

Women in Transportation Field Jobs: The Hidden Asset

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Photo: Daniel Rust

Overview

- To date, transportation field jobs/ operational positions remain male-dominated
- These jobs include:
 - Freight railroad train crews (locomotive engineers, conductors, brakepersons) and maintenance of way personnel
 - Over-the-road truck drivers
 - Towboat pilots and barge deckhands
 - Shuttle bus/van operators

Overview

- The transportation industry currently faces a shortage of qualified applicants for operations roles
- **This project contends that the female labor force is an underutilized asset that transportation companies should consider when hiring**
- By making appropriate accommodations as necessary, transportation companies will likely find that women can fill many traditionally male-dominated operational positions
 - Examples of emergency responders and military

Project Goals

- Conduct literature review of historic and current trends related to topic of women in transportation field jobs
- Compile current demographic data for female population and trends in operational, traditionally male-dominated roles in rail, trucking, barge, and shuttle bus industries
- Use surveys to explore reasons why women do not occupy more positions within these operational roles

Project Goals, cont.

- Present an action plan to influence an increase in the female population within operational roles in the transportation industry

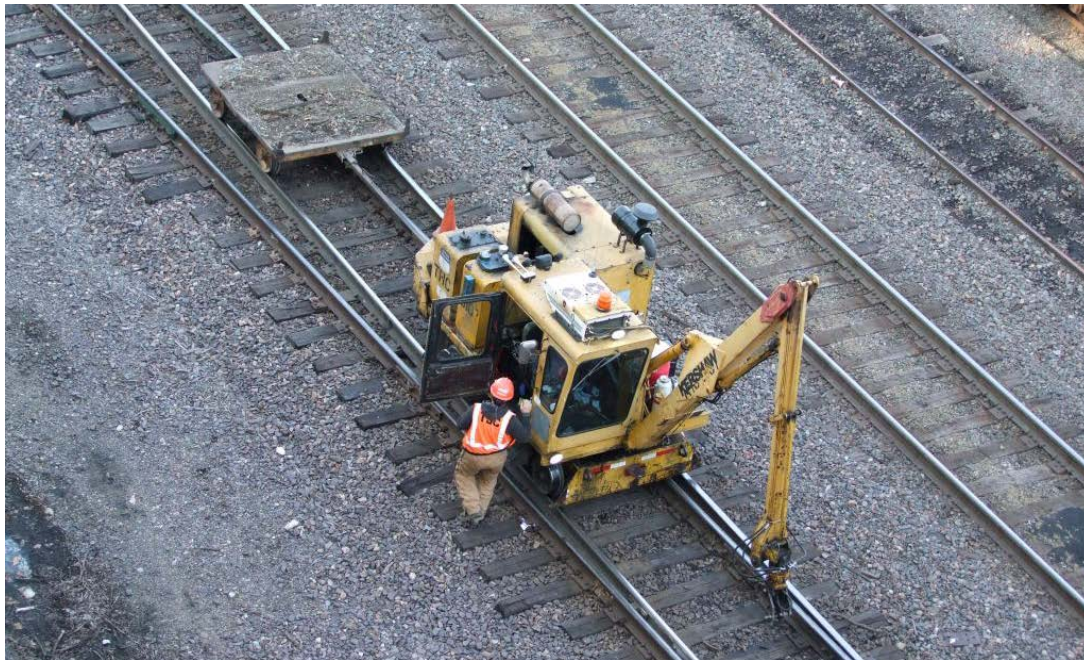


Photo: Daniel Rust

The four industries with the largest percentage of total employed women in 2013 were:



Education and Health Services industry - 36.2%



Wholesale and Retail Trade Industry - 13.1%



Professional and Business Services industry - 10.5%



Leisure and Hospitality industry - 10.3%

Source: Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics- Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat14.htm> (2013 annual averages)

The four industries with the smallest percentage of total employed women in 2013 were:



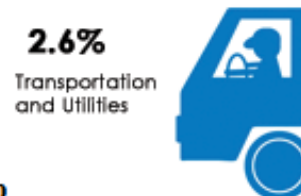
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry - 0.2%.



