



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"

It's Time to Register for NSTA's Summer Convention!

NSTA's Summer Convention will be held at **Harrah's Resort in Lake Tahoe, Nevada, July 22-26, 2006.**

A special group block has been set up for NSTA attendees and is available at the discounted group rate of \$165 single or double occupancy. Rooms are limited and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

To make reservations for your room(s), call **(800) 455-4770** and ask for the Group Code: **S07-NSTA.**

The [42nd Annual Meeting & Convention](#) agenda, as well as registration forms, are available in the Upcoming Events section and on the home page of NSTA's website, www.yellowbuses.org.



Industry Alliance Tackles Tough Issues

What began as a meeting of the three national school transportation associations to discuss common issues in late 2003 has evolved into an alliance

of industry leaders meeting bimonthly to develop strategies for tackling tough issues. The group, unnamed but usually referred to as the "3Ns", comprises two representatives each from NSTA, NAPT, and NASDPTS, plus representatives from Blue Bird, IC, and Thomas.

At their recent meeting in the Chicago area, the group discussed the status of the security training programs, School Bus Watch and School Transportation Awareness Training (STAT), both of which have benefited from significant industry involvement. They also discussed the Security Task Force, a group of two people from each association charged with identifying topics and developing projects related to school bus security. Ron Kinney of NSTA has been asked to chair the Task Force.

A new issue on the group's agenda is the "65% Solution." This is a controversial nationwide initiative to require that at least 65% of educational operating funds be spent in the classroom. NSTA's Industry Specialist, Robin Leeds, was asked to prepare a background paper on the movement and to serve as technical resource to the alliance. The group will then formulate a position and strategy to educate the industry and the public on the potential effects of this initiative on school transportation.

David Hillman of IC Corporation serves as the facilitator for the group, who together believe that combining the knowledge and resources of the three associations and the three leading manufacturers will result in positive developments for the entire industry.



House Adds \$5 Million to DERA Funding Bill Following Industry Visit

Yesterday the House of Representatives approved \$28 million in funding for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA), which includes the Clean School Bus USA grant program. This is \$5 million more than the bill contained when it left the Interior and Environment subcommittee a little over a week ago.

On May 10, during the National School Transportation Association's annual visit to Capitol Hill, Representative Charles Taylor (R, NC), Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and Environment, addressed members of the NSTA Board of Directors and invited representatives of NAPT and NASDPTS. Immediately following Congressman Taylor's visit with the school bus group, he presented the bill to the full Appropriations committee, adding \$3 million to the grant funding. When the bill was debated in the House yesterday, Mr. Taylor offered an amendment to increase the amount by another \$2 million.

"We want to thank Chairman Taylor for fighting to increase funding for this much needed program," said John Corr, NSTA President, "I am glad we were able to be there to meet with Chairman Taylor at a critical time and I think it made a difference."

DERA was part of the comprehensive energy legislation enacted last year by the Congress. It authorized \$200 million for a wide range of diesel

reduction programs, including Clean School Bus. While the appropriation approved today is less than the Energy bill authorized, it is more than twice the amount appropriated for clean diesel programs in the current fiscal year.

NSTA worked with a broad coalition of advocates to pass the DERA authorization and to support full funding of the Act. Important to NSTA members, DERA envisions grant funding for privately owned and operated fleets using more flexible eligibility rules than have been used to fund Clean School Bus USA programs in recent years.



New Hampshire Passes Audio Recording Law

New Hampshire has become the first state in the union to specifically exempt school buses from wiretapping laws. A bill signed by the Governor on April 25 adds an exemption to the state's prohibition on recording conversations without the consent of all parties by allowing the owners of school buses to make audio recordings in conjunction with video recordings of the interiors of school buses while students are being transported. In order for the audio recording to be legal, the board of education must hold a public hearing to authorize the use of audio surveillance. If the use is authorized, the board must adopt administrative procedures concerning storage and viewing of tapes. The board must notify parents and students that audio recording will be in effect, and must post signs in the

buses informing passengers that they may be recorded.

Meantime, in Pennsylvania, where this issue first surfaced, disagreements continue among county prosecutors. District Attorneys in two counties have warned school administrators that the decision of Allegheny County Prosecutor Stephen Zappala not to press charges against Laidlaw for the use of audio recording on buses in that county, and to issue guidelines for districts to help them comply with the law does not apply in other counties. Their advice to districts in their jurisdiction is to defer audio recording until the state legislature settles the issue. A state senator is reportedly drafting legislation to exempt schools from the wiretapping law.

