



This publication is a member service of

**National School
Transportation Association**
113 South West Street, 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 684-3200
Fax: (703) 684-3212
E-mail: info@yellowbuses.org
Website: www.yellowbuses.org

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The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) was founded in 1964 by school bus contractors to "promote and foster the highest degree of safety in the transportation of school children"

Energy Bill Approved Overwhelmingly in Senate

This week, the Senate

approved their version of a comprehensive energy bill by a vote of 85-12.

It is over 1,000

pages long and contains provisions to address energy

needs affecting many sectors of the economy.

The bill now awaits the actions of a Conference Committee to resolve

differences with the House-passed bill with the hope of getting a bill to the President by August.



NSTA has been working on several issues of interest to the school bus industry

including the authorization of a grant program for school bus replacement and retrofit to lower school bus emissions, a

new diesel vehicle and off-road equipment retrofit program and tax credits for diesel and alternative fueled

vehicles.

Clean School Bus authorization language

has been included in comprehensive energy bills that stalled in the past two

Congresses. This year's House bill again contains the same school bus

replacement and retrofit language that was in the energy bill negotiated two

years ago. The provision authorizes \$300 million in school bus grants over three

years to be administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

This year, NSTA, working with a broad coalition of school bus industry interests,

including engine and equipment manufacturers, state and local school bus

trade associations and public interest groups, developed a new, more flexible

\$110 million, two-year program that would provide greater opportunities for

contractor participation. That language

was inserted in the highway bill on the Senate floor. That bill is now in Conference with the House. We have obtained commitments of support for our new more flexible approach in the energy bill should the highway bill stall and the energy bill begin to move through Conference on a faster track.

The Senate-passed energy bill also contains a new five-year, \$1 billion

EPA diesel retrofit grant program for diesel vehicles (including buses) and

off-road equipment. The bill provides authorization for \$200 million per year,

70% of which would be in direct EPA administered grants and 30% allocated

to the states. Of the 70% in grants administered by EPA, at least 50%

must go to public fleets (but up to 49% can be for private fleets). Grant

funds can go to state, local or tribal transportation or air agencies or to

non-profits, like NSTA. The House has a much smaller provision that

authorizes only \$100 million in funding over five years.

One amendment that heavy-duty vehicle manufacturers were seeking to

add to the bill was a tax incentive package to encourage the purchase of

2007 model year clean diesel vehicles. The provision as originally drafted

would have provided a 5% tax credit and accelerated depreciation for diesel

vehicles over 26,000 pounds that meet 2007 emissions standards and were

purchased in that year.

The Senate-passed bill contains language providing for tax incentives

to encourage the purchase of hybrid, hydrogen or alternative fueled

vehicles.

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Annual Convention Reminders...

Mayflower Hotel Reservation Deadline is Extended to Monday, July 4th!

The convention hotel is the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel located at 1127 Connecticut Avenue, NW in downtown Washington, DC.

If you would like to book your room early, you can call Renaissance Reservations at (800) 468-3571 or you can contact the hotel directly at (202) 347-3000. Room rates for the Conference are \$165 single or double occupancy. In order to receive this discounted rate, **you must make your reservations by July 4th** and let the Reservation Agent know you are with NSTA.

First time to NSTA's Annual Meeting?

Join us for a new member/first time attendee session on Sunday, July 17th from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Learn what you need to know about Conference happenings and how to get the most out of your attendance!

NEW Web site to debut at NSTA's Convention!

The redesigned NSTA Web site will be launched on Friday, July 15. See it for the first time at the Cyber Café at Annual Convention.!! The site will include information on membership benefits, news from Capitol Hill, upcoming events, and much more!

To register for the NSTA Convention, please contact the NSTA office at (800) 222-NSTA or go to the website at www.yellowbuses.org and download the most-recent registration brochure.

NHTSA Issues CSRS Ease of Use Ratings

Those of you who use child safety restraint systems (car seats) for preschoolers or students with special needs know that the more difficult it is for drivers to secure the seat and the child, the less likely they are to do it properly. Since proper securement is critical to safety, knowing which seats are easier to use can be an important step toward safer transportation of this increasing population—as well as making drivers happier and more efficient.



