

Are you the tired of the winter blues? Good news is on the way in the form of fuel savings. We have overhauled our fuel discount program and that means more savings for our contractors. It is exciting to start out the New Year with good news after going through a tough year like 2005. Last year our contractors experienced record fuel prices. Due to the hard work and dedication from our contractors we made it past a very difficult time. We also know that tough times are still ahead of us. Let's discuss how we can utilize good fuel purchasing habits and good safety habits to have a better year this year.

We have entered a direct fuel program with Pilot. This means we still get .04 cents discount at all Pilot locations except our high volume sites which are from .05 to as much as .09 cents per gallon discount depending on location. See Pilot discount letter. We are in the process of entering the same agreement with Loves. We will have .04 cents at all locations with a .05 cent discount at our high volume locations as soon as our contract is done. There is more! Pilot and Loves have waived their transaction fees which can save you another .01 cent per gallon. Also Petro has stepped up their discount up to .035 cents per gallon at most locations. Not to be left out T/A is still giving those great "cost plus" discounts. By calling 800-494-3835 and entering the site code you can get our cost for fuel at any T/A location. In the event that their cost and street price is the same we will get "cents off at the pump" like we do at the other vendors. Simply put the more fuel we buy with these vendors the better fuel discounts we can get.

Fikes contractors have completed the first year of our new fuel tax program. Although we started out with a few mistakes and misunderstandings for the most part fuel tax is a routine issue now. My hat is off to you who treat fuel taxes seriously and come out month after month with little or no tax due. Good job everybody! Please keep up the good work and let me know if you have any problems.

I need your attention on a very critical matter. This issue will dictate our ability to make a living if we do not get a handle on it. This issue is CLAIMS. Physical damage claims from accidents, wet load claims and stolen load claims. We encountered more than our fair share last year and this year is starting out in the wrong direction. Rollovers involving one vehicle only are preventable, wet load claims are

preventable and most stolen load claims are preventable. We have got to take responsibility for the loads we are hauling. Fikes contractors had a total of 50 reportable claims last year. This represents \$268,007 in losses. These are losses that our insurance company, our contractors and Fikes Truck Line, Inc. are responsible for. Insurance premiums just like fuel prices are at an all time high. We use fuel surcharges and discounts to combat fuel prices. We have to practice safe driving and do a better job of preventing cargo claims to combat insurance premiums. Please drive safely and tarp those loads!

Please notice a couple of interesting products that are now available. The first product is Gulf Coast Filters by-pass oil systems. Installed in Gulfport, MS they are \$961.00. In Springfield, MO they run \$1025.00. If you install it yourself they are \$825.00. We can payroll deduct after you pay the first \$200.00. Call 800-398-8114 for details. Also Spinner 2 has a similar product available. The price is \$398.00. Call 800-231-7746 for details. A good safety product now on the market is the Deck Mate portable folding ladders that hook on your rub rail. They weigh only 20 lbs. and fold up for easy storage. They will be in stock at Twin City Trailer in Texarkana, AR soon or you can order direct from Gateway supply at 806-665-7990. For more information on any of these topics call and be sure to attend a Safety Meeting.

Thanks and be SAFE!

William Harding, Contractor Programs Coordinator



January 21st Safety Meeting in Hope, AR.