

# How truckers manage family life on the road

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ALTHOUGH BY 10:30 a.m. the father and daughter had already been to Canada to pick up a load of lumber, their day of traveling had just begun. By dinnertime, the itinerary will have included a stop in Detroit, another trip to Canada and home to Madison Heights.

But the trucker, dressed in a T-shirt, blue jeans and boots, says he's happy.

There was a time when the trucker, would be on the road for four-to-five months with only one night at home with his family. In those days he would drive almost 10,000 miles a week across 48 states.

Now as an independent, he makes monthly payments on his \$87,000 cab and decides when he'll work, for whom and where he'll travel.

Without making the characteristic phone call or trip to the restroom, Rohlf quickly darted under his leased trailer to check the brakes.

"It's really hard to make it in this business. The margin of profit is pretty small," said the 17-year veteran trucker, sleeping one of the tires he has to replace for \$300 apiece.

But he considers himself lucky because he only pays about \$400 a month for the loan on his cab when most pay upwards of \$1,000 a month. And keep-

ing up with the maintenance costs and state-required permits is admittedly tough.

Pointing to a sticker on the passenger's side of the cab — his wife's side when she travels with him — Rohlf says the small sticker cost him \$12.

THE LITTLE piece of paper allows him to avoid a six cent a gallon tax that Michigan imposes. Along with the sticker, however, is the responsibility of filing quarterly statements of gasoline purchases. But without it, Rohlf would pay much more at the pumps.

And the name of the game in the trucking business is to pay out as little as possible, make as many profitable runs as possible and to maintain some normalcy in family life.

But some, like Wesley, prefer making sure he's home every night by

working as a local trucker rather than a long-distance hauler.

"I got to go home," said the trucker with 20-25 years' experience. "I wouldn't do long-distance. But for those who like it . . . once they start in it, they stay in it."

## C'ville school board ratifies contract

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coverage, Salter said.

Because of the district's heavy reliance on state aid payments, this is the sixth consecutive year of one-year teacher contracts.

Of the district's two other union

groups, the custodial/maintenance group has already settled for the coming year. Negotiations are just beginning with the secretarial group.

The Clarenceville district, which covers parts of Livonia, Farmington

Hills and Redford Township, employs about 180 people.

GEA president Robert Wolf was unavailable to comment on the proposal last week.

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