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Industry News
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EXPEDITE NOW MAGAZINE

Volume 15
Issue 6

OWNER OPERATOR TO FLEET OWNER

How to Make a
Smooth Transition
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11 POINT CHECKLIST:

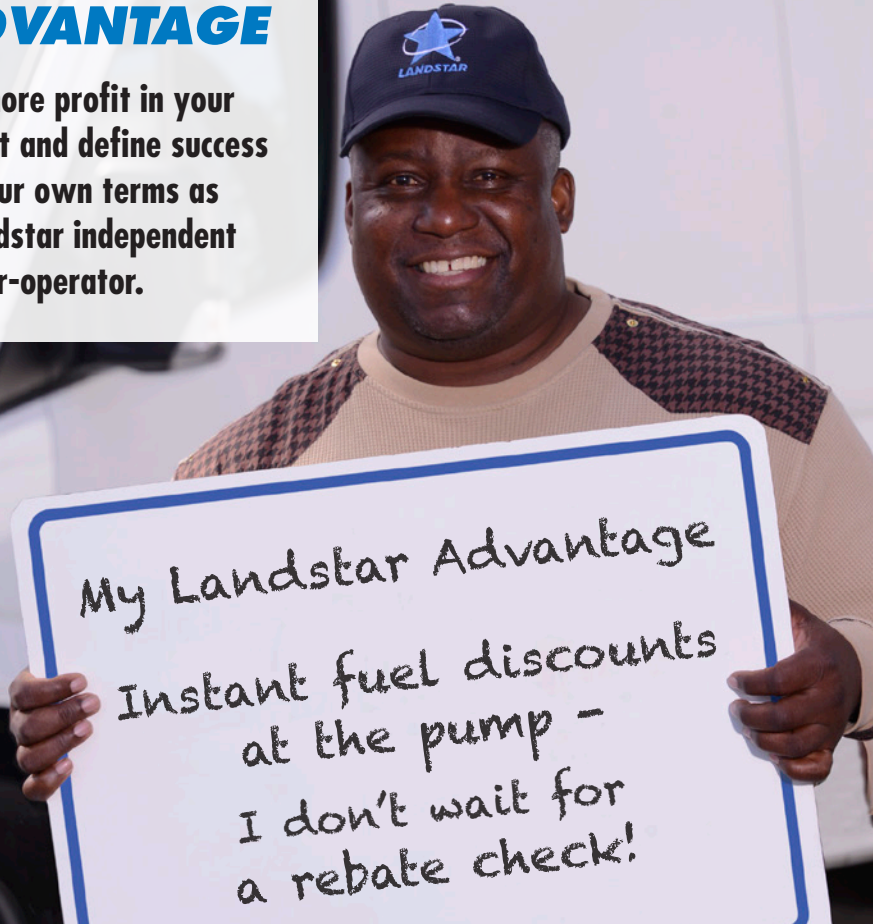
Preparing Your Truck for Winter
READ ON PAGE 14



Q&A  **Apex**[®]
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Business



28 From Owner Operator to Fleet Owner: How to Make a Smooth Transition

Business Staff

Lawrence McCord Publisher
Monte Stetler..... VP of Business Development
Jeff Blakemore.....Creative Director
Joshua McCord.....Interactive Developer
Michael Sams.....Interactive Developer
Debbie McCord Accounting
Carol Hill Subscription Manager

Editorial Staff

Jeff JensenEditor Posthumous
Sean Lyden..... Staff Writer
Scott Loftis..... Contributing Writer

National Account Executive

Isaac Speicher 859-795-5741

Expedite Now is written for professional owner operators and drivers working in the expedited trucking industry.

Our editorial policy encompasses informing drivers, fleet managers and carriers of the news and information about the expedited trucking community.

News and feature articles are compiled to keep owner operators and drivers apprised of industry trends and events, and other issues which impact those who move this industry.



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Have you thought about starting your own expedited freight company? Do you already own an expedited freight company and are thinking about transitioning to a long-haul trucking company?

The Apex Startup Program can help you in the startup process or can assist you in the next steps. Here are some frequently asked questions answered by Apex Startup Program experts, Associate General Counsel Reghan Grasty and Business Startup Sales Consultant Catherine Van Dyke.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS AND HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO START AN EXPEDITED FREIGHT COMPANY?

