

SMITH & SOLOMON®

TRAINING SOLUTIONS

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The American Trucking Association reports a nationwide shortage of 20,000 long haul drivers –a shortage expected to grow to 110,000 by 2014 if current demographic trends continue.

Right now, trailer loads filled with goods sit idle in carrier yards because of a shortage of drivers. 10% of all the major fleets have trucks sitting up against the fence because of a shortage of drivers.

Patricia Sanchez and Alice Martinez of New Jersey may hold the answer to this problem.

Pat and Alice not only drive 80,000 pound fully loaded tractor trailers, they teach a largely male student population how to do it to earn commercial driver's licenses-- in an industry that until now has been a male-dominated business.

Pat and Alice are truck driver training instructors and are very representative of a new breed of mom that is getting a commercial driver's license and taking the big rigs on the road. They may also be the answer in replacing more than 200,000 male truck drivers ages 55-65 set to retire in the next five years.

When Alice and Pat first went for their own licenses a few years ago they were the only women in the class at Smith & Solomon Commercial Driver Training. Today two out of every 10 in a class are women.

Pat Sanchez of Elizabeth, NJ is a single mother of three children – two sons, 21 and 13, and a daughter, 12, has held a number of jobs over the years, customer service rep, p/t driver for Hertz, shuttle bus driver at a university, when she decided to get a commercial drivers license that would allow her to drive trucks, and specifically tractor trailers. She drove full and part time to support her family; went back as an instructor in April teaching largely male classes. How she teaches them and what she tells them is interesting.

Alice' story is similar--- went to work after high school as a machine operator, left manufacturing to become a customer service representative at a bank, left the bank, went to school and got her bartender's license got bored and satisfied her fascination with the idea of learning to drive a truck and got her license. Drove long haul trucks and started as an instructor a year ago. They are interesting people.