



FOR THE TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONAL

"Elite" FLEET® MAGAZINE

Special Issue

DRIVER Of The Year

Who will be 2016 DOY?

2016 Barney Award



VIEW FROM THE WINDSHIELD



LOREN BRIDGE
NCI VICE PRESIDENT

Eleven drivers will compete for the title of 2016 Driver of the Year. February Driver of the Month, Paul Sakis, retired shortly after the passing of his beloved wife, Kathleen. We appreciate the excellent work he contributed to the “Elite” Fleet and we continue to wish him well in his retirement.

In 2016 National Carriers recognized both the oldest and youngest driver to be named as Driver of the Month. Buddy Haston, who began driving at NCI in 1989, was 30 days from celebrating his 77th birthday when he won DOM honors. At 30 years and seven months old, Tyler Claussen became the youngest driver to be awarded DOM. Iesha Hawkins emerged as the youngest female to be named DOM. Each and every finalist of 2016 Driver of the Year have their own unique personal success story. Whether they are an owner operator, lease operator, company driver, or pull within the livestock division, hide division, regional or 48 state refrigerated division, they have one thing in common – they are the Elite of the “Elite” Fleet.

Every month we sit down to choose the driver of the month and it gets harder and harder. National Carriers has been blessed with many quality drivers who provide our customers with on time service and deliver with their loads in good condition, which means arriving safely. We can’t succeed without giving excellent service to our customers and we can’t stress safety enough, your safety is our number one concern. You are all professional drivers, alert, attentive and know when to shut down. When we honor the drivers of the month for 2016 remember they are representatives of our entire fleet—The ELITE Fleet. From every non-driver at National Carriers, we wouldn’t be here doing our thing without our drivers out on the road doing their thing.

On March 17th in Arlington, TX, at the Bill Duncan Center, each of these deserving drivers will be honored at our Driver of the Year Banquet. One will be named Driver of the Year.

Allen and Sandy Smith



**Owner
Operator**



Start Date: 8/4/1987 - 29 Years

Division: 48 State

Miles logged 2016: 182,480

Safety Points: -95 NCI 5 Million Miles Safe Driving Award

Service Failures 2016: 0

Home: Oak Hill, VA

*Driver
of the Year
Award*

Al Love, Director of Driver Services shares, "On August 4 of this year, Allen and Sandy Smith will have been with NCI for 30 years. What an amazing adventure this has been for them! When interviewing to lease at NCI, Allen was asked what he was looking for. He responded, "A work home that will be able to get me home to West Virginia." In hindsight, Allen wonders how many companies stay in business for 30 years? And, how many drivers work for the same company that long? It is always a pleasure to talk to Allen. Even if he is upset, a person would have to really know him in order to notice, and I do. I am lucky to have dealt with him and Sandy through the years. If you give them a dispatch, then your worries are over. They are always on time and never late, time and time again."

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How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

"I'll donate \$1000 and then give Sandy the rest so she can buy furniture for our house."



Felipe Chacon



**Owner
Operator**

Start Date: 7/7/2003 - 14 Years
Division: Livestock
Miles logged 2016: 87,586
Safety Points: -20 NCI 1 Million Miles Safe Driving Award
Service Failures 2016: 0
Home: Garden City, KS

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

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Mike Lynch, Dodge City livestock dispatcher shares, "People like Felipe work so hard day in and day out to make the 'Elite Fleet' elite. At National Carriers quality drivers are held to the utmost prominence within our organization. The fact that he is elite each and every day is awesome and takes great character. Here in Dodge City, Felipe is a great example of what it means to be elite for all of the drivers. Maybe he is embarrassed to call himself elite or maybe he doesn't want to be too flashy, but he does his job everyday with humbleness, each and every day. I consider myself VERY lucky to have the privilege to work with this great group we have here in Dodge, and with Felipe in particular."

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?
"I will take my family on a vacation, a NICE vacation."



