

We Are The Z-Team!

Volume 2, Issue 11
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DISPATCH: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT ANYWAY?

Dispatch. It's the nerve center of every trucking company. But Dispatch just matches up loads with available trucks, right? So, what's so complicated about dispatching? "Well, if that's all there was to it, we could just phone it in everyday. But that's not how it works," said **Dave Wetzler**, ZTL Operations Manager and 20 year Dispatch veteran. "The end result is matching loads with trucks, but so much more goes into making those decisions. It's like putting together a puzzle, which is moving down a conveyer belt, and the pieces are always changing position and their shape, 24 hours per day. It never stops — and since ZTL doesn't do the same loads on a regular daily basis, the puzzle is completely different every day."

The dispatch process usually starts by booking loads 24 to 96 hours ahead. Shippers for outbound freight contact Dispatch via e-mail (mostly), but sometimes by fax (less often these days), and by phone (a lot). Everything requires a written confirmation follow-up. Confirmed loads are then entered into the computer system. For backhauls, dispatchers first contact those companies who have a regular pattern of available freight near the outbound destination. And an e-mail "blast" is sent out two to four times per day announcing where ZTL will have empty trucks from 2 to 48 hours ahead of time. These blasts go to a changing list of about 150 different contacts who have done business with ZTL recently.

"Not only do we send out e-mail blasts, but we receive hundreds of e-mails each day as well. Brokers and carriers are using these same tools [to do mass e-mailing], so some days we are drowning in e-mail." Dave said. "Plus we get phone calls regularly asking if we have trucks in various areas. We also use Internet-based 'load boards' with reputable brokers to find backhauls when we're in areas that we don't deliver to regularly. Finding backhauls can be time consuming."

Once loads are booked (remember that process goes on continuously), drivers have to be assigned to pick up and deliver them. There is a "decision tree" that is followed to see which truck should get each assignment. The process starts by seeing who will be geographically closest and empty during the pickup window. That's simple enough. The next decision: does that driver have enough hours to pickup and make the required delivery window? It helps when the shipper and consignee have flexible appointments — some do, but some don't. Other considerations include short notice (hot) loads, breakdowns, cancellations, and the personal needs of drivers including requests for time off for doctor appointments, bereavement, court appearances, vacations, and family issues. If the closest

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Want to Learn More?

You can participate and "learn how the sausage is made" in Dispatch. There is an open invitation to anyone who wants to sit in and help make the day-to-day decisions. Come and experience the excitement! The only conditions are that it has to be done on your time and when it's not inconvenient for operations. See **Mark Zimmerman** for more information.

DISPATCH (... continued from front page)

truck/driver gets ruled out for any one of these reasons, then the next closest is selected and goes through the same decision process until someone is assigned. One small item changes (a delay, breakdown, or cancellation, for example) and the "puzzle" falls apart and has to be redone. Often dispatchers use their judgment and experience with each individual situation to try to determine the best choices. And a lot of times they have to make a "Plan B", just in case it looks like the original plan might have issues. One thing that cannot be allowed is a service failure with a customer. That's the fastest route to losing any customer.

What else happens in Dispatch? Everything else! In addition to answering the phones, two or three people are dedicated to calling to confirm appointments and to obtain directions. These are then entered into the computer system to be transmitted to individual trucks through the PeopleNet mobile communications system. Dispatchers also handle almost every interaction with drivers, shippers, and customers if there are questions or issues regarding cargo, load securement, directions, weather, hours of service, exceptions, delays, damaged freight, freight and pay rates, accidents, plus you-name-it, and Dispatch has to deal with it.

Kerry Hummel has worked all sides of this square. He worked in Flatbed Dispatch for 13 years and transferred last year to Van Dispatch — and he started his career as a flatbed driver, on the road for over 10 years. Kerry describes dispatching as, "... like being a travel agent. We arrange every detail for everyone. But just when it's all arranged, a load gets redirected, canceled, or delayed. That throws everything off." When asked about the biggest mystery in dispatching ("*Why are you doing it that way?*"), he said, "Sometimes the drivers know about changes before we do. They're the ones who tell us. We try to keep the drivers informed and explain what's going on. We make some decisions that may seem crazy, but we are often forced into those situations for any number of reasons outside of our control." He finished by adding, "Drivers have it tough out there and we know it. We try our best to make it easy."

