

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST ABOUT DECEMBER:

- In early Roman calendars, December was the 10th month., until January and February were added.
- The name December comes from the Latin word for 10.
- Until 46 A.D., December had only 29 days, but that year Julius Caesar added two more to give December 31 days.
- Texas was admitted to the Union on December 29, 1845.
- December is Universal Human Rights Month.
- More than 2,300 Americans were killed at Pearl Harbor's U.S. Naval Base during this month in 1941 when the U.S. was attacked by Japanese pilots.

# Driving to Success

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## Fuel tax percentage decline means bumpier roads

Over the last several years, fuel (diesel and gas) taxes have fallen across the nation. While that may sound like a good thing, it actually might have a negative impact on you – drivers on our nation's highways. That's because the less fuel tax monies that are rolling in to state



coffers has a negative impact on road construction and repairs.

The Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) this month release its report on fuel taxes, noting these taxes "are the most important source of transportation funding under the control of state lawmakers."

The report states that, unfortunately, most state gas taxes "are built to fail." There are more than 35 states that rely on fixed-rate taxes that collect the same amount in tax annually on every gallon of fuel purchased. The rub is that while other costs are rising – such as asphalt, concrete and other transportation construction costs – the fuel taxes are remaining stagnant. In the aggregate, that means inflation is taking a big bite out of fuel taxes.

In fact, the report states, "After adjusting to account for growth in construction costs, the average state's gas tax rate has effectively fallen by 20 percent, or 6.8 cents per gallon, since the last time it was increased. In states that rely on the fixed-rate tax, that number increases to 29 percent, which is about 9.5 cents per gallon.

State's with the biggest declines in percentages of fuel tax monies include Alaska, New Mexico, Montana and Maryland.

According to ITEP, the trend they are seeing reflects long-term changes in how we live. In fact, they said, the decline in the fuel tax revenues means fuel taxes are "a less significant part of families' household budgets than they have been in 80 years."



# FactorLoads Launches TruckersButler

Whether you have 1 truck or 50, keeping your drive time maximized and your down-



*The TruckersButler Dispatch Team is trained in a variety of services to make your life on the road easier and less stressful.*

time (deadhead) minimized should result in greater profitability.

The newest service from FactorLoads, the TruckersButler freight dispatching service, is here to help you do just that.

By working with the professional freight dispatch team at TruckersButler, you can increase your profits while decreasing your deadhead miles -- and your stress. The result: TruckersButler helps make your life as a trucker or small trucking business owner easier and more rewarding.

**Working with** TruckersButler is like having a behind-the-scenes, full-time freight dispatch service working exclusively for you. Our primary mission is acting as your freight dispatch advocate — working with brokers on your behalf. While you are under your current load, you won't have

to worry about finding your next load. The professional freight dispatch team members at TruckersButler are finding loads, negotiating with brokers, and searching for the highest paying jobs for you. You won't get stuck with the leftovers that no one else wants and you will minimize your deadhead time. And because our freight dispatchers serve the trucking industry day in and day out, they are accustomed to finding the best rates and top companies for you.

Our professional freight dispatchers also are trained in a variety of services that make your over-the-road driving time less stressful:

- Negotiating with brokers and finding you the best rates available
- Arranging assistance for breakdowns/tire blowouts
- Finding you the best diesel prices along your route
- Easing your paperwork burden through our document management services
- Providing information on road amenities, such as nearby hotels and restaurants

**Working with** the team of professional freight dispatchers at TruckersButler is like having your own concierge service. Our goal is to make your life on the road easier and more profitable.

# ATA supports ban on handheld devices while driving

The Department of Transportation and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's ruling for banning handheld cell phones for all commercial truck and bus drivers got a big boost late last month when it gained the endorsement of the American Trucking Associations (ATA).

ATA President and CEO Bill Graves said in a press release that studies show texting and dialing a cell phone while driving significantly increase the risk of crashing. "...steps to curb these behaviors hold great promise to improve highway safety."

The ATA supports bans on texting and using handheld phones for all drivers. "While the federal government cannot enact such bans for drivers of passenger vehicles, ATA urges all states to follow the lead of DOT and FMCSA and take steps to ban these dangerous activities for all drivers," Graves said.



## Pair Fights Unreasonable Toll Hikes

A pair of legislators are trying to restore power the Department of Transportation once had to prevent unreasonable toll increases.

Rep. Michael Grimm of New York and Sen. Frank Lautenberg of N.J. created the legislation to help stave the negative impacts of allowing toll agencies to raise tolls however – and by however much – they see fit. The legislation gives the DOT control once again to override outrageous increases.

One such increase that has drawn much negative publicity is being pushed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Their proposal includes increased toll hikes considered by many to be exorbitant. The Port Authority says it needs the hikes to balance its budget and pay for a variety of non-transportation costs.

## Nationwide Diesel Prices

REGION	WEEK OF DEC 12	DIFFERENCE FROM LAST WEEK	DIFFERENCE FROM ONE YEAR AGO
East Coast	3.917	+0.017	+0.669
New England	4.032	-0.004	+0.659
Central Atlantic	4.003	-0.015	+0.639
Lower Atlantic	3.830	+0.032	+0.643
Midwest	3.848	+0.059	+0.643
Gulf Coast	3.794	-0.034	+0.631
Rocky Mountain	3.991	-0.044	+0.706
West Coast	4.061	-0.044	+0.700
West Coast less Calif.	3.990	NA	NA
California	4.122	-0.050	+0.719

Fuel prices during the first two weeks of the month were trending down in most geographic areas of the U.S., according to the U.S. Energy and Information Administration, which publishes weekly assessments of fuel prices.

For the week of December 12, the highest prices for diesel were reported in California, at \$4.12 per gallon (including taxes). The lowest prices were recorded along the Gulf Coast, at \$3.79 per gallon. The overall U.S. average was \$3.89, which was down almost 4 cents from the prior week, but up about 66 cents from one year ago.

The chart lists prices as well as year-to-date and week-to-week changes.