Bruce O'Guinn



**Lease
Operator**

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Start Date: 6/18/2012 - 4 Years

Division: 48 State

Miles logged 2016: 99,961

Safety Points: -20 NCI 1 Million Miles Safe Driving Award

Service Failures 2016: 2

Home: Surprise, AZ

Kim Obholz, Assistant Director of Truck Leasing shares, "Bruce O'Guinn started in June 2012. He has completed two 2-year leases and will finish his third in April 2017. I have enjoyed working with Bruce over the years. I have laughed with him and listened to him. I felt sorrow over the loss of his wife, Pam. Bruce has always been the professional: from his work habits, appearance, and overall positive attitude, even in the worse situations. He has mentored other lease drivers, while also being willing to do whatever his driver manager and I have asked. It has been a pleasure having him as part of this program. I wish him many years of success."

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

"I have some medical bills from my wife's care, plus I'd setup up a trust fund for our grandkids in her name. I know she would approve of it!"



With SCCC Students

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Steve Danielson



**Owner
Operator**

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Start Date: 1/7/2008 - 9 Years
Division: Dedicated
Miles logged 2016: 133,398
Safety Points: -30 NCI 1 Million Miles Safe Driving Award
Service Failures 2016: 0
Home: Ocala, Florida

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Jill Maschmeier,, Director of Safety shares, "Steve - big man, big heart! When he began at NCI, the very first experience I had with Steve was on Christmas Eve. He was in a motor vehicle accident with two small children in the car. Together we worked to ensure the little folks made it to their destination in time for Santa Claus. We provided them a couple extra gifts to boot! Moving forward about seven years, he now works with children educating them about trucking, as well as, mentoring troubled teens. Steve is always our go-to guy if we are needing help in the safety department. He has helped with everything from testing a new program to assisting other drivers in his area."

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

"I just rebuilt the engine in my truck. So between that and my retirement account, I will find a place for it."



With Head Start Students

Calvin Field



**Company
Driver**

Start Date: 8/19/2013 -3 Years
Division: Hides
Miles logged 2016: 145,246
Safety Points: -40
Service Failures 2016: 0
Home: Topeka, KS

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Phil Eade, dispatcher for the HIDE division shares, *“Cal came to HIDE from the reefer side, wanting more home time. He is easy to work with, communicates well and is always asking questions. I rarely worry about Cal. He is the kind of a guy you tell what to do and he is gone. He’s a very solid family man and driver. He’s a very “National Carrier” kind of guy.”*

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How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

“First and foremost, I’d take care of my church, wife Donna (my boo), and daughter Sami (daddy’s little girl). It would be a God thing if I won so He would get the glory.”





The Barney Award

Bonnell Edmonds worked 10 years in our safety department helping to educate drivers in the tedious process of keeping paper logs accurate. Barney was the Log Lady. Most drivers at the time hated doing logs by hand, especially if the

driver had not had proper guidance in filling them out. Many times an apprehensive driver was called into the office to correct violations. Expecting the worst, most drivers had worked themselves into a foul mood before arriving at Barney's desk. Once they introduced themselves, Barney always told them a joke, ALWAYS. Sometimes it was a bit off-colored, but she had a knack for knowing which joke to use to defuse a nervous, frustrated, and worried driver. Once the driver found that she had driven for NCI and had been in their shoes, you could see the driver's shoulders relax, mouths turn from frowns to grins, and the fear of being in trouble dissipate.

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She loved her job, she loved the drivers, she loved her co-workers and, above all, she loved her NCI family. Rain, sleet, snow, or shine, Barney was at her desk, ready to tell a joke (did I mention some were off-colored), ease a driver's anxiety, and teach drivers to legally log on and off duty time.

During her NCI journey, Barney was diagnosed with cancer. Her attitude remained upbeat and she was determined to continue to help others. Fighting through fatigue and weakness from treatments, she persisted as a bright and shining light. Through hair loss, nausea, and exhaustion she worked every day, enjoying her NCI family and, in turn, we enjoyed her.

Shortly after her passing, former owner operator Mike Jenkins was named Driver of the Month. As a tribute to Barney for all she had done for NCI drivers, he asked that his \$500 bonus check be used as funding to begin a memorial in Barney's name from NCI drivers. Thus, the Barney Award was created to recognize the office or shop personality who best represents the spirit of Bonnell Edmonds, our beloved Barney.

