

DAVE FONS MEMORIAL FUND

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

A Little Help from Our Friends



Garrett Fons
President

As we wrap up our seventh successful year, I sit here, just days before Christmas, filled with gratitude. Beyond my family, friends, and career, I am incredibly thankful for the love and support we have received at the Dave Fons Memorial Fund. In a world full with deserving causes, we are humbled by the choice so many have made to support us.

Starting a nonprofit was an intimidating challenge. As someone naturally skeptical, I feared a lack of support might limit our potential impact. But year after year, our donors and supporters prove me wrong. From the beginning, people have stepped up to contribute, many of whom support us annually. Their generosity has been nothing short of inspiring. I believe that people give what they can because they believe in our mission. Thanks to their support, we have been able to raise funds that have opened countless doors to new opportunities and measurable successes. It is a testament to the power of shared purpose and the impact we can achieve when we work together.

Financial contributions are vital to our mission, but they're only part of the story. Our volunteers are the unsung heroes of this journey. Whether helping locally or traveling from other states, their willingness to step up whenever needed has been nothing short of extraordinary. Looking ahead, I know we can count on a little help from our friends!

This past year was another triumph for the Dave Fons Memorial Fund. Here are some of our proudest accomplishments:

- Funded scholarships for students in Michigan and Florida, including veterans pursuing commercial driving careers.
- Provided support for families impacted by truck-related accidents.
- Honored safe drivers monthly in both Michigan and Florida.
- Promoted truck safety awareness through training, events, and social media.

- Hosted two full-capacity fundraisers: the 7th Annual Golf Tournament at Mystic Creek in Milford, Michigan, and the 5th Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament at The Westin in Cape Coral, Florida.
- Donated safety signs and partnered with similar organizations to amplify our efforts.
- Attended industry events to share our story and expand outreach.

As we step into 2025, we are excited to build on our momentum. Here's what we aim to achieve:

- Expand our scholarship program and partner with additional driving schools in Michigan and Florida.
- Increase the visibility of our billboard campaigns.
- Strengthen public safety education initiatives in partnership with organizations like the Michigan Center for Truck Safety, Florida DHSMV, and the Institute for Safer Trucking.
- Enhance training efforts and collaborate with other groups to develop actionable truck safety plans.
- Grow our support network and continue serving as a trusted truck safety resource.
- Increase our victim support contributions

The trust and dedication of our supporters have been instrumental in bringing truck safety awareness to the forefront. Thanks to you, the Dave Fons Memorial Fund has grown into the impactful organization it is today.

On behalf of the board members, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our journey. Together, we are making a difference, and we look forward to achieving even greater milestones in 2025.

The 2024 Dave Fons Memorial Fund Fundraising Events



Michelle Fons
Director of Public Relations & Events

We are thrilled to announce another successful year of events for the Dave Fons Memorial Fund. Your unwavering trust and support make

everything we do possible, and we cannot thank you enough for your ongoing participation and generosity.

Dave Fons Memorial Fund Seventh Annual Golf Tournament

On July 27th, we hosted our annual golf tournament at Mystic Creek Golf Course & Banquet Center in Milford, Michigan - our fourth year at this wonderful venue. As always, the staff provided exceptional service, playing a key role in the event's success. This year, golfers played on the Woods and Lakes courses, a change from last year's Meadows and Lakes. The excellent course conditions, combined with sunny weather and no wind, made for an outstanding play. Feedback from golfers about the course change and their overall experience was overwhelmingly positive.

Our board members worked hard to enhance the tournament experience by introducing exciting side games and challenges, including a golf cannon, a chipping game, and a putting game, all of which were enthusiastically received. Throughout the day, attendees enjoyed delicious food and beverages, followed by a dinner banquet and a lively raffle featuring great prizes donated by our generous sponsors.



Board members with the 2024 golf tournament winning team



2024 Best Dressed Team: Ajax Paving Industries of Michigan

We were thrilled to have an excellent turnout of golfers, volunteers, and sponsors. This year, sponsorship support reached new heights, and we sold out the event in record time! A special thank you to our loyal annual sponsors and the new sponsors who placed their trust in us for the first time.