NSTA Offers Sample Request for Clarification

In response to a request from one of our members for help in getting a clarification of how the state wiretap law affects school bus surveillance, NSTA provided a sample letter to the state Attorney General. The letter explains the use of surveillance equipment in school buses and asks whether notification to parents and signs in the buses are sufficient to infer consent required by the law. In most states, the Attorney General's office will provide interpretation of state laws only to elected officials and heads of government agencies; so an individual contractor or state association cannot approach the AG directly. You can, however, ask a state legislator to send the letter for you—as this member did—or work with your regulatory agency or state director to make the request.

If you'd like a copy of the sample letter, contact the NSTA office or email leeds@yellowbuses.org.



EPA Regions 1 & 2 Announce CSB Grant Applications

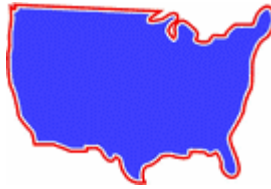
The Northeast Diesel Collaborative (EPA regions 1 & 2) has announced the availability of grants for Clean School Bus projects as part of their 2006 Emissions Reduction Program.

School districts and nonprofit groups in the following states may apply for grants of \$50,000 to \$300,000 to upgrade diesel fleets through retrofits or replacements, install anti-idling technology, or use clean fuels: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT.

The funding available for CSB projects is \$1.140 million, out of a total of \$1.48 million for all diesel reduction grants. The agency anticipates awarding four to eight clean school bus awards. Be aware that the funds cannot be used to comply with state or federal mandates—so funding for ULSD, for example, will end once required use kicks in.

The deadline for applications is June 29. While contractors may not apply directly for the funds, school districts may apply with a proposal to subcontract with their commercial school bus service providers. State associations may also apply with a proposal to subcontract with multiple school district/contractor partnerships. You can find the application at www.epa.gov/ne/eco/diesel/assets/pdfs/NEDC-RFP.pdf. If you have questions about how to apply or how to make your project more appealing, contact NSTA.

State Legislative Activity



MO: A bill is being considered that requires all school buses as of September 2007 to be equipped with child safety alarm systems that talk to and alert children as they are getting on and off the bus.

MO: The House amended a tax bill previously passed by the Senate to, among other things, exempt from taxes fuel used in buses that transport students. The bill is in conference to resolve differences, one of which is the school bus fuel tax exemption.

NY: A bill was filed that would require the state to set up a toll-free number for reporting the improper operation of a school bus, and would require every school bus to display the number in a conspicuous location.

VA: The Senate passed a bill that would increase the tax on diesel fuel by 1.5 cents, and add a 6-cent tax on all fuel distributed from a facility in VA.

MN: The Finance committee has received a bill that would change the way school transportation is funded. It appears to penalize school districts that contract transportation services by reducing their funding allocation from the state and allowing them to levy a local tax to make up for the "contracted services reduction." The legislature adjourns on May 19, so this bill won't be considered until next March.

We Get Questions

Q. *Is it true that if I use a safety harness with a cam wrap on the bus, the students in the seat behind have to use seat belts? If so, why don't we have to do that for child safety seats?*

A. The federal regulation that allows cam wraps to be used on school bus seats—and only school bus seats—stipulates that a condition of their use is that any passenger seated behind the seat with a cam wrap must be restrained.

The reason is that there is a danger of overloading the seat back in a frontal crash if both the force of the child who is restrained by the harness and the force of the child who is unrestrained behind the seat combine on the seat back.

Harnesses or vests that use a cam wrap should have a warning label on the part of the restraint that attaches to the seat back saying that it can be used only on school bus seats and only if the entire seat behind is unoccupied or occupied by restrained passengers.

Other CSRS (safety seats and boosters) do not have the same restriction because they are not attached to the seat back. They attach to the reinforced frame through the seat belts instead.

If you have questions, please contact Robin Leeds-Tanner at rleeds@yellowbuses.org.





We Now Have 50 Co-Sponsors for the SBSW Resolution!

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, totaling 57, include: Representatives **Joe Baca (D-CA)**, Timothy Bishop (D-NY), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), John Boozman (R-AR), **Allen Boyd (D-FL)**, Jeb Bradley (R-NH), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Lois Capps (D-CA), **Tom Cole (R-OK)**, Jerry Costello (D-IL), Danny Davis (D-IL) Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Eliot Engel (D-NY), **Bob Etheridge (D-NC)**, Jim Gerlach (R-PA), Bart Gordon (R-TN), Stephanie Herseth (D-SD), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Mike Honda (D-CA), Darrell Issa (R-CA), **Nancy Johnson (R-CT)**, Tim Johnson (R-IL), Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH), Sue Kelly (R-NY), Randy Kuhl (R-NY), Ray LaHood (R-IL), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Betty McCollum (D-MN), Jim McGovern (D-MA), **John McHugh (D-NY)**, Mike McIntyre (D-NC), Michael McNulty (D-NY), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Richard Neal (D-MA), Tom Osborne (R-NE), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Donald Payne (D-NJ), Tom Petri (R-WI), Joseph Pitts (R-PA), Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Martin Sabo (D-MN), John Shimkus (R-IL), Bill Shuster (R-PA), Rob Simmons (R-CT), Ike Skelton (D-