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is entering its fourth year of testing CSRS for ease of use, and has published its 2005 ratings on the NHTSA website at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/CSSRating/Index.cfm>. The chart is easy to read, and provides detailed information on each CSRS, categorized by type of seat (e.g. forward-facing, combination). In addition to the ease of use rating (A, B, or C), you can readily see the weight range for the seat, harness type, and other information on 92 different seats. If you're looking for a specialized product (a forward-facing seat for a 65-pound child, for example), this is an easy place to start.



Vote for this Salmon!

This summer, 26 wild salmon (and 3 halibut) will swim through Anchorage, Alaska, during the 2005 Wild Salmon on Parade season, which runs June - August 2005.

Reeling from a successful run in 2003 and 2004, wildly decorated salmon (and halibut) sculptures are displayed in celebration of one of Alaska's most unique and abundant resources - wild Alaska salmon.

The four-foot, artistically transformed salmon (and three-foot long halibut) sculptures include creations such as Vincent Van Coho, Float Fish, Summer School and Fish and Chips. The fish will swim to locations on June 10th along the Wild Salmon on Parade Walking Tour.

At season close, Wild Salmon sculptures will go to auction at the Fish Fry & Buy dinner auction to be held on Friday September 9th at the Hilton Anchorage. Proceeds benefit CampFire USA - Alaska Council, the Anchorage Cultural Council and Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion Programs of Alaska.

To vote for this salmon, visit: http://www.anchorage.net/salmon/index.cfm?fuseaction=salmon.view&fish_id=24



Welcome New Members!

Charles Rukstela
Rukstela Charter Service
Brooklyn, CT

Calvin Compton, Jr.
Compton Bus Services, Inc.
Port Tobacco, MD



Recalls

The following recalls have been posted on the NHTSA website in the past month.

BlueBird All American, Conventional, Minibird, Microbird, Vision, and TC2000, model years 2002-2006, sold or registered in 20 Northeast and Midwest states. In extremely cold weather, the microswitches used internally to position the stop sign in the open and closed positions may malfunction, causing the sign to open or close in an improper position, or not to open at all. Blue Bird will notify owners in June and will replace the original switch with a switch pack that is not sensitive to extreme cold.

U.S. Bus Sturdivus and Universe, model years 2004-2005. Certain buses were manufactured with improper or missing welds on the 30" wide barrier support, which fails to comply with FMVSS 222. U.S. Bus will notify owners in June and will inspect the barriers and repair the welds as necessary.

U.S. Bus Sturdivus, model year 2005. Certain buses fail to comply with FMVSS 217, Window Retention. In the event of a crash, passenger contact with the window could cause the window to dislodge from its gasket/seal. U.S. Bus has not provided a remedy or notification schedule yet.

International 3200 Chassis, model year 2006, equipped with air brakes. The push rod that connects the brake pedal to the brake rod was manufactured incorrectly and could break under certain load conditions. International began notification on June 3; dealers will replace the push rods.

Ford E350 and E450 vans, model year 2004-2005, equipped with 6.0L diesel engines. Certain vans may experience stalling without warning while driving, and engine may or may not restart. Dealers will upgrade the fuel injection control module wire harness and/or install a new injection control pressure sensor. Notification of owners will begin on July 5.



Senate Committee to Consider Non-profit Reform

The Panel on the Nonprofit Sector, formed at the direction of the Senate Finance Committee, recently released its findings and recommendations.

The Panel suggested over 120 reforms for Congress, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and nonprofits to consider.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) said that the report "will be of great use" when the Committee begins drafting its reform bill later this summer.

The Committee's main focus is to end the abusive tax treatment of items donated to nonprofits, but is also taking the opportunity to consider reforming nonprofits given they have not been thoroughly reviewed by Congress since 1969.

Junk Fax Bill Passes Congress



Congress finally passed the Junk Fax Preservation Act of 2005 just before to the July 1, 2005 date when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule requiring prior permission to send a commercial fax was set to take effect.

Under the bill, exceptions to "junk" faxing will be made for businesses with an "established business relationship." There is no time limit for establishing such a relationship.