Your support helps us raise awareness for truck safety and achieve our organization's goals. Over the past seven years, interest in our mission has continued to grow, and we could not be more grateful. A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in making the 2024 golf tournament a success. We look forward to welcoming you to the 8th Annual Dave Fons Memorial Fund Golf Tournament in July 2025. Stay tuned for details on our website and social media platforms.

Fifth Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament

Our 5th Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament was a tremendous success thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors, sponsors, volunteers, and participants. Due to popular demand, we once again hosted the event in Southwest Florida at The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village in Cape Coral, Florida. The welcome cocktail party and captain's meeting took place on Friday, September 13th, followed by the tournament and awards dinner on Saturday, September 14th.

This year, we welcomed 126 anglers and over 200 guests, marking another record-breaking turnout. We hosted both an Adult Inshore and Offshore Tournament, and an Inshore and Offshore Junior Angler Division. The kindness and enthusiasm of our sponsors and participants left us truly humbled.



First Place Adult Division Inshore Team: Team Ajax FOB with a 89" Total Length



First Place Adult Division Offshore Team: Team United Rentals with a 103.1 lb Total Weight



First Place Junior Division Inshore: Knox Hammett 68.25" total length



Second Place Junior Division Inshore: Leo Banks 65.5" total length



First Place Junior Division Offshore: Julih Krull with a 14.55 lb grouper

We were honored to collaborate with The Reel Chase and Monika Urbanski, who once again provided our official tournament shirts. Captain Leiza Fitzgerald of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) brought her expertise and charm to elevate the event, and Chelsea Aldrich Photography captured the essence of the tournament beautifully.

Whether you shared our social media posts, donated, fished, sponsored, or joined us as a guest, you made this event unforgettable. We look forward to seeing everyone at the 6th Annual Fins for Fons Fishing Tournament in September 2025. Details will be announced on our website and social media platforms soon.

Your support, participation, and generosity are the foundation of our success. Each year, we aim to improve and it's all thanks to you. We are profoundly grateful and can't wait to see you at our 2025 events!

Annual Financial Report



Craig Fons
Treasurer

As we step into 2025, I am thrilled to share that the Dave Fons Memorial Fund remains in excellent financial health, allowing us to continue promoting safe trucking and driver safety. From Michigan to Florida, our mission to create safer highways and support aspiring truck drivers has never been more vital.

Empowering Veterans & Strengthening Trucking

One of our most rewarding accomplishments over the past year has been assisting military veterans in covering tuition costs for truck driving schools not fully covered by their GI Bills. Having spent years working with truck drivers in the heavy equipment and highway construction industries, I've witnessed the remarkable skill and dedication of those who operate big rigs daily. The board of directors unanimously agrees that veterans—individuals to whom we owe our freedoms—make ideal candidates for this career path. By ensuring their training is cost-neutral, we achieve a two-fold benefit: producing highly skilled, safety-conscious truck drivers while offering veterans a promising career opportunity. If you know a veteran who could benefit from our help, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Accountability & Transparency

I am proud to report that our CPA firm, Pfeffer, Hanniford, and Palka, has provided the Dave Fons Memorial Fund with a clean bill of health for the 2022-2024 financial period. While the final report is still pending, our fundraising efforts and charitable expenditures remain well within the guidelines required for a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our CPA partners for their time and expertise in ensuring we meet the highest standards of financial accountability.

In addition, thanks to the incredible support and generosity of our donors and sponsors, we are excited to announce the opening of an outside investment account. This step will enable us to maximize the impact of your contributions and ensure your donations and sponsorships are utilized effectively to further our mission. We couldn't be more grateful for your continued trust and partnership. Your unwavering belief in our work inspires us, and we are honored to have your support.

Billboards & Broader Awareness

Our billboard campaign in Florida and Michigan continues to be one of our most impactful initiatives. These messages aim to educate both motorists and truck drivers on safe interactions, especially in heavy truck traffic areas. By increasing awareness, we hope to reduce accidents and foster safer highways for everyone.