Reghan: First, you should create a business plan. Think about your customers, your partners, and your services. But keep in mind insurance and equipment costs, both of which could change depending on your geographical region. To set up your company, you'll want to take care of various state level and federal filings. Your equipment's gross vehicle weight will determine if

you are regulated by the FMCSA. If your equipment's gross vehicle weight is 10,001 pounds or more, you are FMCSA-regulated, which means additional registrations, compliance obligations, and of course added costs. For more information on starting an FMCSA-regulated company, check out Start Your Own Trucking Company.

WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE AND DRIVER'S LICENSE DO I NEED FOR MY EXPEDITED FREIGHT COMPANY?

Reghan: Typically, you'll need a Class B driver's license. A Class B license is for those operating vehicles with a gross vehicle weight that doesn't exceed 10,000 pounds. If you exceed 10,000 pounds, you'll likely need a Class A license. Also, your driving experience could help you receive better insurance rates and attract more customers. Two years of driving experience is a good guideline.

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WHAT ABOUT A FUEL CARD OR AN ELD – DO I NEED THEM?

Reghan: If you are FMCSA-regulated due to your gross vehicle weight, you'll fall under the federal ELD mandate, subject to certain exceptions. But even if you aren't FMCSA-regulated, check with your state for any state-level ELD mandates. As for fuel cards, most options give discounts on diesel only. So, if your vehicle uses diesel, you should take advantage of a fuel card such as the TCS Fuel Card. If your equipment runs on regular gasoline, your options are more limited. Just use your best judgment to save gas money like you might with your personal vehicle.

WHAT REGISTRATIONS DO I NEED TO RUN AN EXPEDITED TRUCKING COMPANY? ARE THEY DIFFERENT FROM RUNNING A LONG-HAUL FREIGHT COMPANY?

Reghan: Again, most registrations depend on whether your company is FMCSA-regulated. If you plan to haul specific types of freight, you might need specific equipment. Then your equipment would indicate if you are FMCSA-regulated. If so, additional registrations and compliance obligations are required.

IS GETTING PAID FOR HAULING EXPEDITED FREIGHT DIFFERENT FROM GETTING PAID FOR HAULING LONG-HAUL FREIGHT?

Catherine: Are you paid directly by your customer or a third party? Normally, getting paid directly by your customer gets money in your pocket quicker. But if you are using a broker as a middleman,

then the usual long-haul payment time frames, typically 30-40 days, apply. Depending on the amount and frequency of your invoices, factoring could be a good option for you to speed up cash flow. Contact Apex to see if factoring is right for you.

CAN I UPDATE OR UPGRADE MY AUTHORITY TO A SEMI TRUCK LATER?

Catherine: Authority types depend on where you are hauling and your equipment's gross vehicle weight. If you are already FMCSA-regulated, less steps are involved. You'll need to update your current registrations and take care of insurance and other related permits or state filings. On the other hand, if you aren't regulated and have a Class B license, you probably need to upgrade to a Class A license and take care of the registrations and compliance obligations mentioned in questions 1 and 3.

IS HAVING AN EXPEDITED FREIGHT COMPANY AN EASY TRANSITION TO A LONG-HAUL TRUCKING COMPANY?

Catherine: Experience in the freight industry helps to smoothly transition into a long-haul trucking company. However, experience doesn't change the fact that long-haul trucking companies are more regulated.

Have more questions? Apex is here to help. Contact us by calling 844-827-4521, emailing us at startup@apexcapitalcorp.com or visiting the Apex website.



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11-POINT CHECKLIST: Preparing Your Truck for Winter

By Sean M. Lyden, Staff Writer



**EXPEDITE
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INDUSTRY

Is your truck ready for winter?

If not, the last thing you want to

happen is to be stuck on the side of the road in bitterly cold conditions, especially for an issue that could have been avoided with proper planning.

So what can you do to prepare your truck to reduce the risk of downtime, improve truck safety, and be as productive—and profitable—as possible during the harsh winter months?

Veteran expeditor Bob Caffee recently put together a great video where he starts underneath the hood and then walks around the truck, pointing out essential items to keep in mind to get your truck ready for winter.

