

Salute To Trucking



Graves: 'Inviting, Long Road Ahead for Trucking'

Grapevine, Texas -In his annual State of the Industry Address, American Trucking Associations President and CEO Bill Graves said that despite the prevailing political and economic uncertainty in the country, the United States and the trucking industry are poised to see good days ahead.

"In Phoenix I told you that we'd weathered the storm of Katrina in New Orleans in 2008, bet on some recovery in 2009 in Las Vegas, were starting to see the economy 'rise' in Phoenix and we could count on bigger and better things by the time we met here in Dallas," said Graves in his remarks opening the second day of ATA's Management Conference and Exhibition here. "Little did I know that 'bigger' was going to be the size of the federal debt; 'bigger' was going to be the unemployment rate and 'bigger' would characterize the number of government regulations our industry would be facing. And 'better' - well 'better' is apparently caught up in some sort of political traffic jam and just hasn't been able to get here yet."

Despite frustration with Washington's inability to come together on seemingly simple tasks like the need to fix roads and bridges and pass a highway bill, Graves said he was still optimistic about the economy and trucking's future.

"I really believe we are blessed with a country, with a people and with an economy that is capable of surviving anything our government can throw at it," said Graves. "Government is not supposed to solve all our problems-but at this point we'd be thrilled if government could figure out how to not 'be the problem.'"

Even with many consumers and businesses "on the sidelines" due to economic uncertainty, Graves said there "is an inviting, long road ahead for trucking."

"During this time of economic uncertainty, it's easy to misjudge the opportunity that's on the trucking industry's horizon," Graves said. "The economy will recover. And when it does, the trucking industry is going to be one of the 'first in line' beneficiaries."

"In almost every speech I make, I point out the expected population growth of America—expected to grow from 300 Million people in 2006 to 400 Million by 2050—something on the order of adding a city the size of Houston or Chicago each and every year. 400 million people need a lot of Good Stuff and most of time we'll be bringing it. Keep on Truckin' is not just a slogan, it's an economic imperative," Graves said.

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