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Contact: Deborah Sparks, Vice President of Development
(703) 838-1950 or dsparks@truckload.org

Gary Salisbury Elected Chairman of the Truckload Carriers Association
A former owner operator, Salisbury's goals include focusing on driver and industry image

San Diego, California – Gary Salisbury, president and chief executive officer of Fikes Truck Line, Inc., Hope, Ark., has been elected as 2011-2012 chairman of the Truckload Carriers Association (TCA). The swearing-in ceremony took place on Wednesday, March 16, 2011, during the association's Annual Convention at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront and San Diego Convention Center in California.

Salisbury brings a unique perspective to TCA that includes experience behind the wheel as well as behind the desk. His began his multi-faceted career as an owner operator and, in the 30 years since then, has worked in almost every aspect of the trucking industry, including sales, dispatch, and management.

In 1995, Salisbury accepted a position on Fikes Truck Line's executive team, and in 2008, he became president and CEO. His leadership skills have been instrumental in growing the business from an 11-truck company operating in Arkansas, to a premier flatbed and heavy haul specialist servicing well-known manufacturers across the United States.

At the Truckload Carriers Association, Salisbury has served on the Board since 2003 and the Executive Committee since 2005. His officer positions have included at-large officer as well as second and first vice chairman. Over the years, he has volunteered for numerous TCA committees and task forces, including the Carrier/Shipper Relations Committee, Driver Recruitment & Retention Panel, Financial Oversight & Long-Range Planning Task Force, Highway Policy Committee, Independent Contractor Practices Policy Committee, Membership Committee (co-chairman), Regulatory Policy Committee, Retention & Recruitment Human Resources Group, and the TCA Communications & Image Policy Committee (co-chairman). Salisbury founded the association's Open Deck Division and served the TCA Scholarship Fund as vice chairman and officer liaison.

While his leadership roles within TCA have increased steadily over the years, Salisbury has also been active as a board member or committee chair for the American Trucking Associations, the Arkansas Trucking Association, the Texas Motor Carrier Association, and Internet Truckstop. In addition, he is the immediate past chairman of the North American Transportation Management Institute, an organization dedicated to providing internationally recognized, university affiliated professional certification and training seminars for truck, bus, and transit fleet professionals.

Improving the industry's image will be Salisbury's primary focus this year. With first-hand experience as an owner operator, he is keenly aware of how image is intertwined with many of the challenges facing the trucking industry today.

"When it comes to image, we're in the driver's seat of our own destiny. If we don't grab the wheel, somebody else will," he said.

For example, Salisbury points out that when public opinion sides with our industry, it will be easier to set regulatory and legislative issues in a manner that favors trucking. This, in turn, will drive the supply chain and will ultimately ratchet up profits for both companies and drivers. A positive public image also increases the attractiveness of the trucking industry to potential, top-quality drivers with safe driving records who may be working in other industries and looking for new opportunities.

Salisbury said he plans to work in tandem with other industry groups "to create a stronger voice that can drive us in a more positive direction." He will build upon the image improvement mechanisms employed by previous TCA chairmen, including the Highway Angel program, Driver of the Year competition, and *Best Fleets to Drive For* contest and survey. He acknowledges that such programs cost money to implement and maintain, but "to be able to tell the truckload story to the general public, to the local chambers of commerce, to civic organizations and to people who work in economic development, it's worth it," he said. "For example, the pro-trucking commercial TCA ran on ESPN during the uDrove Humanitarian Bowl last December reached millions of football fans watching from home. Some of these could be potential drivers, so this type of exposure is money well spent."

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