



Human trafficking exhibit stops in Bismarck

16 HOURS AGO • BY [KAREE MAGEE](#)

Truckers Against Trafficking will arrive in Bismarck on Saturday with a mobile exhibit on human trafficking to raise awareness and act as a call to action for truckers in North Dakota.

T.A.T is a nonprofit organization, founded in 2009, that educates and equips members of the trucking industry to combat domestic human trafficking.

"Truckers are the eyes and ears of our nation's highways," said Kyla Lanier, deputy director of T.A.T. "They would really be a force in this fight."

The goal of the organization is to give truckers the tools to identify victims of human trafficking and mobilize them to report it to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center's hotline number or the authorities, Lanier said.

"It's happening, and a lot of industries are sticking their heads in the sand," she said. "We're saying no."

The training involves a 26-minute DVD and a wallet card is given to each trained driver with the hotline number, red flag indicators, questions to ask a potential victim and other tips.

Truckers have made hundreds of calls to the hotline and identified 369 likely human trafficking cases, involving 650 victims, according to Lanier.

"The momentum is building and support in the industry is increasing," she said. "The trucking industry has embraced it."

According to Lanier, there are more than 166,000 registered T.A.T.-trained drivers, and many more who are not registered.

T.A.T. is looking to bring the momentum to North Dakota's truckers and public.

"North Dakota is not worse than any other state, but there is more of an opportunity to recognize human trafficking and put a stop to it right now," Lanier said.

The mobile exhibit, the Freedom Drivers Project, includes stories and artifacts from survivors, portraits of the truckers involved with T.A.T. and steps that people can use to take action.

"We hope it helps to put human trafficking back on people's radars, and people are doing something about it," Lanier said.

Education is important because of the misconceptions about human trafficking, according to Lanier, who said the misunderstanding arises from a belief the victims choose to be in their

situation.

"We want this innocent picture of a perfect victim. That is not the reality. The vast majority don't fit that category," said Lanier, adding the victims vary, ranging from girls who are seduced and their boyfriend turns out to be a trafficker to a runaway forced into making bad choices.

"We need to look at it in a different way," she said.

Truckers Against Trafficking

What: Event to raise awareness about the active role truckers can take to combat human trafficking.

When: 12:45 p.m. Saturday

Where: Bismarck Police Department, 700 S. Ninth St.

Exhibit: Open for tours from 1 to 3 p.m.