our board is always vigilant in seeking out opportunities to make a difference in all facets of truck safety. Our mission is to financially participate in our cause, while still always being very mindful of using the financial support that you, our benefactors have bestowed on us, in a smart and efficient manner. Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome as we find worthy ways to deploy funds. Our entire board consists of volunteers. Despite the fact that these individuals have lives, jobs, and commitments, you can know for sure that every penny of your support is accounted for and spent in the best most useful ways that we can find. We are very appreciative of the financial support provided to us by our sponsors, and we are constantly working to uphold the highest standards in how those funds are used.

Everyone is responsible for safety on our highways and byways of this great country. Whether you drive a car or operate a big rig, we all want to arrive at our destination in one piece. The temptation is always there to blame a big truck for every accident or mishap on our roads, and, indeed many times they are at fault, but sometimes the best action is to slow down, take a deep breath, and avoid that interaction that could generate that call no one wants to get. God bless and safe is as safe does.

Truck Safety Objectives for 2023



Courtney Sprague
Secretary

Over the past decade, trucking has irrefutably become deadlier. From 2011 to 2020, there was a 31% increase in truck crash fatalities, while the number of miles traveled by trucks during that same time period only increased 5%. There is no question that more action needs to be taken in order to prevent these senseless deaths. Recently, the Institute for Safer Trucking (IST) analyzed fatal truck crash data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrations (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). From this review, key areas of change were identified. They include: improvements in how underrides are reported and studied, increasing minimum insurance requirements, and reductions in truck speeds.

According to the Institute for Safer Trucking, an underride collision is a crash in which a vehicle or vulnerable road user, such as a pedestrian, motorcyclist, or bicyclist travels underneath a truck and/or trailer. Currently, only 17 states have an underride field on their police accident report. Neither Michigan nor Florida have this field on their reports. This leads to an underreporting of underride collisions. Research has found that states with underride fields on their police accident forms report 2.7 times as many underride fatalities. Thus, it is critical to work towards all states requiring the inclusion of a specific field for underrides on their police accident reports.

Current minimum insurance requirements for interstate motor carriers are severely outdated. These minimum requirements were set by congress back in 1980 and, despite inflation and rising costs of living, they have never been raised. Thus, insurance coverage often proves inadequate to cover the financial burden of a truck crash on survivors and families of victims. According to the Institute for Safer Trucking, if the \$750,000 insurance minimum were adjusted for inflation, it would be \$2,464,440 in 2021. If adjusted for medical inflation, it would be \$5,255,990. Further, the estimated cost of a fatal large truck crash in 2022 is \$4,749,068. As can be clearly seen, these minimum insurance requirements are hugely inadequate. It is recommended that lawmakers increase the minimum insurance requirements to account for inflation and index the new amount to inflation.

Lastly, data has again and again shown that truck speeds greatly contribute to not only truck crashes, but also the lethality of those crashes. From 2011 to 2020, there was a 164% increase in truck crash fatalities on roads with speed limits of 75 miles per hour or more, but

only a 29% increase in truck crash deaths on roads with speed limits of 70 miles per hour. For reference, Florida has truck speed limit of 70 and Michigan has a truck speed limit of 65, but there are many states with speed limits ranging from 75 to 80 to even 85 miles per hour. These higher speed limits could result in more truck crashes in general, as well as more truck crash fatalities. Further, speeding among truck drivers is not an uncommon behavior. In 2021, there were more than 115,000 driver violations for speeding, with speeding of 6-10 miles over the speed limit being the most frequent driver violation in inspections. It is recommended that large trucks be equipped with and use speed limiter technology set to a maximum speed of either 65 or 70 mph with the use of automatic emergency braking or adaptive speed control.

Over the past decade, we have witnessed the lethality of truck crashes increase. We cannot sit by idly and watch this continue. We need to use technology that has been shown to improve truck safety and improve reporting of truck crashes so we can better understand how to make trucks safer. Additionally, we need to ensure that, in the event of a devastating truck crash, survivors and their families are provided for adequately. We cannot continue to watch lives be lost to these senseless and preventable truck crashes. The time is now.

Tips for New Truck Drivers



Mike Fons
Board Member

Becoming a truck driver can be a rewarding yet challenging adventure. The road to becoming a truck driver includes maintaining a clean driving record and obtaining a CDL. However, it is also important to follow some simple but important safety practices to make sure you and those you share the road with return home safe and sound.

- **Get Out and Look (G.O.A.L.):** When backing up your truck, if you are not sure whether or not you're going to make it, always get out and double-check.
- **Don't Neglect The Pre-Trip Inspection:** Make a checklist to help you make this a routine, and prevent you from overlooking a potential safety issue.
- **Don't Rush:** Don't sacrifice safety for speed.
- **Get Enough Sleep:** Driving while tired can be as dangerous as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol,
- **Maintain a Safe Following Distance:** Commercial trucks have a much longer stopping distance. It is also important to check your mirrors, and know which lanes are clear in case you need to change quickly to avoid an accident.

- **Pay Attention to Weather Conditions:** Always keep an eye on the weather, and be prepared to adjust your schedule and your driving to compensate for weather.
- **Swing Wide When Making Those Turns:** If you don't swing wide enough you can hit power poles, street signs, hang your trailer in a ditch, and even roll your truck over.
- **Pay Attention to Road Signs:** Remain alert for signs warning you about low bridge clearances and weight restrictions.

Teen Drivers & Trucks on the Road



Jill Fons
Volunteer

Even with the best CDL training, a truck driver still depends on the drivers around them to be aware of them. New and young drivers may be at a greater risk when sharing the roads with big trucks. However, some of these risks can be lessened by parents and other experienced drivers educating teen drivers about sharing the roads with trucks. Below are a few critical points to emphasize with new drivers.

First, it is absolutely crucial that drivers be alert behind the wheel. Distracted driving is an epidemic and it contributes to many fatal accidents each year. Distraction can come in various forms from inside and outside your vehicle. It is important that teen drivers be educated about these sources of distraction and how to avoid them. For example, teens should have their phones off or on silent and out of view while driving.

Second, most teen drivers are taught about blind spots in their vehicle. But large trucks, particularly ones that are pulling trailers, have blind spots that are exponentially bigger. There are blind spots on the right and left side the cab, as well as directly behind the truck. Teen drivers need to understand that, if they cannot see the truck driver, then the truck driver cannot see them either.

Lastly, it is very important to teach young drivers how to be patient, understanding, and calm while driving. Everyone on the road needs to get to their destination. Being impatient or upset can cause young drivers to drive faster or more erratically, which can lead to them causing or being involved in an accident. They should always keep a constant level of speed when driving around big trucks. When entering their blind spot, drivers should maintain their speed and be predictable and visible. Trucks need more time and space to react to things that happen on the road. Drivers should avoid weaving in and out of lanes, and signal in plenty of time prior to making moves in traffic to allow the truck driver enough time to adjust to react to their lane or direction change.

Thank You to Our 2022 Sponsors & Donors

We want to extend our sincere appreciation to all of our amazing supporters this year.

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