



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"



A School Bus Driver in the Making

In early June a newspaper editor in West Virginia wrote about his son, Adam, who was graduating from Kindergarten and whose biggest concern was that he wouldn't be able to ride a school bus again until Fall.

It seems Adam has a passion for school buses; he knows school buses the way teenagers know cars, and can tell you the manufacturer and body type of every bus he sees. He became friends with his bus driver as they talked about the different school buses.

When he takes a field trip, his stories at home are more about the bus he was riding in than about the destination. He told his father that when he grows up he wants to be a school bus driver—after he is President.

His family drives out of their way to go past bus depots so Adam can inventory the buses there—and dream about what it would be like to ride in the new ones. He was especially intrigued by the new Thomas C2 parked at one of the bus lots. His father was planning to take him to a bus maintenance garage this summer so he could survey the sea of yellow buses, but instead Adam got a bigger thrill.

When we saw the story about Adam, we sent it to Ken Hedgecock at Thomas Built Buses and Ken forwarded it to Alan Haggai, Manager of Marketing.

Through NSTA, Alan invited Adam and his family to tour the Thomas factory in High Point and promised to give Adam a ride in a C2. Last Monday the family visited the factory—a trip that was the highlight of Adam's year, according to his father.

We need more kids like Adam who think school buses are cool—and who want to grow up to be both President AND a school bus driver!

Thanks, Adam, for being such a fan. Thanks, Adam's dad, for sharing his story. And thanks, Thomas Built Buses, for making a young boy's dream come true.

Upcoming Events

July 22-23, 2006

[International Safety
Competition](#)

July 23-26, 2006

[42nd Annual Meeting
and Convention](#)

January 28-31, 2007

Midwinter Meeting

July 14-18, 2007

[43rd Annual Meeting
and Convention](#)



Possible Energy Deal Reached in Senate

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN), Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Gulf Coast Senators including Florida Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Mel Martinez (R-FL) announced that a possible deal has been reached on an energy bill. The Florida Senators want the House to accept the plan essential verbatim, however, a condition which could prove the bill's undoing. House Republican Leaders have yet to agree to this.

The agreement, which has yet to be formally released, calls for production leases to be offered in 1.7 million acres in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, known as Lease Sale 181, where production is not banned but has not occurred because of opposition from Florida officials.

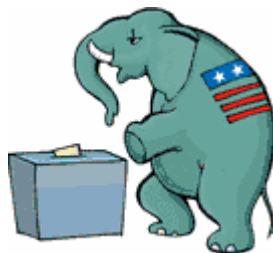
The deal would also lift Federal offshore production bans in 6.3 million acres south of that area. To appease Floridians, the plan would create a 125-mile non-drilling buffer in Florida waters and a 100-mile buffer from Florida's coast in a portion of Alabama waters through 2022. It also bars drilling east of the Military Mission Line, which extends south of the Florida Panhandle and about 235 miles east of Tampa Bay, through 2022.

The bill gives coastal producing states 37.5 percent of the revenue from drilling in areas opened up in the bill. By 2017, these states would also receive

37.5 percent of revenue gained from new production leases in all areas of the Gulf of Mexico. As much as \$450 million annually would go to state land and water conservation funding.

"This agreement will make America more energy independent...and help reduce the cost of living for all consumers in all 50 states," stated Majority Leader Frist. A spokesman for House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA), a leader in the House effort, said he doubted the House would accept the Senate measure.

Meanwhile, the cost of crude oil topped \$78/barrel on July 13th and is expected to pass the \$80/barrel level soon. The increases are being driven by concern that the conflict in the Middle East and the summer's hurricane season could further disrupt oil deliveries.



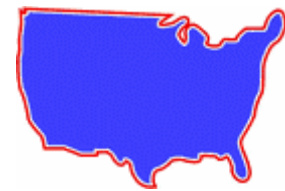
Some Republicans Request Vote on Minimum Wage

Twenty-five pro-labor House Republicans have written to House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) requesting a vote on increasing the minimum wage this month. "We write today to urge you to schedule a vote on legislation which would provide a substantial increase in the minimum wage before the House recesses for the August District Work Period."

Majority Leader Boehner has not given any indication that he will agree to a vote, although several

sources indicate he "is amenable to the idea".

The timing of the vote is currently tied up with the fate of the Fiscal Year 2007 Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services Appropriations bill, which would provide a \$2.10 an hour wage hike over two years. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) has been lobbying Party leaders to separate the provision from the appropriations bill, but to date has been unsuccessful.



Outside the Beltway

TX: The Transportation Commission has raised the daytime speed limit for passenger vehicles including school activity buses to 80 mph on Interstates 10 and 20 in west Texas! The speed limit for yellow school buses remains unchanged at 55 mph.

