

# news

# NHTSA



Published by  
National Highway Traffic  
Safety Administration

U.S. Department of  
Transportation  
Washington, D.C.

NHTSA News is a semi-monthly publication prepared for all agency employees by the Executive Secretariat, Room 5221, Nassif Building, 426-2876. Distribution is on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month.

Editor M. J. Noll

October 1979

## In Search of Ways To Make Trucks Safer



A group of 25 panelists listened to over 100 speakers at the two-day public meeting.



Heavy duty trucks were on display outside the auditorium.

Over 100 speakers, many of them professional truck drivers, presented their ideas on how to make trucks safer at a meeting at the Department of Commerce auditorium in Washington, D.C. on September 10 and 11.

Administrator Joan Claybrook called the two-day public meeting to find ways to curb the steadily rising number of fatalities attributable to heavy trucks. In 1978 traffic accidents involving heavy trucks claimed an estimated 4,624 lives, or almost 10 percent of the 50,000 persons killed on the nation's highways last year.

Suggestions made during the presentations were evaluated by a group of about 25 panelists, which included government, manufacturer-supplier, motor carrier, and labor representatives. The panel was chaired by Administrator Claybrook. Their evaluations of these suggestions will be used to help identify areas for additional cooperative and individual action by all parties involved.

NHTSA has identified heavy truck safety as one of the priorities under its five-year rulemaking plan. Special emphasis will be given to brakes,

(See **Safer Trucks** on page 4.)

## Barbara Lee Hickman



### NHTSA's New Personnel Director

Many of you may already know Barbara Lee Hickman, NHTSA's new Personnel Director. She worked in NHTSA from 1970 to 1974. More recently she has been popping in and out of offices to meet and listen to people since her return to NHTSA on June 4.

And because of her warm and open manner, she is the type of person that most people enjoy knowing, a worthwhile asset for the position she's in. In addition, Barbara Hickman is a person with a purpose—making NHTSA a better place to work.

Already she is well on the way to making some dramatic changes in the Office of Personnel. One is to publish her office FY-80 goals and work plans in the area of personnel

with the hope of engendering more understanding of and participation in making the program changes necessitated by the Civil Service Reform Act. Later, she hopes to start a series of open monthly meetings to answer employees' questions concerning personnel matters.

As one of her FY-80 goals, Hickman plans to place special emphasis on the support of the principles of Equal Employment in all major personnel programs.

For example, additional efforts will be made to make managers aware of the potential of handicapped and disabled veterans as employment prospects. Provisions resulting from the Civil Service Reform

Act now allow the employment of readers for the blind and interpreters for the deaf. This should open a number of opportunities to compete for jobs.

Among other plans, the new Personnel Director also will assess and hopes to expand the upward mobility program. She also wants to include EEO sensitivity training for all professional and technical personnelists as a requirement.

"I do not mean to say that personnelists do not care," Hickman said, "but in personnel you have to go a lot further—stand in a person's shoes to determine what the hispanic, the black, and the woman's problems are, for example. People in personnel who are not sensitive and tuned in on people as human beings shouldn't be in the profession, in my opinion."

Hickman is also thinking about setting up career counseling for employees in dead end jobs to help them get on the road to something better, even if it's outside NHTSA. She is also assessing the effectiveness of the Coop program to attract minorities and women.

Barbara Hickman, herself, is a good example of what a woman can do, if she makes her mind up to do it. She went from a GS-03 clerk-typist to a GS-15 Director of Personnel in 16 years. While attending college, Hickman had worked as a clerk-typist for the Coast Guard and, later, the Geological Survey. After graduation, having passed

the Federal Service Entrance Examination, she was given an opportunity in the Geological Survey to enter into an employee relations job. That turned out to be a good opportunity, Hickman said (who admits to predated women's lib). Her boss was a GS-12 woman, who was interested in bringing along other qualified women. This started her career in personnel.

Young and restless, the somewhat newly graduated history major remembered the words of John Babson Lane Soule who in an article published in the Terre Haute, Indiana Express in 1851 said "Go West, Young Man." Hickman did not take his words literally, however, and went West to make her fortune. She quickly found out that in the early 1960's, man strictly meant man in San Francisco.

"Every professional personnel job that I applied for or interviewed for, I was told, 'Oh, we were looking for a man'," Hickman declared.

"Their thought was that a woman would soon get married and pregnant and leave them."

So back to Washington, D.C. she came and landed a job as a position classification specialist with the Public Health Service. She first worked for the Office of the Surgeon General and later with the Bureau of Disease Prevention and Environmental Control. The Bureau later organized into the Environmental Health Services, the forerunner of the Environmental Protection Agency.

From there, Hickman came to NHTSA in July 1970 and served in a variety of positions, including Chief of Classification and Pay, Chief of Personnel Operations and Acting Director of Personnel. During that time her accomplishments included the development and implementation of the first NHTSA Merit Promotion Program; the development and implementation of the first NHTSA Employee Recognition Program; the selling and development of the first NHTSA Position Management Program; and management and recruitment for supergrade positions.

