

Tenacity Fuels First Female Winner Of Washington State Diesel Event

By Lizz Giodano
The Daily Herald

EVERETT, Wash. — When McKenzie Budrow arrived at the state SkillsUSA diesel competition in Yakima last month the only bathroom she could find in the vehicle workshop was for men.

She was unfazed that the male-dominated event was not prepared for the handful of female participants who attended. Instead, Budrow kept her focus on the upcoming Diesel Equipment Technology competition.

By the end of the weekend, she took top honors, the first female student to do so in the competition's 53-year history.

"I was going to be happy with sixth place, because sixth wasn't last," Budrow, 18, of Everett, said in an interview, her long, brown hair pulled back by a pair of clear safety glasses perched atop her head.

One of only two women students in the diesel program at Sno-Isle TECH this year, Budrow is familiar with being a minority in the room.

Entering the class at the beginning of the school year, Budrow remembered thinking, "It's going to be a harder time for me, but it's not impossible."

Her fondness for trucks, along with a desire for future job security, led her to the diesel program at the high school.

"As long as people need to eat, diesel trucks won't go out of style," Budrow said.

When Budrow began expressing interest in the field, her parents at first were hesitant about the choice. They warned her of the challenges she might face entering a traditionally male-dominated industry. Her mom, Jenette, relayed a story about a female friend who experienced sexist and crude humor while working as a mechanic, and though highly capable was often given the least desirable jobs.

"I knew, while there have been great strides in many areas of trades, McKenzie would still be facing an industry that may still be getting used to the idea of women in the workplace," Jenette Budrow said.



McKenzie Budrow stands with her awards declaring her champion in the state SkillsUSA diesel competition. She will compete nationally.

McKenzie Budrow maintained women are actually well-suited to working on cars and trucks, especially when running diagnostics tests, which requires extreme scrutiny. "Girls are wanted in the industry, because by nature girls are more detail-oriented," Budrow said.

Budrow assumed she was a long shot to take home the top prize at the state competition after coming in third at the regionals.

To prepare for the diesel competition at the state SkillsUSA event, participants were given a five-page list of skills to study. This year students were tested on precision measuring, circuit board troubleshooting, air brakes testing and overhauling a manual transmission. Students were given only 20 minutes to complete each task. Students also had to take a multi-hour test.

All of which Budrow aced.

"I hope McKenzie winning the state diesel competition will inspire other young women to follow their passions, even if others around them aren't doing the same," said Maggie Bagwell, director of the Sno-Isle TECH Skills Center.

In June, Budrow will represent Sno-Isle TECH at the SkillsUSA national competition. The price tag to attend the competition in Kentucky is hefty so Budrow launched a Go Fund Me account.

The win also has provided Budrow an avenue to college: Part of her award includes a \$10,000 partial scholarship to Universal Technical Institute.

"We are most proud of her ability to stick up for what she believes in and her determination to see it through. The last thing you want to tell McKenzie is, 'That's impossible,'" her mother said.

Ultimately, Budrow has her eyes set on a career that has perhaps even fewer women than the diesel industry — smokejumper.

She wants to be on the first line of defense battling wildfires.

The older sister of twin brothers, Budrow had some advice for them if they ever find themselves in a male-dominated class or career.

"Treat the girls with respect for even having the guts to walk through the door," Budrow said, "because it's not easy."

Sirva

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two years with several large carriers going out of business and others pursuing mergers and acquisitions.

In 2016, interstate mover Graebel Moving and Workplace Solutions, based in Dallas, and The Kane Co., a commercial moving specialist based in Washington, D.C., shut down.

Suddath Cos., based in Jacksonville, Fla., took over some of Graebel's business and last year acquired Sterling Mobility, a global relocation firm based in the United Kingdom.

Interstate Group Holdings, based in Springfield, Va., also purchased American Red Ball World Wide Movers.

Sirva CEO Tom Oberdorf said he's looking forward to working with the new ownership group and called Madison Deaborn "the ideal partner to help us accelerate our growth strategy."

Oberdorf did not provide any details, but said the investment firm "has



Sirva is a holding company for U.S.-based Allied Van Lines and North American Van Lines and U.K.-based Allied Pickfords.

a long, successful track record of supporting companies like Sirva."

