



January 18, 2006
For Immediate Release

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Fikes Truck Line Improves Retention and Turnover

Salisbury (SVP and COO) Attributes Success To Company's Focus on Profitability

Hope, Arkansas... Speaking at the *Recruitment and Retention Conference* in Nashville last week, Gary Salisbury, SVP and COO of Fikes Truck Line, announced that the company is retaining more new contractors in the first year of their lease, and that turnover among their entire owner operator fleet is declining. Retention jumped 13% this year to a total of 70% of all new leases. Turnover dropped from 80% a year ago to 65% in 2005. These improvements have been achieved for a second consecutive year in conjunction with programs targeted at increasing profitability among contractors. Salisbury's announcement was part of a presentation he gave at the conference sponsored by the Truckload Carriers Association and Multimedia Advertising.

"Traditional wisdom suggests that contractors are individual business people who are responsible for their own profits," says Salisbury, but as we studied the numbers we track, we realized that when our contractors are more profitable, we are more profitable. So we started looking at how our business decisions impact the profitability of our contractors. At the same time, we invested in business programs to educate our contractors about how to lower their costs and make smarter business decisions."

Front-end initiatives to increase profitability include tracking more data about loads, distances, deadhead and individual contractors that help load and fleet coordinators load-for-profit. Fikes is also covering tuition costs for contractors and operations staff to attend the two-day Certified Master Contractor (CMC™) business program sponsored by *The Alliance of Independent Trucking*



Professionals™. The course provides tactical advice on how to lower costs and create long-term financial stability.

CMC graduate Wayne Mason states “I’ve been driving my truck wrong for 15 years. I learned details about my operation that I’ve never thought about, and it made me much more aware of my costs.” Mason has increased his fuel mileage by more than a mile per gallon and paid back an \$11,000 loan with the money he saved since attending the program. “If I’m making more money, then I am happier,” he says, “and if I’m happy, I’m not looking to go anywhere.”

Dispatch Manager Jimmy Graves attended the CMC last January, “Now when I get a call for a load, I can evaluate whether or not it will be a profitable one,” he says, “sometimes that means I have to say no to a customer, which in the past was never done.”

“Shifting our focus to contractor profitability is changing the culture at Fikes and leading us to evaluate business decisions by asking – *Is this good for our contractors?*” says Salisbury, “We are establishing a true partnership in which Fikes and our contractors are connected for success. We are providing a place where contractors get so good at running their business that they are financial stable and self-reliant, and they can stay here until they retire.”

Fikes Truck Line is a leading flatbed specialist with headquarters in Hope, Arkansas and terminals in Texas, Colorado and Kentucky. The truck line delivers building materials, steel, machinery and manufactured goods all over the United States. For more information, call Fikes at 1-800-643-6611 or log onto www.fikes.com.

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For more details on Fikes’ programs including additional quotes, profiles on individual contractors, and photography that might be used in a feature piece, please contact Cynthia Forstmann at Write Edge Communications, (970) 328-0786.