

# Transport Topics **Online**

Updated:

## CEO Davidson Will Retire from Arkansas Best Corp.

*By Frederick Kiel, Staff Reporter*

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Arkansas Best Corp. announced Robert Davidson, its president and chief executive officer, would retire Dec. 31 and that Judy McReynolds, currently its chief financial officer, would succeed him, becoming the only woman running a publicly traded trucking company.

The company last week also released its third-quarter earnings, reporting a loss of \$5.6 million, down from a profit of \$15.4 million in the third quarter of 2008.

“Let’s hope that we can see a brighter future from a business level standpoint fairly soon,” McReynolds said in response to a question about the recession in a telephone call with investment analysts Oct. 21. “But this has been unprecedented in its length, and we’ve got to be prepared for that to continue for a while.”

Arkansas Best, Fort Smith, Ark., ranks No. 18 on the Transport Topics 100 list of the largest for-hire carriers in the United States and Canada.

Its main operating company is ABF Freight System, a unionized less-than-truckload carrier that is primarily a longhaul carrier but also has a growing regional business.

Davidson said he would retire on his 62nd birthday, Dec. 31, after spending 38 years with the company. He has been CEO since February 2006.

Davidson also is treasurer of American Trucking Associations and a member of ATA’s executive committee and the ATA Litigation Center board of directors.

McReynolds, 47, has been CFO since February 2006. She had been vice president and controller since 2000.

A certified public accountant, she joined Arkansas Best in 1997 after several years in public accounting and two years at another publicly held transportation company.

McReynolds, born in Norman, Okla., received a bachelor’s degree in 1985 from the University of Oklahoma, Bloomberg News reported.

Davidson told analysts that his time at Arkansas Best “has been an absolute joy,” adding he was happy that McReynolds would take over.

“Judy has an incredible combination of integrity, intelligence, energy, judgment, vision and leadership skills,” Davidson said. “Judy and I have worked closely together in her role as CFO, and we share a common vision and excitement for the growth and prosperity of Arkansas Best Corp. She appreciates and has immersed herself in the wonderful culture that

makes our company unique.”

McReynolds praised Davidson but did not say anything about her plans for the company as CEO. She acknowledged that she was entering the position at a difficult time.

In its financial report, Arkansas Best said that it had revenue of

\$399 million in the third quarter, “a per-day decrease of 19.5% from prior year quarter of \$495.8 million.”

ABF Freight System had revenue of \$369.8 million in the quarter, down from \$476.3 million in third quarter of 2008, a per-day decrease of 22.4%, the statement said.

ABF tonnage per day decreased by 10.1% from the third quarter of 2008, the company said.

“ABF began the fourth year of what has been turned out to be the most severe and longest-lasting recession of my 38 years with the company,” Davidson told the analysts.

“We remain committed to closely monitoring ABF’s costs by aligning them with available business,” he said. “However, low freight levels combined with an aggressive pricing environment that intensified further caused the loss in the quarter.”

He added that the company’s third-quarter tonnage, despite the decrease, was helped by both “modest market share gains from new accounts that we secured from LTL competitors” and “a normal seasonal uptick in business that’s expected this time of year.”

Business again softened in September and into October, Davidson said, but he could not predict whether any further improvements would develop this year.