Madison Deaborn has invested \$23 billion in 130 companies since it was founded in 1992. The firm's current holdings include medical waste disposal service provider Stericycle Inc. and U.S. Lumber, a distributor of building materials in the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the United States.

Sirva had been jointly owned by Aurora Resurgence Management Partners and Equity Group Invest-

ments since 2008.

Sirva ranks No. 21 on the TRANSPORT TOPICS Top 100 list of largest for-hire carriers in North America with annual revenue of about \$1.5 billion. It ranks second to Unigroup Inc., the parent of United Van Lines and Mayflower Transit, on the list of largest for-hire carriers in the household goods/commercial delivery sector.

The deal is subject to regulatory approval and is expected to be completed this summer, company officials said.

Digest

Illinois Unveils \$11 Billion Infrastructure Plan

Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner announced an \$11 billion infrastructure plan that aims to repair and upgrade the state's roads and bridges.

The plan, dubbed the Illinois Department of Transportation Multi-Year Proposed Highway Improvement Program, accounts for the next six years and includes \$2.2 billion in state and federal funding for the upcoming fiscal year. It would support projects that yield the greatest economic benefit to communities and use long-term strategies to save money, according to a statement from Rauner's office.

The six-year highway improvement plan is meant to improve 1,945 miles of state roads, 525 state-maintained bridges, 750 miles of local roads and more than 922,000 square feet of locally maintained bridges.

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Epes Transport to Raise Driver Compensation

Drivers with Epes Transport System soon will see their pay increase. The company said it will invest nearly \$3 million to improve its compensation plan. This represents the largest pay hike in its more than 85-year history, the Greensboro, N.C.-based carrier said.

Company drivers saw an additional 2 cents per mile when the pay raises took effect June 3. Also, an extra 2-cents-per-mile performance bonus will double an incentive rate for meeting monthly mileage and delivery goals.

For independent drivers, Epes said it offers percentage-based pay so their pay increases when rates increase and reflects the value of the freight they are hauling.

Several carriers have announced pay increases in the past month in an effort to retain drivers and hire new ones.

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RIDOT Announces \$90 Million in Paving Projects

Rhode Island Department of Transportation officials announced that the agency will invest more than \$90 million in paving projects over the next year.

Some \$80.8 million will go toward 15 projects, which will include about 15 miles of multilane highways. Also, \$10 million will be spent on pavement preservation projects on 140 miles of road throughout the state.

The projects are part of Gov. Gina Raimondo's RhodeWorks program, which is slated to generate \$4.7 billion to finance infrastructure improvements.

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Firm, Investor Join to Acquire 3PL Companies

Private equity firm Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe formed a strategic partnership with logistics industry veteran Randy Curran to identify and acquire United States-based third-party logistics companies.

Curran and Welsh, Carson previously partnered on 3PL Ozburn-Hessey Logistics. As CEO, Curran led the firm as it was purchased by Geodis in 2015 for an undisclosed price.

In 2014, Ozburn-Hessey Logistics generated gross revenue of \$1.3 billion from its 120 North American distribution centers. Welsh, Carson has organized 16 limited partnerships with capital of more than \$22 billion since its founding in 1979.

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PCS Software Announces New ELD Interfaces

PCS Software said its Express Dispatching software now is interfacing with electronic logging device systems by KeepTruckin, Samsara and Geotab. The company's program already was being used by its ELD interface partners, including JJ Keller, Omnitrac and PeopleNet.

The ELD interface can continuously import and update a driver's current GPS-verified location. It tracks a driver's duty status and available on-duty and driving hours.

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HOS Rules Relaxed as Storm Hits Southeast

Hours-of-service rules were relaxed in seven states as Subtropical Storm Alberto hit the Southeast last week.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration announced May 27 that a regional emergency declaration was issued for Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee and Texas. The declaration activated the temporary suspension of certain agency regulations, including HOS rules for motor carriers engaged in relief efforts.

FMCSA's notice granted exemption from Parts 390-399 of its regulations, which cover parts and accessories needed for safe operation, hours of service and longer combination vehicles.

According to the National Weather Service, on May 29, Alberto was moving through Alabama with winds up to 39 mph. The storm was classified as a "tropical cyclone."

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