A Shared Responsibility

Safety is a shared responsibility—whether you're behind the wheel of a car or operating a big rig. While it is easy to point at large trucks for road incidents, the best course of action often involves slowing down, taking a deep breath, and avoiding potentially dangerous interactions. Our mission is rooted in promoting safety, and we are constantly

seeking new ways to make a difference. Every dollar donated to the Dave Fons Memorial Fund is carefully managed by our all-volunteer board, ensuring your contributions have their maximum impact. To our supporters, sponsors, and volunteers—thank you. Your generosity fuels our mission and helps us uphold the highest standards in financial stewardship. As we continue to grow, we welcome your ideas and suggestions on how we can further our cause. Together, we can create safer roads and a brighter future for truck drivers, motorists, and our communities. Stay safe and remember: we all have a role to play in ensuring everyone arrives at their destination in one piece. God bless and thank you for your support.

Truck Safety Objectives for 2025



Courtney Sprague
Vice-President

We are honored to report that, this year, we were invited to become a partner with the Institute for Safer Trucking (IST). This incredible organization is committed to reducing crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving large trucks in the United States by implementing data-driven solutions. They work to raise awareness and educate the public about truck safety, offer support to families impacted by crashes, and collaborate with all stakeholders to advance safety on roads. We are excited to continue our collaboration and support to IST in 2025.

Each year, IST publishes the Annual Safer Trucking Report, in which they analyze truck crash data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). The report serves as a resource to learn more about truck safety in the United States and provide tangible solutions. This year’s report focused on truck crash data from 2022, in which there were 5,936 truck crash fatalities nationwide. Further, there were 160,608 people injured and 536,424 truck crashes reported.

The report also showed that, since 2020, there has been a 20% increase in truck crash fatalities, despite truck vehicle miles traveled only increasing 11%. One of the most alarming truck crash statistics is that the ten deadliest states account for more than half of all truck crash fatalities. Even more concerning for our organization in particular, is that Florida was once again the third most deadly state in 2022 with 368 truck crash fatalities.

Work zone crashes are another area of concern for our organization. While the number of work zone crashes involving at least one large truck decreased slightly in 2022 to 29% versus 33% in 2021, we believe this is still too high. In 2025, we will continue to advocate for and support truck safety efforts in the domain of work zones.

This year’s safer trucking report clearly shows that more data-driven solutions need to be adopted to better prevent truck crash deaths. IST included several calls to action to improve truck safety including;

- Requiring automatic emergency braking to be equipped in and used in all trucks.
- Initiate advanced rulemaking on telematics and dual-facing cameras in large trucks.
- Increase the minimum insurance required to account for 40 years of inflation.
- Finalize a rulemaking to require that large trucks be equipped with and use speed limiter technology set to a maximum speed of either 65 mph or 70 mph with the use of automatic emergency braking and adaptive cruise control.
- Reevaluate the safety benefits of side underride guards and adopt side underride guard standards meeting or exceeding EU standards for city trucks.
- Reassess data to more accurately reflect underride crashes and include a field for underride on police-accident reports.



IST was a proud sponsor for the Dave Fons Memorial Fund Golf Tournament

The Dave Fons Memorial Fund strongly believes in the work IST is doing to improve truck safety. We are excited about our growing partnership with their organization and potential for increased impact that that partnership brings. This year will bring new campaigns for awareness, education, and resources, and we are looking forward what we can accomplish together.

Truck Safety Objectives for 2025



Jill Fons
Volunteer

Dave’s story is one of passion, family, and resilience. In December 2017, he decided to take a quick trip to Florida, where we had recently purchased a retirement condo to be closer to our son’s family. As someone deeply involved in the trucking and excavating industries throughout his life, Dave loved exploring new places, particularly other

businesses in excavating, aggregate, and recycled concrete. Tragically, Dave’s life was cut short on that trip. While making a left turn at an intersection, a fully loaded aggregate truck, traveling too fast, ran a red light. The collision devastated our family, friends, and business community. The news of his passing was both heartbreaking and profoundly painful, leaving us grappling with unimaginable loss. For me, the aftermath was marked by deep grief and survivor’s guilt. The weight of losing Dave, combined with the realization of how deeply our children and grandchildren would be affected, was overwhelming. I’ve always considered myself a strong person, but this loss tested me in ways I could never have anticipated. It felt as though my world had shattered, and I was unsure how to move forward. Over time, and with the support of my faith, professional counseling, and trusted friends and family, I began to find a path forward. My sorrow remains, but so too does my strength. Slowly, I started to rebuild a sense of normalcy and peace, holding onto the belief that Dave would want us to live fully and meaningfully despite the pain of his absence.

