

CASE STUDY

Drury Southwest and FleetLocate

ALL ABOUT IFTA, ELD, AND SAFER DRIVERS

ABOUT DRURY SOUTHWEST:

Bob Drury and his brothers grew up working long hours on the family farm back in the 1940's. Their father, Lambert Drury, introduced his sons to the construction industry by forming a tile and plaster company to help supplement the family farm income. Bob and his brothers helped energize the Drury family business, making it successful and respected throughout Southeast Missouri and neighboring states.

In the 1960's, the Drury family business expanded and they built their first hotel in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Bob and his brothers enjoyed the challenges and rewards that the hotel industry presented, so in 1974 they formed another company known today as Drury Hotels.

Drury Hotels continues to be 100% family owned and operated. For 40 years, Drury has continued to stick with the basics that helped the company grow from a small plastering business in the Bootheel of Missouri to a successful, growing system of over 130 hotels in 20 states.



DIS Huntsville, Alabama

JULIE SVENDSEN, OFFICE MANAGER AT DRURY SOUTHWEST FOR OVER TWO DECADES

Julie Svendsen works in Drury Southwest's San Antonio office which focuses on all the company's construction projects, including hotel and roof deck construction. She works closely with the Senior VP of Construction and the Director of Construction, handling everything from contract administration for their subcontractors, change orders for construction projects, applications for state contractor licenses, and booking travel each month to and from jobsites.

Julie also manages Drury Southwest's two full time CDL short haul/long haul drivers and tractors, including processing IFTA taxes and coordinating everything tractor-related. In addition to the two tractors, Drury Southwest also maintains a flatbed and trailer fleet for the purpose of hauling construction equipment and materials.

For one job, Drury Southwest even hauled custom-constructed bridge sections to their Wichita, KS site where their own employee welders seamed the sections together on-site to create a bridge from the hotel to the parking structure.

“What was so interesting is that inspectors had to x-ray the bridge before they would allow us to open the hotel to make sure that all the welds were secure and done properly. We passed with flying colors, so, yeah – we’ve even hauled a bridge!”

With extensive long-haul trips crossing state lines, Drury Southwest needed to comply with the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA). Enter FleetLocate.



INTERNATIONAL FUEL TAX AGREEMENT

IFTA administration “was a nightmare. It used to take me a whole week to get my IFTA taxes done. When our drivers cross state lines, they’re not sitting there saying, ‘How many miles was it from Texarkana to the Louisiana state line...’, so I’d have to backtrack, recalculate, and many times their miles didn’t add up.”

Julie relied on the drivers to provide information about their miles, and as a result, she spent a lot of time shoring up missing or inaccurate information on MapQuest.

But that was before FleetLocate. Now, the thing Julie raves most about FleetLocate is how drastically it has reduced her IFTA workload.

ELD MANDATE COMPLIANCE

Beyond Julie’s own requirements for IFTA reporting, her drivers also needed to comply with the ELD mandate – another motivator for adopting the FleetLocate solution. Rather than wait for the compliance deadline to hit, they decided in mid-2016 to be proactive and get a jump on things.

“We started early for several different reasons,” Julie explained. First of all, we wanted to give our drivers time for a learning curve before the mandate went into effect. I think they were going over their hours and they weren’t aware of it. So we did it to help them, to help us, and to keep us all legal.”

Despite overcoming some initial hesitation about learning a new technology, Julie says if her drivers had the choice today to go back to paper logs, they wouldn’t. “I think they’re happy with Spireon,” Julie said. And Julie reports that happy drivers make productive drivers, particularly since they aren’t having to spend time to manually keep logs.

“FLEETLOCATE HAS WORKED SMOOTHLY THE WHOLE TIME WE’VE HAD IT AND IT’S BEEN A VERY WELCOME ADDITION TO OUR TRACTORS.”

IMPROVING FLEET SAFETY

“On a day-to-day basis, I don’t want to play big brother with them. I trust them when they’re on the road, but every now and then we’ll wonder where they are and we’ll log in just to see where they are. It’s easy to check on their hours, make sure that their hours are in line with that they should be.”

Sometimes, a driver’s hours may not be in line, most often due to driver error. But when that happens, Julie says it’s easy to correct. “I can just log in and make a couple of clicks and they’re good to go, so it doesn’t hold them up.”

Getting alerts about driver behavior is an added benefit that arms Julie with good information for coaching her drivers about fleet safety.

“I let them know every time I get speeding notifications or hard braking notifications,” Julie said. “One day, I got 50 notifications right in a row. I texted the driver and said, ‘When you take a break, I need you to call me.’ I let him know that when they’re not driving in a safe manner, we all know about it, and I think that helps keep them from speeding, from harsh braking, etc.” When Julie confronted the driver, he offered an excuse. But for Julie, it wasn’t about that particular instance. “At least he knew that I knew,” Julie said. And that was the point.

RESULTS

Julie says the FleetLocate solution pays for itself with the return on investment she gets from simplified IFTA reporting and electronic logging, but ultimately, the greatest benefit is making her small fleet safer.

“What’s the biggest benefit to Drury Southwest? Having safe drivers,” Julie said. “FleetLocate has worked smoothly the whole time we’ve had it and it’s been a very welcome addition to our tractors.”