

FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT TRUCKERS
AND CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, INC.

NITACA News

2022



- Must Stop Truck Stops
- Driving Along the Covid Conversation

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Must Stop Truck Stops

Deciding where you'll stop to eat and rest are important factors as plan your daily routes. With over 40,000 truck stops and travel centers open across the U.S., you have lots of options. How do you choose?

Let's start with the **big national chains**, which tend to have the same basic services and experiences at every location, no matter where you happen to stop. In addition to the consistent experience, many chains offer a loyalty program where you earn points for every stop that can then be used for free showers or credit towards fuel and food. Here's a list of some of the largest truck stop chains in the U.S.

Pilot Flying J. The largest travel center with over 740 locations in 44 states. As a professional driver you have access to certified CAT scales, fuel stations, truck washes, service centers, laundry and showers. They are known for hosting popular fast food chains. With their myRewards Plus app you can earn free shower and drink credits.

Love's Travel Stops. Around since 1964, Love's has over 550 locations in 41 states. Love's provides fuel, tire care, mechanical services and travel essentials. The Love's Connect app offers you rewards for purchases made at Love's or Speedco locations.

TA Travel Centers/Petro Truck Stops. TA and Petro truck stops offer truck maintenance services, fast-food options and 24-hour home-style restaurants. Plus, you can reserve parking spaces up to 30 days in advance. With the TruckSmart mobile app, you can redeem points from the TA/Petro loyalty program.

Sapp Bros Travel Centers. While not as well known, Sapp Bros. has been around for 50 years. They have 17 travel centers across the country, with most located in the West and Midwest. Of those locations, 10 include truck service centers and 15 have certified scales. Sapp Bros. offers a guest reward card to professional drivers and 24-hour roadside assistance.

Although you can expect most locations within a chain to be similar, there are always one or two that stand out. Here's the top five individual locations as voted by fellow truckers on the Trucker Path app:

1st Place – Mach 1, Frankfort, Illinois

2nd Place – Love's Travel Stop, Hampshire, Illinois

3rd Place – Sapp Bros Travel Center, Harrisonville, Missouri

4th Place – Flying J Travel Center, Mesquite, Nevada

5th Place – Mr. Gas Travel Center, Jerome, Idaho

In most cases, **independent truck stops** provide similar services to that of a large national chain, but offer a local flair to break up the monotony. There's never a stop as nice as home, but independent truck stops tend to offer you a little more down home comfort. For example, Iowa 80, located near the quad cities on the Iowa side, offers a barbershop. Jubitz in Oregon offers hot tubs and fluffy towels. We researched popular opinions and trucker-based surveys found in CDLLife, American Trucker, overdriveonline, trucker.com, Prime, Inc and others to identify the best America has to offer. So when you're traveling along the country, we recommend the following as **must stop, not to be missed** independent locations.

Walcott, Iowa - Iowa 80

With 900 parking spots and a whole bunch of services, the Iowa 80 earns the title of the "World's Largest Truck Stop." They serve around 5,000 customer every day with lots of food choices and a 50 foot salad bar. Nicknamed the Truck Driver's Disneyland, it offers a convenience store, truck wash, pet wash, movie theater, barber shop, chiropractor, dental office, workout room and more.

Portland Oregon - Jubitz Travel Center

If you're traveling through the Pacific Northwest, and in particular Portland, you don't want to miss the



Jubitz Travel Center. The 15 acre campus offers a driver's lounge, a 24-hour scale, nine fuel lanes, a truck wash and a convenience store. But the best part is their private showers and Jacuzzis. You can have an over the road spa experience, complete with oversized towels and massages. Jubitz has a barbershop, pet wash, postal service and offers both DOT and non-DOT drug testing.

Joplin, Missouri - Big Apple Travel Center

In 2020, the Big Apple Travel Center was voted by truckers using the Trucker Path app as one of their top 3 favorite stops in the U.S. Heralded for their clean facilities, good service, quality food and free wifi, the Big Apple is the most popular stop along the I-44 corridor from Texas all the way through Missouri. Another interesting feature of this location in the middle of the heartland is its authentic Indian cuisine with rice pudding, pakoras, curry, butter chicken, tandoori chicken, samosas and much more.

Bangor, Maine - Dysart's Restaurant & Truck Stop

If you're traveling in the Northeast and happen to be in Maine you won't want to miss this family-owned business. Open since 1967 it features two restaurants and eight convenience stores with small-town charm and award-winning Maine food. Also you won't want to miss their homemade pies!

Flagstaff, Arizona - Little America / Rocky Mountain Travel Center

For those driving through the southwest looking for a motel stay, Little America offers incredible views of natural beauty and ponderosa pines. The Rocky Mountain Travel Center has a hot grill, deli and a 24-hour convenience store.

