

CUTLINE: The Southern State Truck Driving Academy will be o-4.9

authority. Local truck driving instructor JT Smith said there has never been a better time to enter the transportation industry.

Smith, who oversees Southern State's Truck Driving Academy, said a longstanding demand for truck drivers has longevity beyond his lifetime.

"Everything still comes on a truck regardless of what it is, whether it's groceries or gas," Smith said. "Any store you want to shop at or anything online like Amazon uses trucks. Trains and planes can only get them so far – trucks get things where they need to go."

Smith said Southern State offers high-tech training methods to prepare students for the road in changing times. The Truck Driving Academy uses virtual-reality simulators for shifting and driving training so students can safely learn techniques without getting behind the wheel, and the college will soon offer a tablet and smartphone app simulating pre-trip maintenance and preparation, Smith said.

Accompanying the technological changes in the trucking industry is a paradigm shift in the way society sees truck drivers, Smith said. "The stigma of being a truck driver has come a long way," he said. "You can support a family on a single income and you can avoid all kinds of college debt. If you like to drive, truck driving is a great field to get into."

Smith said potential truck drivers could qualify for a Class A Commercial Driver's License in four weeks or eight weekends at a cost of \$5,300. The course for a Class B license, or passenger bus qualification, is two weeks and costs \$2,900.

Smith can be reached by email at jtsmith@sscc.edu. For more information, please visit <https://www.sscc.edu/academics/programs/truck-driving.shtml>.

###

Southern State Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

James Bland, Vice President of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management | Title IX Lead Coordinator
100 Hobart Drive, Hillsboro, OH 45133 | jbland@sscc.edu | 800.628.7722, Ext. 2510

Mindy Markey-Grabill, Director of Human Resources | Title IX Coordinator
100 Hobart Drive, Hillsboro, OH 45133 | mmarkey@sscc.edu | 800.628.7722, Ext. 2550