Here's an 11-point checklist, based on tips Bob shares in the video, to help you ensure you're covering all your bases when "winterizing" your truck.

1. REPLACE BELTS.

Bob says that he likes to start each year with a new set of engine belts as a part of his winterizing routine. And if any of the old belts still have useable life left on them, he



saves them to have on hand "in case we have a problem and break one."

2. CHECK COOLANT.

You're already checking coolant levels during your pre-trip inspections. But depending on the miles you have on the truck, you might consider having the coolant changed. And a good time to do that is before winter arrives at full force.

3. INSPECT TIRE PRESSURE SENSORS.

"We run a tire pressure monitoring system, so we always make sure our sensors are good and working properly," says Bob.

EXPEDITE OWNER OPERATORS

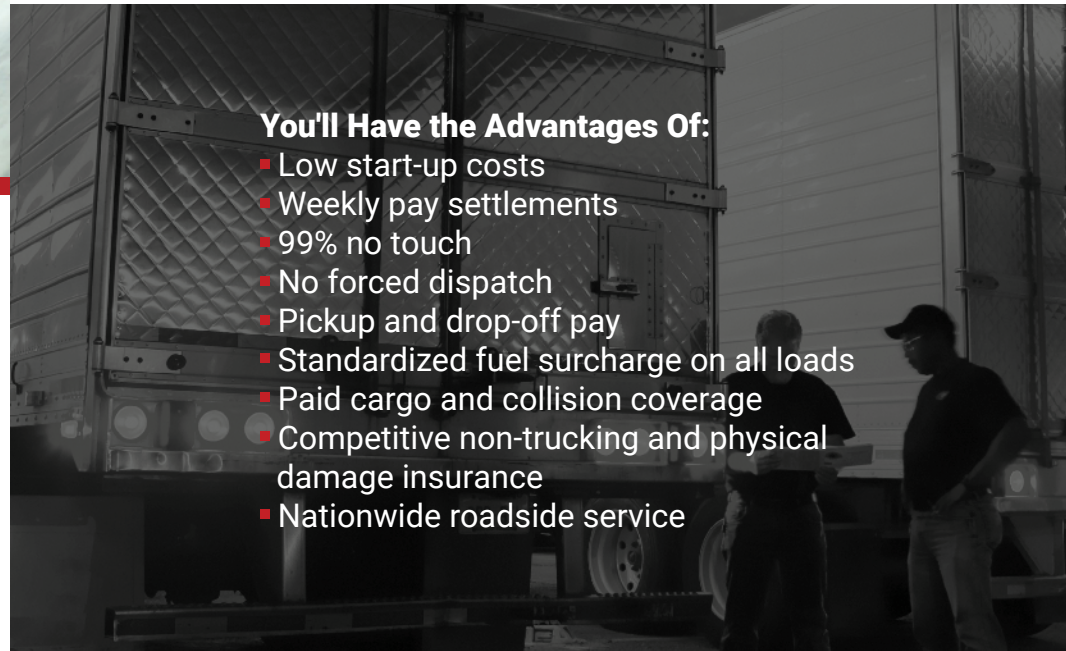
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But a challenge that many new expeditors don't consider before they get into the business is that you tend to be out on the road for weeks at a time and often have to "sit" for extended periods between loads.

So, what if you could build your business in expedited trucking in a way that also gives you the flexibility to take on other types of freight that help you get home sooner or shorten your wait times?

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4. INSPECT BRAKES.

Bob says that he performs a thorough brake inspection in the fall to make sure "brake pads are thick enough to get us through the winter."

5. TREAT THE WINDSHIELD.

"This is the time of the year when I make sure I've treated the windshield with Rain-X or some type of aquaphobic coating on the glass," says Bob.

6. CARRY AN EXTRA SET OF WINDSHIELD WIPERS.

"If you're running in ice and snow, and the wiper blades get built up with ice, you can just get out and swap [the wipers], throw the other ones under the defroster or on the floor to thaw out, and you're ready to go with another fresh set," says Bob.