Corinth, Kentucky - Noble's Restaurant & Truck Stop

Noble's is a restaurant, convenience store and gas station all in one. Stop by for home-style country cooking and yummy milkshakes. In a survey from CDLLife, Noble's Restaurant and Truck Stop came in first place for independent truck stops.

Albert Lea, Minnesota – Trail's Travel Center

Did you know that "all trails lead to Trail's?" It's true if you're near the intersection of I-35 and I-90. They've got all the basics covered and then some. Good food, modern showers, truck wash and more. They will also take care of your tractor with tire services, suspension repair and they have heavy-duty truck parts in stock. They'll get you back on the road.

Primm, Nevada - Whiskey Pete's

The most unique choice of our must stop stops, Whiskey Pete's is perfect if you want a little Vegas without a full-blown trip to the strip. Named after bootlegger Pete MacIntyre, Whiskey Pete's brings a Western casino atmosphere to a travel center. It's the last place to fuel up before heading into Las Vegas. And for you history buffs, Whiskey Pete's has a Bonnie and Clyde's bullet-ridden car on display.

Johnstown, Colorado - Johnson's Corner Truck Stop

Located off I-25, Johnson's Corner Truck Stop is known for its world famous giant cinnamon rolls and home-style cooking. This great stop offers a chapel, overnight parking, CAT scales, laundry facilities and more.

In addition to these, we offer as honorable mention three others:

Davie, Florida – Davie 95

Glenrio, New Mexico – Russell's Truck & Travel Center

Toledo, Washington – Gee Cee's Truck Stop

We hope this offers you food for thought and inspiration for rest. Be safe out there!

Driving Along the Covid Conversation

The ongoing impact of Covid on Truckers



The pandemic continues to impact the trucking industry in a variety of ways. In the beginning, with news of Covid-19 spreading like wildfire, the national economy came to a halt. Our industry had been enjoying growth until that point, but once lockdowns started we saw freight come to a stop and many companies were forced to lay off drivers. Some even closed their doors. This created too many drivers for too few jobs. That was a main part of the story on the impact of Covid on the trucking industry. But once vaccines became available and Covid infections slowed down, state by state the economy began to come back. And that's when things really got interesting, especially for truck drivers.

As the economy got back on the road, the conversation on driver safety intensified. Truckers were given guidelines on how to keep your trucks and tractors safe, how to avoid risks as you enter warehouses and stocking locations and generally how to protect yourself in public while on the road. Safety has always been a core focus for the industry, but now we were talking about hand sanitizer, staying 6 feet apart and wearing masks.

Once the trucks began rolling again later in 2020, with safety at the forefront, many trucking companies were not prepared for the pent up demand and found themselves extremely

understaffed. Trucker recruiting sites like AllTruckJobs.com, CDLJobs.com, Jobsintrucks.com and others experienced an immediate influx of trucking companies looking for drivers. Job openings were up and candidates looking for jobs were down. Truckers could be more selective with work. Companies were offering higher levels of starting pay and signing bonuses. That was a positive impact on many truckers, who'd long been the last in line for lucrative pay incentives. At this point the conversation turned to the ongoing driver shortage and its impact on the U.S. supply chain. And this continues to be true and part of the ongoing Covid conversation.

But recently things took another dramatic turn. In September, the White House announced a new plan that would mandate companies with 100 or more employees to require their workers to be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing for the Covid virus. As you might expect, it didn't take long for the trucking industry to start voicing concerns. Larger trucking companies are claiming that these types of mandates will push more truckers away from their operation and cause greater delays to the already crippled U.S. supply chain.

Trucking leaders say the proposed testing requirements for workers who choose not to get vaccinated will be extremely challenging,

especially for long distance fleets. Many times long hauls send drivers from one corner of the country to another over several days or weeks along rural routes, with limited services. Locating testing facilities is one thing, but routing trucks off the path is both expensive and time-consuming. Not to mention frustrating for many truckers. The market for drivers is already tight, and company executives claim a testing requirement will add even greater pressure to the logistic networks already struggling to supply factories with parts and stores with stock.

“We’re in an industry where we can’t afford any fallout. We don’t have enough drivers today,” said Eric Fuller, chief executive of U.S. Xpress Enterprises Inc., a large trucking carrier based in Chattanooga, Tenn. U.S. Xpress, like many large trucking companies, is encouraging its workforce, which includes about 7,000 drivers, to get the Covid vaccine. The company estimates that just under half of its drivers are vaccinated. But the carrier isn’t requiring its workers to get the vaccine, “and we’re not necessarily comfortable with the government mandating it,” Mr. Fuller said.

October of 2021 is showing some positive signs where Covid and recent variations are declining, which gives us hope. Whether or not Biden’s Covid Plan mandating vaccines and tests comes to be is unclear at the moment, but the impact of Covid is far from over.

To stay current on the changing story, check out the ATA site: <https://www.trucking.org/COVID19>.

The NITACA NEWS Newsletter is published by:
**NATIONAL INDEPENDENT TRUCKERS
AND CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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