Even though our dispatch office hours are 7:30 AM to 8 PM Monday through Friday, ZTL trucks are moving round the clock every day. Most dispatchers are working nights and weekends from home. **Steve Arnold** comes in every Sunday evening at 7 PM for three hours of flatbed dispatching since a lot of flatbed drivers are leaving Sunday night. And there is always a dispatcher on call 24 hours per day.


Mark Zimmerman summed up his views on dispatch this way, "Dispatch is a series of compromises for everyone involved. Sometimes it's about choosing the best option among several poor ones. Not everyone can get the perfect load every day. Not every shipment pays the top rate. We cannot take every load tendered to us. We are all working with limited resources including equipment, personnel, and time. The regulations also present many challenges. Our goals are simple: to serve everyone (including customers and drivers), to keep the wheels turning (idle trucks earn nothing), and to maintain our 99% on-time service record (so we develop loyal customers with repeat business). If you must judge what we are doing in Dispatch, please first give us the benefit of the doubt!"

LATEST CSA SCORES

So how is the Z-Team doing this month? The latest numbers as of September 25th along with the thresholds (in parentheses) and the trend arrows indicate the direction of change from last month (lower for better, green—or higher for worse, red):

Unsafe Driving (65)	ZTL Score: 7	↓
HOS Compliance (65)	ZTL Score: 51	↑
Vehicle Maintenance (85)	ZTL Score: 31	↓

Geoff Hosband, Safety Director, said, "Videos of the Winter Safety Meeting will be available on November 5. Drivers who were excused from attending must request a loaner DVD and watch by December 18, or lose the safety part of their bonus."



Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday November 1 at 2 AM. Turn your clocks back — and sleep an extra hour!



Two words can help prevent a million dollar claim: **SEAL INTACT** should be written on all freight bills!

WELCOME NEW DRIVERS!

THROUGH AUGUST 2015
MORE IN FUTURE ISSUES!



George Hayes, III



Les Brownsberger



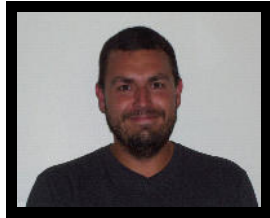
Leonard Chubb



Perry Goss



Gary Brown



Andrew Romig



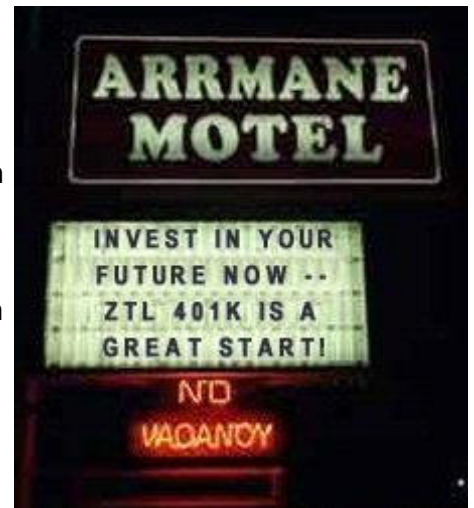
Kristofer Embly



Your Next Referral?

News About ZTL's 401(k) Plan

Zimmerman Truck Lines employees have saved over \$3 million for their retirement as of April 30, 2015. But only 56% of employees participate! Participation is completely voluntary, of course. Do you have another plan for your retirement savings? If not, you should talk to **Cinda Lauver** at Ext 250 about joining. There are many options for investing and saving. You can manage and monitor your plan on-line or over the phone. You decide how much to contribute (a dollar amount or percentage) from each paycheck. Your contributions are deducted from your taxable income, thus reducing your taxes at year end. (That means the government helps pay today for part of your retirement tomorrow.) And the 401(k) plan is designed to be a long term investment that will grow over time. Already in the plan? You should increase by one percent the amount you were withholding over last year. And then increase this again by one percentage point every January from now on. The end result will be one you can live with—for quite a long time!