Since its inception, the Barney Award has been presented at the Driver of the Year Banquet. Past winners include Steve Spence from our IT department, Willie Jefferson from our Security/Safety department, Jeana Huebert from our Customer Service/Operations department and James White from our Maintenance department.

THE BARNEY AWARD RECIPIENTS



WILLIE JEFFERSON
SECURITY/SAFETY DEPARTMENT



STEVE SPENCE
IT DEPARTMENT



JEANA HUEBERT
CUSTOMER SERVICE/
OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT



JAMES WHITE
MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT



Iesha Hawkins



**Company
Driver**

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Start Date: 5/13/2015 -1 Year
Division: 48 State
Miles logged 2016: 135,388
Safety Points: -20
Service Failures 2016: 0
Home: Garland, TX

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Ed Kentner, Director of Social Media shares, *"Iesha is the youngest women in NCI history to be named Driver of the Month. She is a military veteran, a dedicated mother and an excellent professional driver making a positive impact on our industry"*

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

"I'm not sure. I haven't thought about it. I was always taught not to count my eggs until they hatch."



Kenneth Covington



**Owner
Operator**

Start Date: 8/24/2009 - 7 Years
Division: 48 States
Miles logged 2016: 108,857
Safety Points: -3
Service Failures 2016: 2
Home: Johnson City, TN

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Debra Haley, 48 state dispatcher shares, *“Ken is personable, and a very knowledgeable young man. I really enjoy talking to him. He does an awesome job. Ken was on my fleet when I started here at NCI, so I have worked with him for a while. It took some time to get his logs straight so he could be nominated for DOM, but he finally got it. I love working with Kenneth.”*

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

“This may sound crazy, but I will set it aside to buy a new truck”



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Buddy Haston



**Owner
Operator**

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Start Date: 1/24/1989 - 27 Years
Division: Regional Southwest
Miles logged 2016: 98,075
Safety Points: -16
Service Failures 2016: 0
Home: North Richland Hills, TX

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Lex Mendenhall, Director of Operations shares, "Over the years I've had the pleasure of working with, in my opinion, some of the finest professional drivers in the country. Every month we recognize another from that exclusive club, and we add them to our growing wall of fame. It's people like Buddy Haston who are on that wall that make this company great and keeps our success sustainable. I am so proud and privileged to be on the same team with these men and women that make this company the "ELITE" FLEET."

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

"Put some in the bank, buy something for my wife, or go on a good vacation. My wife would like to have a new car!"



Tyler Claussen



**Fleet
Driver**

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Start Date: 4/06/2015 - 1 Year

Division: Livestock

Miles logged 2016: 87,440

Safety Points: -10

Service Failures 2016: 0

Home: Garden City, KS

Jason Greer, Director of Livestock/Hides, shares, "Tyler is the youngest driver ever selected for driver of the month at NCI. He placed third last summer in two divisions in a nationwide jiu jitsu tournament. He is a driver that lays low and does his job. He's careful to do things the way we want it done in our division. Tyler tries his best to go unnoticed, not wanting any attention drawn to himself. Does he have flaws? I'm sure, but I'd take 100 more of him any day!"

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How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

"If I win, I would consider applying it to the purchase of my own truck."



Kevin Gulley



**Company
Driver**

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Start Date: 11/04/2013 -3 Years
Division: 48 State
Miles logged 2016: 99,961
Safety Points: -30
Service Failures 2016: 0
Home: Lawton, OK

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Shaun Berry, who oversees NCI driver managers shares, "Kevin is a very hard working individual that always represents the company very well. National is very fortunate to have him as a professional driver in our fleet. "

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?

"I guess I'd put it in savings. If I was just going to spend it to spend it, I'd get another vehicle."



Joseph Ham



**Lease
Operator**

*Driver
of the Year
Contender*

Start Date: 5/4/2015 - 1 Year
Division: Regional Southwest
Miles logged 2016: 98,075
Safety Points: -31
Service Failures 2016: 0
Home: Orlando, FL

Michael Ritchie, driver manager shares, *"Joe never complains and does what's asked of him. He is a very hard worker who rarely takes time off and is an all-around great guy."*

How will you spend the \$5000 check if you win?
"I am going to split it with my wife"

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