Construction industry - 1.3%.



Information industry - 1.7%.



Transportation and Utilities industry - 2.6%

Source: Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics- Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat14.htm> (2013 annual averages)

Historical Background

- Transportation operations positions have been historically male-dominated—Why?
 - Nature of the work
 - Long hours, physical demands, dangerous
 - Unionization
 - Tradition
- Change started during the First and Second World Wars



World War One

- Federalization of railroads in 1917 and the wartime labor shortage led to hiring large numbers of women for railroad work
- By October 1918, more than 101,000 women working for US Railroad Administration
 - Vast majority in traditional jobs for women

Class of Employees	Women Employed by Railroads, October 1, 1918
Clerical or semi-clerical	73,285
Cleaning/Shopwork	10,646
Personal Service and Attendants	5,156
Telegraph or Telephone Operator	5,019
Warehouse/docks (including truck drivers)	1,461
Roundhouse Work	1,365
Track Work	872
Train Service	100

World War Two



Dorothy Lucke, employed as wiper at Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, circa 1943

- Approximately 40,000 women working for railroads at start of war
 - Mostly clerical workers, many stewardesses
- By war's end, 116,000 women worked for railroads in US
 - Classified as “temporary” employees
 - Over 3,000 maintenance of way women workers at Class 1 railroads by 1945
 - American Council of Railroad Women founded in 1944

Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976



Christene Gonzales (age 22), first engineer on Santa Fe Railroad, 1976

- Contained non-discrimination clause and mandate for affirmative action to remove or overcome the effects of the prior discriminatory practice or usage
 - Forced open door for women to become locomotive engineers and conductors

Female Truck Drivers

- 1929, Lillie McGee Drennan became first woman to earn commercial driver's license
- Unions attempted to keep women out of industry, but by late 1970s, there were nearly 25,000 female long-haul drivers



Sandi Talbott has driven more than 4 million miles as OTR semi-truck driver since late 1970s

Labor Force Statistics from Current Population Survey

Occupation	Total Employed in 2014	Women (Percent of total employed)
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	3,406,000	5.8
Industrial truck and tractor operators	564,000	7.4
Locomotive engineers and operators	55,000	1.4

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," 2015: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.html>

Note: Less than 10% of shuttle van/bus industry operators are women, and there are no available statistics of how many females are employed as barge pilots or deckhands

Women Employees at Largest North American Railroads

Railroad	Women as Percentage of Total Employees
Union Pacific	6% (17% of upper management)
BNSF	7%
CSX	7% (1% in train and engine positions)
Norfolk Southern	7%
CN	10% (mostly in support roles and administration)
Amtrak	23%

Source: Deborah R. Huso, "Women on the Line: Railroads still lag when it comes to hiring women," *Progressive Railroading* (August 2015).

Current Status of Research Project

- Pilot surveys currently under evaluation by select female employees of Union Pacific Railroad and SuperShuttle
- Anticipate wide distribution to female employees throughout companies in both rail and shuttle bus industries
- Survey of female truck drivers and barge industry workers to follow

Obstacles to Recruiting and Retaining Female Employees in Transportation Field Jobs



Photo: Daniel Rust

- Tradition
- Stigma of being a woman doing a “man’s job”
- Physical nature of tasks
- Lack of information about potential careers
- Workplace harassment
- Physical accommodations
- Nepotism
- Scheduling demands and unpredictability
- Lack of opportunity for advancement
- Etc.

Action Plan

- To address main question: What can industry do attract and retain more female workers?
- Follow-on phase of project to examine railroad industry practice of using the “extra board” for scheduling in light of current demographics and trends



**Sarah Schmidt, a locomotive engineer
at Union Pacific Railroad**