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Morrilton's Joey Berkemeyer Honored as Arkansas Safety Professional of the Year

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.– Morrilton resident Joey Berkemeyer has been named the 2024 Safety Professional of the Year by the Arkansas Trucking Association, recognizing his exceptional contributions to highway safety and driver education.

Berkemeyer, who serves as safety director at Wayne Smith Trucking, received the honor at the Arkansas Trucking Association's annual conference in Hot Springs on May 16.

His career in trucking began at age 18 behind the wheel, giving him unique insight into driver challenges. After a 30-year career at Walmart, Berkemeyer returned to Wayne Smith Trucking as safety director in 2016. His personal driving record includes over 5 million lifetime miles without a chargeable accident.

Berkemeyer has made significant contributions to the Morrilton community through his partnership with the University of Arkansas Community College of Morrilton's commercial driver's license program. He regularly hosts UACCM students at WST's terminal, providing hands-on experience and real-world insights. Through his advocacy, WST has donated two trailers to enhance UACCM's training capabilities.

His vision for driver development has also led to the creation of a "finishing school" for newly licensed drivers seeking to build the experience needed for employment with WST.

"His care and concern for the driver comes from being one himself, and this allows him to not only gain the driver's trust but be a friend as well, a coveted trait in the world of trucking," said WST President Neil Corder, who nominated Berkemeyer for the award.

Under Berkemeyer's leadership, Wayne Smith Trucking has achieved 45% growth while maintaining rigorous safety standards.

Berkemeyer was honored alongside Tyson Foods' Tim Hay, who was named Driver of the Year, and Maverick Transportation's Brent Hilton, who was named Maintenance Professional of the Year.

"These men represent the dedication to the mission of moving freight as safely and efficiently as possible," said Arkansas Trucking Association President Shannon Newton. "While thousands of professionals across our state perform excellent work every day, Tim, Joey, and Brent have set an extraordinary standard that elevates our entire industry. Their commitment to safety, innovation, and community service not only inspires their peers but makes all Arkansans proud of the essential role trucking plays in our economy. They truly represent the best of our state and industry."

The Arkansas Trucking Association presents the Safety Professional of the Year award annually to recognize exceptional qualifications, safety programs and achievements in the trucking industry.

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About the Arkansas Trucking Association: Since 1932, the Arkansas Trucking Association has served as the voice of the trucking industry, promoting the vitality of this industry on which nearly 87% of Arkansas communities exclusively rely to move their goods. Made up of approximately 350 trucking and service companies, ATA helps members grow their business and profits while protecting the collective interests of trucking companies in the political and regulatory arenas.



Wayne Smith Trucking's Joey Berkemeyer, 2024 Arkansas Safety Professional of the Year with Arkansas Trucking Association President Shannon Newton