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Nancy Spelsberg,
owner of BCP
Transportation

GOING HER WAY

ONE WOMAN'S
APPROACH TO
THE TRUCKING
BUSINESS

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TRUCKS**
25 YEARS OF
GREAT-LOOKING
RIGS AT MATS

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COVER FEATURE

Going Her Way

BY ANNEMARIE MANNION

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Nancy Spelsberg believes her company's drivers should make money and have fun

Nancy Spelsberg never planned to run a trucking company.

She worked in logistics and distribution for a major utility, but always dreamed of having her own business. So about three years ago, she mailed letters to 70

small companies with owners who appeared to be about the age that they might consider selling.

When she heard back from Badger Custom Pallet, a pallet manufacturing company that had its own private carrier, Spelsberg was intrigued. But instead of going into the pallet-making business she and Todd Jourdan, BCP vice president, decided to buy the private carrier. They have expanded it into BCP Transportation, which now delivers far more than pallets. Freight goes out to 48 states and includes printing materials, rolls of cotton and more.

“We decided to spin off the trucking piece and grow it from there,” Spelsberg says.

Grow, it has. In May 2011, BCP had four trucks. Today, it has 75 trucks and 150 trailers, and earned a Rising Star award in 2013 from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp.

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Spelsberg with driver Marisol Roman, a 4'11" powerhouse who was one of the early hires.



Working with drivers

The company's expansion can be tied to Spelsberg's efforts to foster positive relationships with owner-operators and employees. Twenty-seven of its trucks are owner-operated. Two

rates to male drivers who had less experience than she did. "Isn't that a back stab?" she says. Harry Horton, an owner-operator who has worked with BCP since August 2011, also appreciates the straightforward way

WHEEL WOMEN

"Until a few years ago, women often chose to drive and to do their job without calling attention to themselves. They just wanted to be left alone so they weren't noticed. That has changed. Women are much more

likely to be visible and prove their capability. This is important because we need to show the non-trucking public that women can and do drive trucks! We honor them at MATS each year because they still represent a small part of the driver population and



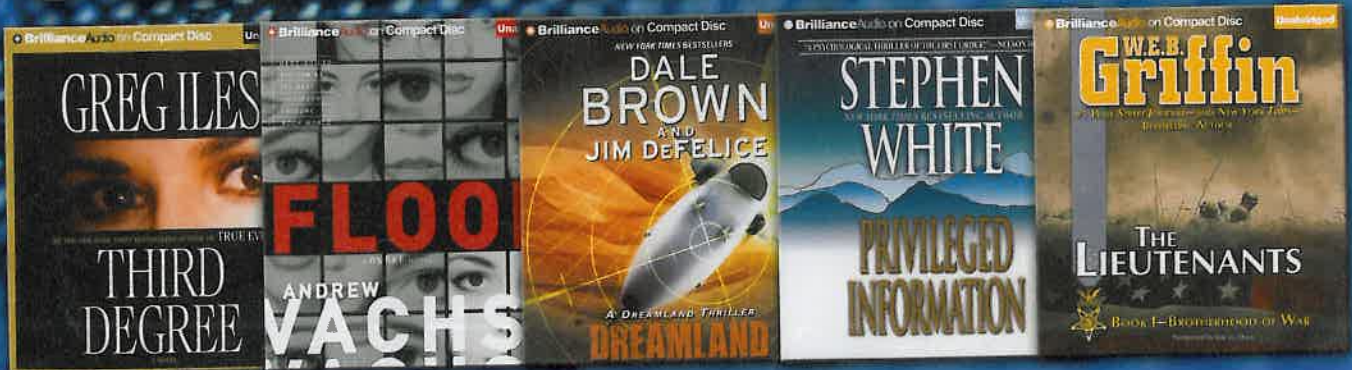
Ellen Voie

I consider them to be pioneers and role models. The Salute to Women Behind the Wheel is to remind them of that and how much we appreciate and admire what they do." - Ellen Voie, President and CEO of Women In Trucking

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Drivers appreciate that Spelsberg pays attention to their concerns.



Woman's work?

If anyone reacts with surprise when Spelsberg tells them she's in trucking, it's usually someone outside the industry.

"They can't fathom in their minds that there's a woman who runs a trucking company," she says. "They say, 'Oh. Are you the office girl?' Or they think I'm a figurehead."

She recently joined the organization Women in Trucking to play a part in changing that. She wants to promote and recruit women to the field, noting the still low percentage of women drivers. But she also believes that women can make an impact in other areas connected to trucking, as she has done with her

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company. "I think women have emotion and compassion in their collective lives and use this to drive personal achievement and inspire others to follow," she says.

Some would say Spelsberg serves as the perfect example of that theory in action. For example, she noticed a while back that one owner-operator for the company was not hitting his numbers and was concerned. Then, by chance, she saw him bobtailing on the highway one evening. Back at work, she asked him about that. Where was he going? He told her that he was driving to northern Wisconsin every night so that he could be home with his family. She immediately changed his route to focus on deliveries near his house.

The goal is always to work as a team and to find ways to enjoy the workday. BCP holds such events as Spirit Week, when employees can sport unique hair styles on Crazy Hair Day. Even callers can get in on the fun by pushing a button on the company voicemail to hear a duck quacking. "It's literally just a duck quacking," says Spelsberg. "People ask us why we have that. I say, 'Because we can.'" Spelsberg wants her staff to work hard, have fun and be positive. Horton says she's meeting that goal.

"If you talk to them on the phone you can hear the fun they're having. They're a good bunch," he says.

More importantly, he and Roman both say they are earning a good living.

"I haven't had a bad quarter," Horton says. "I'm making more money than I ever have." ☺