In August 1974 Hickman left NHTSA and joined the Mine Health and Safety Administration as Chief, Branch of Personnel Operations for Headquarters and Field. Two years later in July 1976 she was selected as the Chief Personnel Officer for the National Park Service.

Hickman returned to NHTSA as the Director of Personnel in June.

When asked what she feels were the major factors that contributed to her ascent up the ladder of success, Hickman said, "First, I had excellent blind luck. On two occasions I happened to have as my bosses women who were interested in seeing that other women had the opportunity to prove themselves. I also happened to fall into organizations that had new programs forming, thus giving me the opportunity to show what I could do, making the journey up the

ladder a bit easier. I was with the EPA predecessor, and both NHTSA and MESA when they were new. This gave me an unusual opportunity to tackle a wide variety of jobs. Also, I purposefully diversified and changed jobs and departments and types of assignments every couple of years."

Hickman advises persons looking for a job or who are interested in changing, not to let the dollar sign and grade rule their decision.

"Too often," she said, "people will simply seek a promotion and don't see beyond that instant promotion as to where that career opportunity is taking them."

"What's more important," Hickman states, "is to find something where you can be happy and contribute. Then try to see where that will lead you in the long run. Because, she emphasizes, you can work yourself right into a dead end by just looking at a grade."

"Also, try to find a mission with which you can identify and a place where people are interested in bringing you along," Hickman stresses.

"Then," she advises, "ask yourself what you are going to do to make the organization better in whatever job you have. And then put a lot of yourself into your job. Continue to work to improve yourself. Set goals. Decide what it is you want to do this year to achieve these goals in terms of your development, and pursue them. It is up to you."

It worked for her!

## Safer Trucks

(from page 1)

tires, rear underride protection, lighting, improved fields of view, splash and spray control, interior noise level, fuel system integrity and ride quality.

Discussions at the meeting covered five major topics. These were driveability (brakes, tires, road conditions, handling and stability, and speed control); vision and lighting; crash protection; driver environment and maintenance, operations and training.

## Setting the Record Straight

Mr. Arne Johnson, Chief of the Policies and Procedures Division (NAD), was recognized recently for 25 years of government service (NHTSA News, Vol. 5, No. 18). Counting his years of service with the National Highway Safety Bureau, Mr. Johnson has worked for NHTSA 12 years.

# graffiti



It is better to wear out  
than to rust out.

## Personnel

### Welcome Aboard

Joanne Sawicki,  
Attorney Advisor, OCC.  
Seymour Stern, General  
Engineer, NRD.

### Congrats on Promotion

Cecelia English,  
Personnel Staff  
Specialist, NAD.  
Beulah Evans, Secretary  
(typing), NRD.  
A. Stana Federighi,  
Writer-Editor, Exec. Sec.  
Margaret Gill,  
Secretary, NRM.  
Linda Lawson,  
Management Analyst, NAD.

### 'Bye and Good Luck

Pamela Anderson, DOT  
Intern, NAD.  
Robert Brumbach, Safety  
Standards Engineer, NRM.  
Billie Graves, Position  
Classification Specialist,  
NAD.  
Manuel Lourenco,  
Supervisory Highway Safety  
Research Engineer, NAD.  
Andrew Ness,  
Supervisory Safety  
Compliance Engineer, NEF.  
Virginia Rhinehart,  
Accountant Technician,  
Region III.  
MaryAnn Scheeler,  
Secretary, Region III.  
Benmun Seto, Safety  
Compliance Engineer, NEF.  
Diane Simon, Secretary,  
NRD.  
Debra Williams, Program  
Analyst, NTS.

## Monumental Trivia

The World's largest  
dump truck is the "Terex  
Titan," made in 1974 by  
General Motors. It stands  
56 feet high and holds  
700,000 pounds of dirt.

## Job Openings

For complete details on  
these job openings, see  
the official vacancy  
announcements. Vacancy  
announcements are posted  
on the NHTSA Bulletin  
Boards at both the Nassif  
and Transpoint Buildings.  
They are also distributed  
to each Office Director.

Director, Office of  
Defects Investigation,  
NEF. Opens: 9-4, Closes:  
10-5. NHTSA 79-82.

Chief, Light Truck  
Standards Division, NEF.  
Opens: 9-10, Closes:  
10-19. NHTSA 79-85.

Director, Office of  
State Program Assistance,  
TSP. Opens: 9-24,  
Closes: 10-31. NHTSA  
79-90.

Supervisory Safety  
Defects Engineer (Chief,  
Evaluation & Test Group)  
GS-801-15, NEF. Opens:  
9-26, Closes: 10-18.  
NHTSA 79-91.

Staffing Clerk (Typing)  
GS-203-4/5/6, NAD. Opens:  
9-24, Closes: 10-12.  
NHTSA 79-93.

## The Miracle of It All

Sometimes the fact that  
a car works at all seems  
like a minor miracle. For  
instance. . .at 55 mph,  
each piston in your engine  
moves up and down inside  
its cylinder about 35  
times per second. Piston  
temperatures reach 400  
degrees, and bearing  
pressures exceed 1,000  
pounds a square inch.  
What keeps the engine from  
grinding itself to pieces?  
A film of motor oil  
thinner than this page.