Unsolicited commercial faxes will now have to include an opt-out provision on the first page of the fax. Companies are required to provide contact information on their faxes to help consumers reach them easily and would have to be available 24 hours a day for opt-out requests.

In addition, businesses must obtain fax numbers through their own relationships with customers or through publicly available websites or advertisements. This is intended to prevent companies from buying client lists from third parties.



TEA-21 Reauthorization Extended an Eighth Time

TEA-21 reauthorization Conferees continue to negotiate a funding level for the five year reauthorization bill, but were unable to reach agreement prior to the end of the latest extension, forcing an eighth extension to keep program funds flowing. Congressional leaders are hopeful that this 19-day extension will keep the pressure on Conferees to reach a deal, but it remains unclear if that can be accomplished in such a short window of time.

(TEA-21 article continued...)

The eighth extension funds the program through July 19, 2005. Over the 4th of July recess, staff is expected to continue to try to work through the agreements Conference Leaders have reached, but the major decisions must be made by the Members themselves, forcing negotiations to continue when lawmakers return the week of July 11.

The House passed a \$284 billion five-year reauthorization on March 10, 2005 and the Senate passed a \$296 billion five-year reauthorization on May 17, 2005. The President has threatened to veto anything over \$284 billion.



Estate Tax Legislation Deal May Be Near

Following the House passage of a bill to permanently repeal the estate tax, the Senate has been trying to follow suit. Unable to muster the necessary 60 votes to avoid a filibuster (endless debate), Senate Republican Leaders appointed Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) to negotiate a deal with Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Max Baucus (D-MT).

Both Kyl and Baucus are having trouble reaching a consensus among their respective Parties.

Under the terms of the 2001 tax cut, the estate tax is being gradually phased out and eliminated in 2010. Unfortunately, the elimination of the tax would end on December 31, 2010, and the tax would return at the full rate in 2011.

Senators Kyl and Baucus have discussed a compromise on the rate, including a tax rate of either 15 or 20 percent with a \$5 - \$10 million per-person exemption on estate size, but no agreement has been reached as of yet.

Senate Republican Leadership is hopeful that a vote will come on compromise legislation in July.



Fourth of July Trivia

1. Who won the first battle of the American Revolution?
2. Where was the Battle of Bunker Hill fought?
3. What did John Hancock do to become the president of the Continental Congress?
4. Was Paul Revere full-blooded British?
5. How cold was it at Valley Forge?

ANSWERS:

1. The Massachusetts Militiamen defeated the British at the Battle of Lexington and Concord on the night of April 18-19, 1775. The British were trying to confiscate colonial arms in Concord.
2. The Battle of Bunker Hill actually took place on a smaller hill about 2000 feet away. For unknown reasons on June 17th, 1775 soldiers dug into Breed's Hill, which was not the intended site for the battle. Later Breed's Hill was renamed Bunker Hill so that visitors would not be confused.
3. He was wealthy. He was a merchant that inherited a fortune from his uncle who was a smuggler. This money was used to help finance the revolution. After the war he became the governor of Massachusetts.
4. No. His father, Apollon Rivoire, was French. His mother, Deborah Hitchbourn, was English.
5. Actually the winter of 1777-78 was a mild one at the site 22 miles NW of Philadelphia. The week of Christmas did offer heavy snow and freezing

conditions, but there was a thaw in January. The real problem was a lack of food, clothing, and shelter caused by negligence and mismanagement by the Continental Congress and the commissary department. Approximately 2,500 out of the 10,000 soldiers there died of disease and exposure.

Important Dates to Note...

2005

July 17, 2005

[International Safety Competition](#)

Washington, DC

July 17 - 20, 2005

[41st Annual Meeting and Convention](#)

Renaissance Mayflower Hotel
Washington, DC

July 21-22, 2005

[NSTA Safety and Security Workshop](#)

Ashburn, Virginia

2006

January 22-25, 2006

[NSTA Mid-Winter Meeting](#)

The Ritz Carlton Kapalua
Kapalua, Maui, HI

July 22, 2006

[International Safety Competition](#)

Lake Tahoe, NV

July 23-26, 2006

[42nd Convention and Annual Meeting](#)
Lake Tahoe, NV