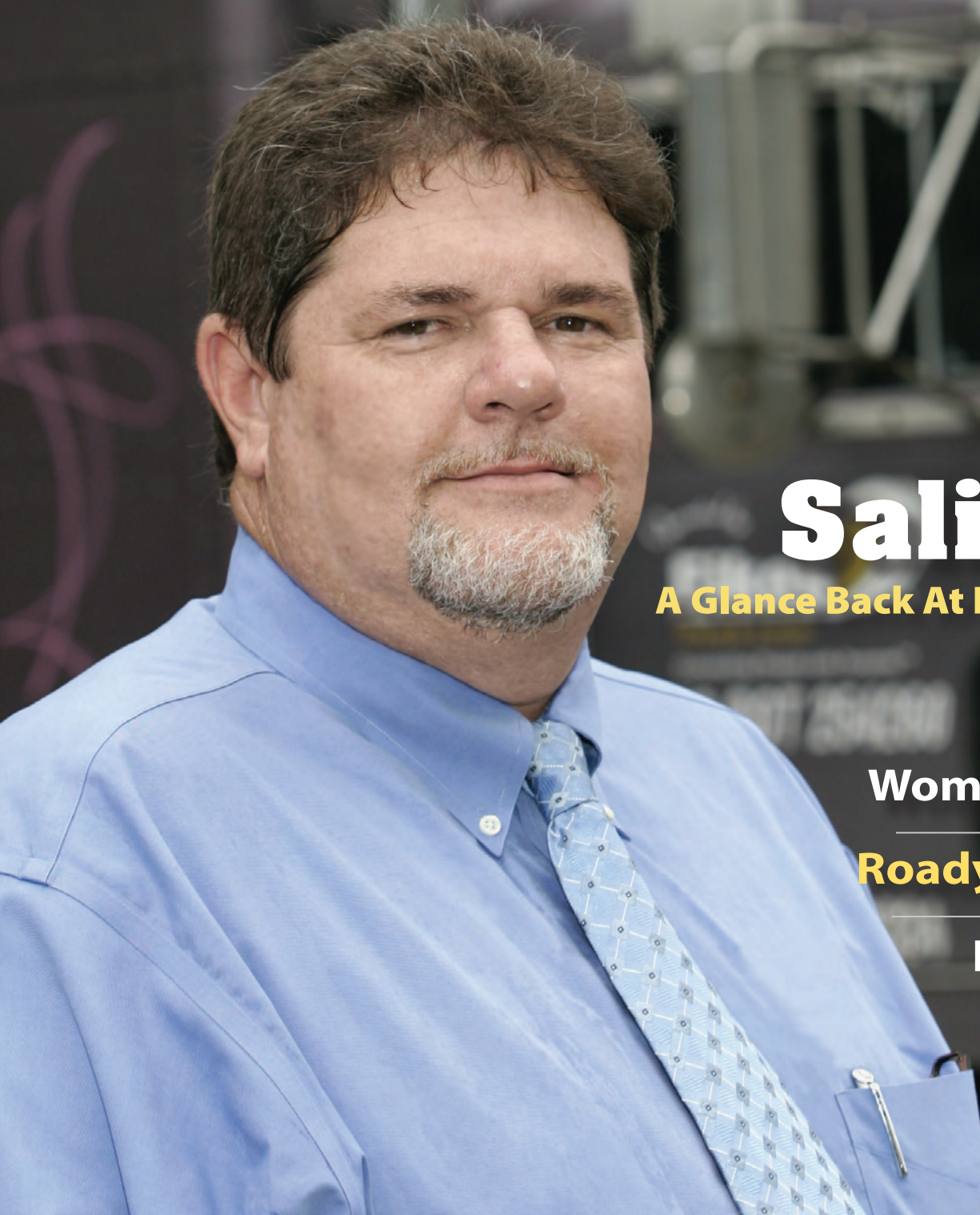




INTERNET TRUCKSTOP®



Gary Salisbury

A Glance Back At Forward Thinking

Women in Trucking

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Freight Trends

Gary Salisbury - Fikes Truck Line

A Glance Back At Forward Thinking

As the 55th customer to The Internet Truckstop, Fikes Truck Line has been with us since the beginning. Gary Salisbury, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer with Fikes has seen how the Internet has created so much positive change in the Fikes Truck Line organization. They have employed the use of several online tools in their operation. Using the Internet as a tool to find freight, check credit, look up mileages and recruit drivers are just a few changes they have seen that have changed their business in a good way.