7. CARRY EXTRA WINDSHIELD WASHING FLUID.

Make sure your windshield washer system is working properly and carry an extra gallon with you during the winter months, says Bob. "The law requires it to work. And I've had DOT officers ask me if I had an extra gallon. So I always carry an extra gallon of windshield washer fluid."

Bob also recommends using winter blend washer fluid so that it will melt ice and snow whenever you're running in those conditions.

8. CHECK THE WIRING.

"On the chicken lights, if you have any, always check the wiring to make sure it's not hanging, or it's not going to gather up ice and snow," says Bob. "Same with your mid-turn signals. We have wiring back there that's going to get exposed to the rain spray and the ice and snow coming off.

So make sure [that wiring] is tied up well."

9. PREP TIRE CHAINS.

Bob says he uses automatic tire chains from Onspot (<https://www.onspot.com/>), which cover the tires as-needed without having to stop the vehicle. The system engages and disengages by flipping a switch on the dashboard. This way, the driver doesn't have to get out the truck in harsh weather conditions to manually install or remove the chains.

"I always take [the Onspot chains] off in the spring, so they're not just hanging underneath [the truck]. I then reinstall them [for the winter], making sure they're adjusted and do their swing properly," says Bob.

10. ROTATE TIRES.

"During the summer, we run trailer tires on our drive axle. So, in the fall, I change them back to a lug or a drive-type tire," says Bob. **Why?**

"We do that for two reasons," says Bob. "We get better fuel economy when we run a trailer-type tread on the drive axle, and also, our drive tires last longer because they don't get run during the summer. So it's a bonus both ways for that."

11. RETORQUE LUG NUTS.

"It's a good idea to have the lug nuts retorqued, even if you haven't gotten new tires lately, to ensure everything's in good condition there," says Bob.

THE BOTTOM LINE

During the winter months, be extra vigilant with your daily pre-trip inspection, says Bob. "Double check and make sure everything is functioning properly, that all the lights work, the wires are tied up and secure so that ice and snow don't gather up on them and pull them down." **EN**



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In fact, it was the high level of freedom available at Landstar that drew long-time team expeditors, Bob and Linda Caffee, to sign on as Landstar BCOs four years ago.

"We run our own business and it's as close to having your own authority as possible without the billing hassles," explains Linda Caffee. "We work when we

want and go home when we want, with absolutely no penalty. We are treated as true business owners."

Committed to the success of its independent owner-operators, the Landstar Contractors' Advantage Purchasing Program or LCAPP®, is a unique cost savings program, which offers discounts that lower operating costs.

"Fuel discounts are comparable or better than what any company offers their drivers," says Caffee. "The LCAPP discounts don't stop at fuel, there are discounts on tires, equipment, hotel stays and so much more."

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FROM OWNER OPERATOR TO FLEET OWNER: How to Make a Smooth Transition

By Sean M. Lyden, Staff Writer



**EXPEDITE
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BUSINESS

*"If you buy a truck,
I'll run it for you."*

These words from a friend changed the trajectory of Donna Sleasman's career in expedited trucking in 2014.

Sleasman, who had started in long-haul trucking in the early 1980's, became an expedite owner-operator in 2000 and continued in that role for the next fourteen years.

Then in early 2014, a friend told Sleasman about her frustration with the way her current fleet owner was treating her and challenged Sleasman to buy another truck to become her new owner.

And in August of that year, Sleasman took her friend's challenge to heart and bought a second truck. But she didn't stop there, as she took delivery of two more trucks within the next six months. Today, Sleasman operates a total of seven trucks in her fleet, including five straight trucks,

one van, and one tractor—with all vehicles, except the tractor, leased to FedEx Custom Critical.

What lessons did Sleasman learn to make the transition from owner-operator to fleet owner as smooth as possible? Here are four.

#1. DETERMINE WHETHER FLEET OWNERSHIP IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

What were some of the first steps Sleasman took to prepare before she bought that second truck? Did she write out a business plan or anything formal like that?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 
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"Really nothing along those lines," says Sleasman. "I've always been good with the numbers in this business. And I put my numbers down, with my worst case scenario. And I thought I could make it work."

But when it comes to succeeding as a fleet owner, you also need to think about the human aspect of managing a fleet, says Sleasman.

Take, for example, the need for patience.

