



This publication is a member service of  
**National School**

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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"



## Expansion of Small Business Expensing Provisions Slowed

Included in President Bush's Fiscal Year 2007 budget, which was recently sent to Congress, was a proposal to double small business expensing limits.

While it is doubtful this proposal will be included in the tax extenders legislation now in Conference, it is possible it could move later in the year if Congress takes up another tax extenders package.

Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) recently introduced legislation detailing the President's plan.

The legislation would increase to \$200,000 the annual limit businesses are able to deduct for new equipment placed in service, up from the current \$100,000 limit. It would also increase from \$400,000 to \$800,000 the total amount of new equipment purchases at which the expensing benefit begins to phase out.

Although he will continue to fight to include the provision in the current bill already in Conference, Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA) has stated that it expects to introduce similar legislation in the House should those efforts fail.

## It's Time to Register for the NSTA Safety & Security Workshop



NSTA will be holding a Safety & Security Workshop on **March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>** at the Holiday Inn Tinley Park in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois.

This important training opportunity is the second time NSTA has offered such an event for the school bus industry.

Learn what you need to know to start a safety plan or strengthen the one you have. Safety and security experts will provide you with the information, knowledge, and resources you need to recruit qualified drivers, the latest information on school bus insurance programs, and strategies for preparing and protecting your business in emergency situations.

Register on the NSTA website at [www.yellowbuses.org](http://www.yellowbuses.org), and click on the "Upcoming Events" section of the home page.

You can also call NSTA headquarters at (800) 222-NSTA (6782) or e-mail us at [info@yellowbuses.org](mailto:info@yellowbuses.org) to find out more.

Room rates are \$95 and are **available only until March 8<sup>th</sup>**. Registration is open to both NSTA/ISTA members and non-members.

## EPA Announces 2005 Clean School Bus Grants

On February 20 EPA Administrator Steve Johnson announced the latest round of Clean School Bus USA grants in Tucson, where one of the largest awards, \$493,000, will help replace 61 older buses with new CNG buses.



The Tucson Unified School District will augment the EPA funds with an additional \$6.5 million raised from a bond election, another grant, and an advertising program.

From a total of 170 applications for the \$7.5 million appropriated for Clean School Bus USA in FY2005, EPA chose 37 projects in 25 states.

Fifteen of the projects include replacing older buses with new vehicles, the majority of which will be CNG buses.

This is by far the largest number of replacements we've seen in the grant program, and the largest interest in natural gas buses.

In the appropriation for the 2005 awards, Congress limited eligibility to school districts.

Even so, at least seven of the grants will benefit contracted fleets.

The FY2006 appropriation does not carry the same restriction, and NSTA is working with EPA to ensure that this year's competition includes all eligible entities.



The following new bills have been introduced in state legislatures during the past two weeks.

**Michigan:** Makes school bus inspections optional rather than mandatory. Under the bill, State Police would inspect school buses only at the request of the owner, and could charge for the inspections.

**Connecticut:** Requires all diesel school buses to be equipped with a closed crankcase ventilation system after September 1, 2008.

**West Virginia:** Prohibits boards of education from requiring a school bus driver or aide to begin the day's work anywhere other than a board-owned facility with available parking, and provides that the work day doesn't end until the driver is able to leave the bus at the same facility. (Don't know the story behind this, but there must be one.)

**Tennessee:** Requires video monitors on all school buses as of the date of adoption of the bill.

**Rhode Island:** Transfers the responsibility for and cost of out-of-district transportation from the school district to the state.

**West Virginia:** Requires insurance companies to give school bus drivers a 5% discount on their automobile insurance if they complete an accident prevention course.

**Iowa:** Requires that a monitor be on board any time a school bus is transporting students.

**Rhode Island:** Provides that municipalities can apply for refund of fuel tax for fuel used in school buses

**Connecticut:** Requires that when a school district goes out to bid for transportation service, it must include in the bid specs the wages and benefits of current drivers and other non-supervisory personnel. Any new contractor must provide no less than the wages and benefits of the previous contractor. (This is a bill perennially offered by the Service Employees International Union).

**Iowa:** Prohibits school districts from transporting students under ten by common carrier (i.e. transit bus) rather than school bus.



## NSTA Offers Two Fuel Management Programs

Call us NSTA Headquarters today to learn more about our fuel management programs, which will help you monitor costs and save money!

Call us at (800) 222-NSTA (6782) or e-mail us at [info@yellowbuses.org](mailto:info@yellowbuses.org).





# IMPORTANT N.S.T.A. DATES TO NOTE...



## School Bus Safety Week Resolution UPDATE...

Congressman John J. "Jimmy" Duncan (R-TN) introduced House Resolution 498 honoring School Bus Safety Week on October 18, 2005. The Resolution honors the goals and ideals of School Bus Safety Week and the safety of school bus transportation.

The most current list of co-sponsors to the Resolution include: Representatives Timothy Bishop (R-UT), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY); John Boozman (R-AR), Ben Cardin (D-MD); Ken Calvert (R-CA), Danny Davis (D-IL) Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Jim Gerlach (R-PA), Stephanie Herseth (D-SD), Darrell Issa (R-CA), Sue Kelly (R-NY), Randy Kuhl (R-NY), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Michael McNulty (R-NY), Richard Neal (D-MA), Tom Osborne (R-NE), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Donald Payne (D-NJ), Tom Petri (R-WI), John Shimkus (R-IL), Rob Simmons (R-CT), Mark Udall (D-CO) and Fred Upton (R-MI).

We have made much progress in securing co-sponsors and we thank you for your efforts to date, but we still have a long way to go. Please contact your Member of Congress and ask that they join onto the bill as a co-sponsor.

In order for the Committee to act upon the Resolution we must have at least 50 co-sponsors, so your assistance in this effort is very important. As this is only a House effort, there is no need to contact your Senators about this Resolution.

includes the  
School Bus Watch Program

## Maintenance Workshops Scheduled for 2006!

NSTA is pleased to announce that Maintenance Workshops at Manufacturers' plants are scheduled for 2006!

This is an excellent opportunity for your maintenance technicians and other staff to become experts on how a school bus operates and learn how to troubleshoot mechanical issues with ease. Workshops will be held at the following locations and during the dates listed:

### Blue Bird Corporation -- Fort Valley, GA

February 28 - March 1  
July 18 - 19  
September 19 - 20

### International Truck & Engine Corporation -- Tulsa, OK

March 6 - 9  
June 26 - 29  
September 25 - 28

### Thomas Built Buses-- High Point, NC

March 14 - 15  
October 24 - 25

Registration forms are available online on the home page (and events section) of the NSTA website, [www.yellowbuses.org](http://www.yellowbuses.org).

If you would like to find out more about these workshops, you can also contact NSTA Headquarters at (800) 222-NSTA or by e-mail at [info@yellowbuses.org](mailto:info@yellowbuses.org).