Gary has had several conversations over the years with the staff at The Internet Truckstop and we have always found those conversations very interesting. The following article is only a quick snap shot into Gary Salisbury's career with Fikes Truck Line and what tools and best practices they have used to make Fikes a successful company.



"I remember the day I walked into Jim Smith's office, I was only 21 years old and he hired me. I look back now, and gosh I don't know if I would have hired me back then," said Gary. "There are a whole group of people at Fikes that were hired around that time,

all in their twenties and are still at Fikes." Gary went on to say, "Things were different then, we all did everything.... dispatch trucks, recruit drivers, sales, you name it we jumped in and got it done." They did it all back then and Jim Smith, the President of Fikes Truck Line, had the confidence in them to make the decisions for the day to day operations that were the best for the company.

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In fact, Gary says, "I remember signing up, 12 years ago, for The Internet Truckstop. We were moving flatbeds into areas and did not have return loads contracted; we would spend hours tracking down a broker with freight. When The Internet Truckstop came along we signed up right away. Then and still today, we list our trucks and set a horn alarm." When the alarm sounds they get on the phone immediately. Gary says when they started looking for more specialized freight, "The Internet Truckstop was extremely helpful in keeping those trucks moving."

With over 26 years experience, Gary has seen tremendous change. One major change that he has seen is the rise of the importance of The Internet Truckstop's value added tools. Gary tells us that until a few months ago, Fikes never realized The Internet Truckstop was the largest provider of credit information. "We changed companies we were doing business with and gave our front line people a CreditStop account. These front line people can now

make a good decision fast on whom to do business with. We can react to finding freight faster and know the company's days to pay and credit score before we ever make a call to book freight. We sometimes access CreditStop 70 or 80 times a day." Gary trusts his front line people to make the best business decisions.

Gary reflects back on the tremendous growth of Fikes. "Every company struggles with change. You cannot do business the same with 20 trucks as you did with 11 trucks. You sure cannot do business the same with 500 trucks as you did with 300." Regarding managing change Gary says, "We struggle with change everyday, many companies wait to make a change in their organization only when there is a crisis. We don't, we act immediately and, in a way, if your business isn't acting with immediate action, the business isn't as successful as it could be."

Fikes was founded in 1941 and in 1981 Jim Smith purchased the company after a sales career in the transportation industry. Not knowing much about running a business, he did know one thing and that was that they needed to grow. Their growth started by gaining operating authority in the states adjacent to Arkansas and by the Spring of 1982, Fikes was running in all 48 states. Smith was able to take several existing customers national, while forging new relationships with shippers in the right areas. Company lore from the early days has Smith driving through the towns of Arkansas and introducing himself to potential owner operators. When his contractors wanted to come in off the road, he encouraged them, eventually cultivating his own management team, referring to Gary and Jerry Davis, who is now the Director of Safety at Fikes.

"Jim Smith raised us all, you will not find a better person or a better boss," says Rick McCain, long time employee and now company Vice President of Sales.

Fikes is a living example of a company that seeks and implements best practices into their operation.

Several best practices that they incorporate that have helped them become a great company include:



Pictured left to right: Rick McCain; Jim Smith; Gary Salisbury and Libby Olney.

Prioritize - Find the Time: If it is important – find the time. Whether it is getting personal and business finances in order, deciding which load to take or making sure you are home for a family event, find the time to get your priorities straight.

Follow Through: If you start something, finish it. There are two ways to run a business: successfully or into the ground.

Go the Extra Mile: Sometimes that means doing something you don't like or want to do. Become known as someone who will make things happen.

"Another example of what a great company Fikes is," says Libby Olney, Senior Manager Operations Integration, "just last week Gary sent a note to everyone in the company that said 'Remember to do the right thing.'"

After talking with Gary and all the people at Fikes, there is no question that Fikes has been doing the right thing for a long time, and will be for a long time to come.

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