"A lot of drivers tell me, 'I don't know how you do it because I would tell those drivers to pack their crap and get the heck out of my truck.' But I tell them that you can't do that. You have to be reasonable. You have to talk to them because getting mad and yelling at somebody doesn't get you anywhere in this business."

Then there's your management style. "I don't micromanage my teams and very seldom call them. If they want to call me, they know I'm available on my phone 24/7," says Sleasman. "I don't want them to think I'm calling to check up on them; I want them to know that I trust their judgment."

And you also must be willing to make time for your drivers.

"I had one team come to me from another fleet owner because they called that owner asking for load advice, and the owner told them, 'I don't have time to talk to you,' and hung up on them. And the team's next call was to me," says Sleasman.

The point is that even if you don't have time to talk, make time, says Sleasman. "There are plenty of times when drivers call, and I'm thinking, 'I don't have time to

talk right now,'" But I say, 'Hi! How are you? What can I do for you?' That's because that's part of the business."

#2. GET BIG OR GET OUT.

When your fleet is small, one truck that sits can quickly eat into your profits and put your business in jeopardy. That's because if you own only three vehicles, and one is sitting, you have to rely on the other two trucks to make up the difference to pay the overhead (monthly payment, insurance, and so forth) associated with the third vehicle. But the more trucks you own, the better positioned your business will be to absorb potential losses from a single truck that sits.

Sleasman learned this lesson early on when the husband on one of her teams died of a heart attack. "That was a real awakening," says Sleasman. "I determined that I had to 'get big or get out' because I realized that I was too small to survive a catastrophic event like that for long."

#3. EXPAND YOUR DRIVER POOL.

Sleasman says she has found good dependable drivers from outside of the trucking industry to help her expand her pool of potential drivers and keep her trucks running.

"People ask me about recruiting and keeping drivers. Usually, drivers come to me. But I've also started taking people into my fleet who have no driving experience," says Sleasman. "In fact, with one of my top teams right now, they were installing air conditioners in Mobile, Alabama a year

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ago. They are one of my top teams right now, and neither one of them had ever driven a truck before."

#4. REDUCE YOUR FINANCIAL RISK.

"Make sure you have money in the bank because you can't do this business on a shoestring," says Sleasman.

That's in response to a common misperception of newbies who think they can get rich quick in this business, says Sleasman. "They look at the numbers and think, 'Oh, we can make a fortune doing this.' But often they have misguided expectations of what you can actually make with a truck. They say, 'Well, the truck makes \$30,000 a month, and we give the driver \$12,000. That means we get to make \$18,000 a month, right?' No, you don't. Not even close."

Another piece of advice: "Don't think that you can become a fleet owner with a bunch of older used trucks," says Sleasman. "Usually those trucks don't have warranties left on them. And without the warranty, you could put yourself in a very precarious position."

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you're an owner-operator thinking about becoming a fleet owner, how can you ensure a smooth transition? First, determine whether being a fleet owner is the best "next step" in your career. Then, before taking that step, seek advice from professionals, like Sleasman, who have made the transition from owner-operator to fleet owner. This way, you can avoid the common pitfalls and put your fleet. **EN**



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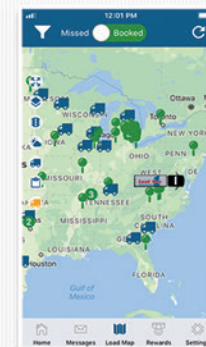
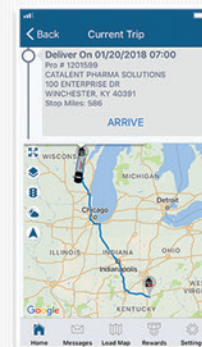
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Team wanted for 2018 D unit Looking for Hazmat endorsed Drivers for FedEx CC small family owned fleet. Same household Preferred. 2018 Freightliner Cascadia 100" Bolt Sleeper only 79,000 miles DR unit double bunk

Samuel 631-617-5481

Team Needed for 2018 M2-112 H/W or Same Household Teams for our 2018 FTL M2-112, fully automatic with DD13 engine. Loaded Bolt Custom Sleeper, with hardwood floors, dinette. TEAM DRIVERS ONLY!!!!