UPDATE ON ZTL MERCHANDISE

Do you remember in August when we asked for your ideas on clothing and gear with the ZTL name and logo? We got some interesting responses and hopefully everyone will be satisfied. **Gina Himes** reports, "We are working on a new clothing line, but in the meantime we are having a clearance sale!" Gina has a list of different T-shirts (FunFest, Employee Appreciation, and ZTL company logo) and jackets, and styles (long/short sleeve), colors (white/gray/red), and sizes. T-shirts are \$5 each, red/black/white beanies are \$8, and jackets with removable stitched names are \$20. Don't miss out on these bargains! Call Gina at x246 today to take advantage of these offers and get your ZTL gear at clearance prices!

www.WeAreTheZ-Team.com

DO YOU FEEL THE LOVE?

Well, this guy probably does — at least enough love to have a ZTL truck and flatbed trailer tattooed on his left forearm. **Anthony Forshey**, who drove flatbed for ZTL from 2002 to 2009 showed off this artwork when he stopped by earlier this month.



NOTICE ANYTHING DIFFERENT?

Of course you do! This month's issue of the *We Are the Z-Team* Newsletter is the first issue to be printed in color — and color delivers IMPACT! (Look right below!)

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Color printing is now possible with the new color printer/copier which was installed in the Billing Department in late September. The new technology performs printing at half the cost of the previous copier which had been with us for almost 10 years. Along with the per-page savings, by printing the newsletter and other large-run documents in-house, will save enough to more than cover the cost of the new, better, faster, and cheaper-to-operate copier!

Dates to Remember

Thanksgiving Day, Thursday November 26
 First day of buck season, Monday November 30
 Santa Kids Party, Sat December 12, 10AM – 1PM
 Company Holiday Party, Sat Dec 19, 5:00 PM
 Christmas Day, Friday December 25

Together we can make it better!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS ...

Joe Ondesko — Nov 1
 Russ Whitesel — Nov 2
 Gina Himes — Nov 4
 Cathy Wible — Nov 5
 Tammie Hopp — Nov 6
 Darryl Walker — Nov 7
 Bruce Garner, Jr. — Nov 10
 Steve Arnold — Nov 13
 Tom Pannebaker — Nov 13
 Scott Benfer — Nov 14
 Dan Black — Nov 18
 Mac Stailey — Nov 18
 James Boyer — Nov 25
 Dennis Snook — Nov 26

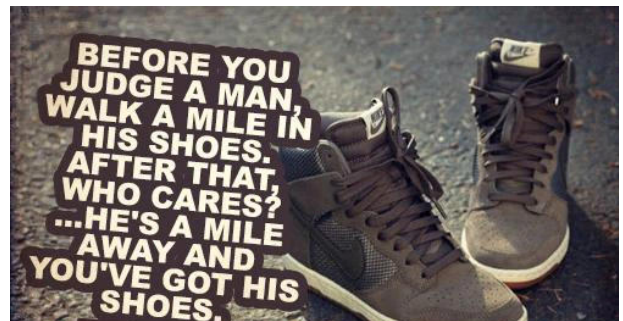
... AND ANNIVERSARIES

Scott Barner — 13 years
 Christine Benfer — 13 years
 Scott Benfer — 13 years
 Lane Rumberger — 10 years
 Todd Knepp — 6 years
 Brenda Atwood — 3 years
 Tom Atwood — 3 years
 Bruce Garner, Jr. — 3 years
 Garry Brown — 3 years



Sign up sheets have been posted for some time now. Drivers who want time off during deer season need to indicate their first, second, and third choices for the days they want. The deadline for signup is November 13. "After that day," **Dave Wetzler** said, "time off will be approved by each dispatch department based on seniority and manpower needs."

QUOTE FOR THE MONTH



ZIMMERMAN TRUCK LINES, INC.