

# Expediting IS Trucking

By Linda Caffee & Terry O'Connell

Surface transportation encompasses several categories of trucking; one of the fastest growing and most women friendly segments of trucking is Expediting. Carriers that specialize specifically in freight that picks-up and delivers door-to-door, with exclusive use trucks, on a schedule determined by the customers, are known as expedite carriers. There are many dozens of expedite carriers in the United States and nearly all of them use leased owner/operators driving tractor-trailer, large and small straight trucks and cargo vans. Many of the expedite drivers came to expediting from other forms of trucking, but a very large percentage of expeditors are second career professionals or empty nest couples seeking a new lifestyle. The option to drive a variety of truck sizes is appealing to many of the women expeditors who are lured to the road but don't feel comfortable starting out in a large tractor. Many of them soon learn that women are prevalent in trucking and they are capable of any and all of the job requirements performed by their male counterparts.

Two of expediting is well known owner/operators are Linda and Bob Caffee of Missouri. Linda always rode along with her husband, Bob, while he was employed as an OTR driver for a line haul carrier. Although she held a dormant class A CDL, Linda resisted Bob's constant encouragement to relinquish her company-authorized passenger status and could join him as a co-driver. She did not feel comfortable behind the wheel of the big truck and dreaded the day she might have to share driving duties in Bob's class 8 tractor dragging a 53' trailer. During a visit to the Expedite Expo Trucking Show, Linda and Bob were introduced to expediting. The couple spent two days talking with expeditors, expedite carriers and looking at a large assortment of expeditor trucks. After the truck show Bob had little trouble convincing Linda that they could obtain and drive a smaller straight truck and earn a larger joint income as team expeditors than they enjoyed in Bob's tractor.

Soon thereafter, Linda and Bob, they purchased a 40' class 7 straight truck with a 96" sleeper and, after researching the business on [www.expeditersonline.com](http://www.expeditersonline.com), they entered into a lease agreement with FedEx Custom Critical. Along with many of their expediting colleagues, Linda and Bob have come to realize that:

Expediting isn't just trucking, it's a lifestyle;

Expediting isn't just a lifestyle, it's an adventure;

Expediting isn't just an adventure, it's a job;

Expediting isn't just a job, it's a business.

As owners of their own businesses, expedite owner/operators are independent contractors that set their own financial goals, determine their own work schedules and accept

or reject load offers that conform to their personal, as well as their business credos. They generally travel about 100,000 - 150,000 loaded miles and log on-duty about 255 days annually. Unlike line haul truckers, expeditors do not have established routes, they do not drive every day, they have no terminal or warehouse. All communication with the carriers' representatives is via telephone, satellite device such as a Qualcomm unit, the U.S. Mail or TripPak. An expeditor's typical load is a piece of equipment necessary to repair a downed assembly line, or back ordered parts needed to satisfy a customer's just-in-time routine. Expeditors also carry a large amount of sensitive, expensive or delicate material for which a customer prefers door-to-door service and time specific pickup and delivery.

The most difficult aspect of expediting, that former line haul truckers have trouble accepting, is the usual wait between load offers. Expeditors might be pre-assigned on their next load or they might have to wait a day or more for their next offer. They soon realize that the financial rewards justify the wait and they learn to enjoy the downtime during layovers, like the Caffees, by visiting local sights in any of 49 States and all of the Canadian Provinces. Reading, movie watching and visiting with friends and family are also favorite pastimes.