In the days following Dave’s accident, the idea for the Dave Fons Memorial Fund emerged. The connection between his tragic passing and his lifelong commitment to safety in the trucking industry was too powerful to ignore. Dave had always been a vocal advocate for safer practices, and this fund felt like the perfect way to honor his legacy. I am incredibly proud of the work we have done through the Dave Fons Memorial Fund. The organization has brought together a knowledgeable and dedicated team of board members, volunteers, and supporters, all committed to advancing safety and awareness in the trucking and transportation industries. The fund’s mission has become a source of great peace and comfort for our family, knowing that Dave’s passion continues to make a difference in the lives of others. Through initiatives like safety training programs, awareness campaigns, and scholarships for individuals pursuing careers in transportation safety, the fund has touched countless lives. Each effort reflects Dave’s dedication and the values he stood for throughout his life.

While the pain of losing Dave will always be with us, the work of the fund provides a sense of purpose and a way to channel our grief into something meaningful. It is a testament to the strength of family, community, and faith that we can carry forward his legacy and continue to make a positive impact in his name. Dave’s story is not just about loss—it is about love, resilience, and the enduring power of purpose. We are honored to share his legacy with the world and remain committed to ensuring that his passion for safety and excellence in the trucking industry lives on.

2024 Dave Fons Memorial Fund Award Recipients

The Dave Fons Memorial Fund for the Advocacy of Truck Safety funds scholarships for college-bound students and U.S. Veterans attending truck driving school. We also select two safe truck drivers each month (nominations permitting) to recognize on social media and present with a financial award.

2024 Scholarship Recipients

Grant Bachman
Jacob Conner
Matthew Miller

2024 Safe Truck Drivers of the Month

Bob Josephson (San Marino Excavating)
Victor H. Ayala (Collier Paving & Concrete)
Willy Craig (Craig Trucking)
Leonard Tantaros, Sr. (Backbay Construction)
Michael Murphy, Jr. (Merlo Construction)
Leonard Tantaros, Jr. (Backbay Construction)
Dale April (TLS Construction)
jRoberto Chappa (McShea Contracting)
Daniel Lott (WPM Southern)
Douglas Arnold (Culver Excavating)
Steve B. (Daniel Mullins Trucking)
William Candelario (Ajax Paving Industries)
Julia Sosa (Ranger Construction)
Orestes Pena (OPC Trucking)
Birvin Bedford (P&S Paving)
Ernesto Vasallo (Gulfshore Trucking)
Edward Lindsey (Ajax Paving Industries)
William Tellis (P&S Paving)
Bobby Barnes (Associated Asphalt)
Johnnie Arizmendi (SED Logistics Florida)
Kelly Arnett (Ajax Paving Industries of Florida)
Armando Adame (Backbay Construction)
Pedro Avila (T. Disney Trucking)
Franco Aversa (Backbay Construction)

Thank You to Our 2024 Sponsors & Donors

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Mike & Carol Horan
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Ongrade Contracting, Inc
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Ownes-Ames-Kimball
Pavement Maintenance LLC

Pfeffer, Hanniford, & Palka, CPAs P.C.
Pins & Aces
PK Contracting
Poured Brick Walls
Preferred Materials, Inc
Pure Florida
Quality Environmental Services
Rhino Seed & Landscape Supply
Ring Power CAT
RKS Consulting Engineers
Rotterdam Jewelers
Salt Life
San Marino Excavating, Inc.
Sand Cloud
Schafer Construction Inc
SED Logistics
SITECH North & Central FL
South Florida Milling
Spartan Barricading & Traffic Control Inc
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Statewide Materials
Stewart Materials
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