NJ: A bill was filed that would provide grants to school districts and tax credits to contractors for equipping school buses with video cameras. The bill also requires that half of the fines collected for violation of the school bus stop law be deposited in a school bus safety fund to pay for the grants.

NJ: The Assembly passed a bill requiring all new school buses to be equipped with sensors to detect movement in front of or behind the bus.

NJ: A bill was filed that would allow school districts to contract for advertising on the outside of buses they own or lease. Both the content of the advertising and the use of the revenues are limited by the bill.

Head Start Deadline Delayed Again



In a supplemental budget bill concerned primarily with appropriating additional money for the war in Iraq and hurricane relief, the Senate included yet another delay in the deadline for all Head Start students to be transported in school buses or multifunction school activity buses (MFSAB).

Even though that provision was not in the House version, it made it into the final bill, signed by the President last month. You may remember that the original deadline, January 1, 2006, was extended to June 30 in an earlier appropriations bill. Now the deadline is December 31, 2006.



EPA Provides Maintenance Tips for Clean Diesel School Buses

The Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Transportation and Air Quality (OTAQ) has provided NSTA and other grant recipients with a helpful list of recommendations for maintenance of buses equipped with emissions reduction technology and/or using Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel fuel (ULSD).

Some of the tips, such as the reminder that all fuel since January 2005 must meet an ASTM fuel lubricity standard and there is no need for end users to add lubricant, apply to all fleets; others are specific to clean diesel buses.

You can access a copy of the letter on the NSTA website in the Members Only section.



Senate Makes Tax Overhaul Efforts

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) announced this week that he will schedule hearings on overhauling the tax code this month, with additional hearings this fall.

The Chairman has noted that with the recent change in leadership at the Treasury Department, with new Secretary Henry Paulson sworn in July 10, this could be an opportunity to restart talks on broad tax code changes.

The Committee recently held a hearing on the nomination of Eric Solomon to be Treasury's Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy, in which Solomon called the tax code the "foremost challenge" to lawmakers. He noted that the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) should be reviewed and possibly eliminated. Doing so would cost approximately \$1.2 trillion over 10 years, and thus an appropriate offset would need to be identified. Solomon has served in an acting capacity since late 2004.

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



Seat Belt Suit Thrown Out of Court

Last week a circuit court in Arkansas dismissed a lawsuit against Thomas Built Buses and its local dealer brought by the families of students injured in a 2003 crash on the grounds that the bus was not equipped with seat belts.

A 14-year-old girl was killed and more than 20 children were injured, two seriously, when the bus driver, distracted by a disturbance on the bus, apparently lost control.

The 1996 bus left the roadway, slid down an embankment, hit several trees and split apart.

The school district and driver are protected from liability by governmental immunity.

Lawyers for the families of eleven children filed suit in January 2005, claiming that the bus was defective and unsafe because it didn't have seat belts. A jury trial was scheduled to begin this week.

In granting the defendants' motion for summary judgment, the judge noted that the state legislature had studied the issue of seat belts on school buses in 1984 and again in the 1990s and had decided against requiring them.

Thomas Built had provided a bus according to the school district's specifications, and the bus met all state requirements without belts.

The attorneys for the families said they will appeal the judgment.



Former Transportation Secretary Goes to Public Relations Firm

It was announced this week that Former Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta will be joining the public relations firm Hill & Knowlton as a Vice President effective July 24, 2006.

"We feel enormously privileged to have a leader with Secretary Mineta's reputation and track record join us," said the firm's Chairman and CEO, Paul Taaffe.

Mineta resigned his position as Secretary of Transportation effective July 7, 2006.



The following companies are supporting the 2006 International Safety Competition and the NSTA Annual Meeting & Convention.

Please take a moment to find out more about them by visiting their websites. They, too, need your support!

24/7 Security, Inc.
www.247securityinc.com

ATWEC Technologies, Inc.
www.atwec.com

Blue Bird Corporation
www.blue-bird.com

The Braun Corporation
www.braunlift.com

Collins Industries, Inc.
(Collin Bus and MidBus)
www.collinsind.com

Donaldson
www.donaldson.com

Durham School Services
www.durhamschoolservices.com

IC Corporation
www.ic-corp.com

Laidlaw Education Services
www.laidlaw.com

NGVAmerica
www.cleanvehicle.org

Orbitz Software
www.orbitzsoftware.net

RBC Dain Rauscher
www.rbcdain.com

Rosco Mirrors
www.roscomirrors.com

Thomas Built Buses
www.thomasbus.com

Transpec Worldwide
www.transpecworldwide.com

US Bus
www.usbuscorp.com

Zonar Systems
www.zonarsystems.com

www.yellowbuses.org