MO), **Adam Smith (D-WA)**, Mark Souder (R-IN), Ted Strickland (D-OH), Mark Udall (D-CO), Fred Upton (R-MI), James Walsh (R-NY), **Zach Wamp (R-TN)**, Anthony Weiner (D-NY) and Curt Weldon (R-PA). (Bold italics denote new additions to the list of co-sponsors.)

As we have now secured over 50 co-sponsors, NSTA will meet with staff from Congressman Duncan's office as well as staff from the House Government Reform Committee to discuss the next steps. We are hopeful to move this Resolution through the House of Representatives as soon as possible.

It's not too late to contact your Member of Congress if they are not listed above. Please keep those calls and letters coming!

Welcome New NSTA Members!

Child Check Mate Systems, Inc.
Gordon Both
Navan, Ontario

PLEASE HELP

Have you trained drivers in School Bus Watch this year? If so, please let us know how many drivers were trained, and whether they were enrolled in School Bus Watch.

NSTA, along with the other national associations, receives a fee for every driver enrolled in SBW—but we think we are missing a lot of drivers. If you have done SBW training at your facility, or participated in SBW training at another facility, please send us the dates, number of drivers, and trainer's name.

If your drivers haven't been enrolled, we will help you get that done; if they have, we want to make sure we have them in our counts.

You can email the information to ahenley@yellowbuses.org, or fax it to 703- 684-3212. Thanks for your help; this revenue will help us continue the programs that are important to members without raising your dues.



members

(Article continued from page 4)

thicker copper circuits. The recall is expected to begin on June 30.

Thomas Minotaur, manufactured from July 2005 to February 2006, and equipped with wheelchair lifts. The floor structure for the wheelchair lift fails to comply with the strength requirement of FMVSS.

Thomas will reinforce the floor at no charge. The recall is expected to begin on June 30.

IC Corp FE, RE, CE, and IC, manufactured from June 2005 through March 2006, equipped with Ricon 1200, 2000, and 5500 series wheelchair lifts. The lifts may have a defect in the weld, which will allow a joint on the vertical lift to crack.

If this happens, it may not be possible to close the lift door, causing the vehicle interlocks to remain engaged and preventing movement of the bus.

International and Ricon will replace both vertical arms, even if only one arm is cracked. The recall began on May 12.

Note: Certain Thomas Built 2004-2007 models, and Girardin MV II and IV, MY 2005-2006, equipped with Ricon lifts have the same defect.

The Thomas recall will begin on May 30, and the Girardin recall will begin sometime this month.



Don't Forget to Visit NSTA's Online Marketplace

/ The School Transportation Outsourcing Toolkit *Everything You Need to Make a Smooth Transition to a Better Use of Resources*

Here's a practical guide for private school bus contractors to provide school districts when they make the decision to outsource their school transportation. Packed with helpful information, this Toolkit includes guidance on: community support, media relations, proposal development, and so much more!

\$50 (NSTA members)
\$100 (Non-NSTA members)

/ The Yellow Bus Industry: Safety, Caring and Innovations

This white paper is the most comprehensive publication written about the history of the school bus industry. Share with school board members, principals, PTA members and others who want to know more about school buses.

\$5 (NSTA members)
\$10 (Non-NSTA members)

Maintenance Workshops Continue

Just a reminder on the continuation of the Maintenance Workshops at Manufacturers' plants!



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

§ July 18 - 19
§ September 19 - 20

International Truck & Engine Corporation -- Tulsa, OK

~~§ June 26 - 29~~ **SOLD OUT!**
§ September 25 - 28

Thomas Built Buses-- High Point, NC

§ October 24 - 25

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

July 22-23, 2006
[International Safety Competition](#)
Heavenly Ski Basin
Lake Tahoe, Nevada

July 23-26, 2006
[42nd Annual Meeting and Convention](#)
Ha rāh's
Lake Tahoe, Nevada

January 28-31, 2007
Midwinter Meeting
Loews Ventana Canyon
Reso t
Tucson, A izona

July 14-18, 2007
43rd Annual Meeting
and Convention
Westin Wate fr ont Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

[www.
yellowbuses.
org](http://www.yellowbuses.org)