Susan 865-719-7830

\$4000 BONUS TEAM 'HOUSE' 144' TRACTOR NOW OFFERING A \$4000 SIGN-ON BONUS! We now have an opening in a newer 2015 Volvo VNL780 tractor with a GORGEOUS 144" ARI Sleeper for a WELL QUALIFIED TEAM COUPLE.

Beverly 419-410-2800

Team Truck Available!!! We have an immediate need for an Established Team. We have a fleet of Freightliner M2-112s, with a DD-13 power plant paired with a fully automatic transmission. Our trucks have 96" Bolt Lux sleepers

Adam 419-297-3773

Experienced FDCC TVAL Teams Needed! GENEROUS SIGN-ON BONUS OFFERED! Our fleet includes brand new state-of-the-art 2019 Western Stars and 2016 Freightliner Cascadias (all D straight trucks) with 96" sleepers well-equipped.

Chris 704-881-3782

Team needed for 2016 automatic tractor-trailer We have a 2016 Cascadia automated manual transmission opening up at the end of September/beginning of October for an established team.

Rob 330-571-9502

DRIVER WANTED

Driver needed willing to team. Trucks are signed on with XPO. I have a great fleet owner and XPO has kept me running. I just need a co-driver to make this the perfect situation. Must have at least 6 months of verifiable experience.

Valorie 717-850-6199

Michigan regional driver needed. Looking for a Class A cdl driver to run expedited in a tractor trailer. Tractor is signed on with Tenpoint Logistics in Lansing, MI. You will be running regional 300 - 500 mile range.

Ron 800-670-0695

Sprinter class drivers opening become o/oper. Choose your equipment Transit or sprinter or promaster 2015 and newer All vans are 3 skid high roof 3k to 4k miles per week Fusion transportation

Randy 419-984-7946

Solo or team. Looking for a team or solo to drive a 2018 Dodge Pro Master sprinter. OTR 62% of trucks gross. Possible 65% after 90 days. contracted with XPO Logistics. Need to be qualified through XPO.

Roy 904-625-6864

Solo Drivers Wanted DOT & Non-DOT. looking to hire DOT and Non-DOT Solo drivers!!! We primarily run from Kansas City to the East with the exception of Texas.

Kelly 270-629-6700

Transit van driver. I'm looking for a driver for a new ford transit leased to FedEx CC. Must have class C CDL w hazmat.

Tammy 936-208-9900

Sprinter Van Solo or Team Driver. Clean driving record Dot med card 60 percent to driver Fuel card Weekly direct deposit Solo or Same Household Team Lease Purchase Available on 2018 Promasters 3 skid capacity

Anthony 614-972-0541

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2006 Sterling Acterra MBE 906 330 hp Allison Auto Engine Brake 1,500,000 miles Reman Engine at 900,000 miles 96" sleeper 22" Dry van body

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2016 Freightliner M2112 NEW! 100" Bolt custom sleeper, dinette, sink, lots of cabinets, DD13 with Allison Automatic

Call Deanna at 888-619-9172

2013 Freightliner Cascadia 113 Expeditor with a 72 inch Raised Roof Sleeper. Detroit DD13 engine and an Allison automatic transmission and APU unit.

Call Jason at 888-258-7795

2016 Freightliner M2 106, 240 Horsepower, 6.7L ISB Cummins, Automatic, 24'x96"x102" Morgan Van Body w/Swing Doors, Door Opening 88"W x 96"T, 2500# Lift Gate, 26" Single Bunk Extended Cab, 5,904 Engine Hours, ECM Reads 259,109 Miles,

Call John at 888-556-4089

2012 Freightliner Cascadia - Truck is running freight at Panther currently - well maintained truck - fresh overhead recently. ThermoKing APU! UltraShift!

Call Larry at 814-449-0849

2017 Freightliner Sprinter 2500 Extended Van ready for expediting for a team operation. It's currently on with FedecCC. Fridge/freezer, Microwave, lots of storage under the bed,

Paul 850-933-9683

2013 cascadia 113 Freightliner referer great condition. white glove equipment 13 speed ultra shift 100" AA sleeper refrigerator freezer Tv Satellite Single full size bed New legacy gold drivers seat on spot tire chains

Richard 817-304-9655



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