



The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues:

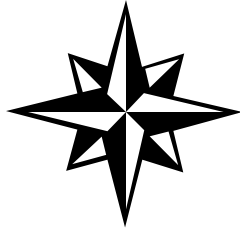
Another year is rapidly coming to an end and the holiday season is upon us. If your operation is like mine, it has already been filled with many challenges for you and for members of your transportation staff. Yet, the team always seems to rally in support of each team member. Your true professional attitude make all the difference in the successful transportation of the children in the school division.

On a personal note, it has been quite a year for me. I sometimes feel the pressures of the job and wonder how will I make it another day. Then, something happens to renew my spirits, warms my heart, and brings a smile to my face. In this case, it came as a simple holiday card. A card signed by several of the school bus drivers wishing me a peaceful holiday vacation. This small expression of concern and support means a lot to me and it rejuvenates my enthusiasm to move forward with a positive mental attitude.

The planning stages for the annual conference to be held in Virginia Beach are well under way. We are working on a program that will be of interest to all our members. Please place this conference on your professional calendar and make every effort to come out and support the VAPT, attend the professional development classes, and share your thoughts with your peers. You will not be disappointed.

Thank you for all you do for the children in Virginia. You do make a difference in their lives. Happy holidays to you and your family and friends.

David



REGION 3 UPDATES

The Region 3 Transportation Directors met on Thursday October 11, 2007 at the Westmoreland County Teacher Resource Center in Montross, Virginia. There were fifteen people present at this meeting. Items discussed included scheduling technicians' meetings, bus evacuation drills, charter bus selection, the VAPT poster contest, and the upcoming VAPT Conference in Virginia Beach. Michael Brown from the DOE provided important updates from Richmond. At the close of the meeting, Susan Tracey, the Director of Food Services for Westmoreland Schools, served lunch to all in attendance.

Region 3 Technicians met on Wednesday, November 28 at the Richmond County

Bus Garage in Warsaw. Scott Hutcherson from Sonny Merryman presented on the 2007 emission standards. His presentation included what to expect from indicator lamps during the regeneration process and when a parked regeneration would be required. After his presentation, Scott answered specific questions from technicians regarding buses in their fleet. Michael Brown from DOE also attended this meeting and gave the technicians an overview of updates and problems he has seen with buses in his travels across the Commonwealth. At the conclusion of the meeting everyone enjoyed pizza provided by Mike Wirt of Sonny Merryman.

Submitted by:

Barry R. Sudduth
Director of Transportation
Westmoreland County Public Schools



NAPT Conference Report

The 33rd Annual Conference and Trade Show for the National Association of Pupil Transportation was held from October 28 – November 1, 2007. Over six hundred pupil transportation specialists descended upon Grand Rapids, Michigan for six days of workshops, classes, and entertaining speakers. Eleven new professional development courses were introduced and new officers were elected for the coming term.

For attendees who arrived on Saturday, there were three professional development courses offered. If this was not enough, there was also a leadership roundtable at which an open forum style discussion was held to discuss a wide variety of topics in the transportation field.

The conference began officially on Sunday. Sunday morning, three more professional development courses were offered. Conference participants could choose from “Procurement and Budget Management,” “School Bus Manufacturing,” and “Transportation System Infrastructure.” Later in the morning the opening ceremonies were held. Students from a local school chorus entertained attendees and welcomed everyone to Grand Rapids. As always the National School Bus Safety Speech Contest was entertaining and informative. High School students from California, New York, North Carolina, and Texas competed for honors in this competition. This was followed by Mack Dryden, a stand up comedian, who led attendees through a seven step guide to achieving personal goals.

The first business session was held on Monday morning after breakfast. Spotsylvania County was recognized nationally for their exceptional training program. Kermit Schaffer accepted the award for Spotsylvania. Monday’s featured speakers included Bill Butterworth and Rick Winslow. Monday night, Thomas Built Buses sponsored a 1970’s Theme Night and Dinner Party. Everyone was given a tie die t-shirt and music from the 70’s was playing. A great time was had by all.

Tuesday morning started early with a live SWAT team demonstration by the Grand Rapids Police Department. Participants in this activity were able to watch the SWAT team handle a hostage situation on a school bus. For attendees who opted out of the demonstration, there were four professional development series courses being offered at the conference site. On Tuesday afternoon the NAPT Trade Show was held at the Devos Convention Center. There were 140 vendors at the show. Many new products were featured as were new services. The advancements in technology in pupil transportation are evident each year at the trade show. A reception and free admission to the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum was offered by Sound Off Signal on Tuesday evening.

Wednesday started out with the trade show. There were also three new professional development courses offered on Wednesday morning. A round table discussion on three point seat belts was held on Wednesday afternoon immediately following a presentation by Safeguard. The final business session featured Craig Zablocki who offered a humorous approach to “unlearning.” IC Corporation hosted a dinner on Wednesday night to close out the conference.

The NAPT Conference will be held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina from October 26 – 30 next year. Please make plans to attend and get in on the action.



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For Immediate Release

VIRGINIA SCHOOL WINS 2007 IC CORPORATION DRIVER TRAINING AND SAFETY AWARD

GRAND RAPIDS, MI (October 29, 2007) – School bus safety is the number one priority in the school bus industry and the nation’s leading school bus manufacturer, IC Corporation, is honored to recognize one school district for its dedication to this important issue.

Spotsylvania County Schools in Fredericksburg, Virginia has been awarded the 2007 IC Corporation Driver Training and Safety Award. Presented at this year’s National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) Conference in Grand Rapids, MI, the award recognizes school districts that go above and beyond in their pursuit for safe and efficient pupil transportation.

With 358 school buses in operation each day, running over 4 million miles a year, Ms Katherine Nicholson, the Driver Trainer for Spotsylvania County Schools, with the support of Kermit Shaffer, Transportation Director, must keep the more than 350 school bus drivers educated with effective safety training.

Driver training is conducted throughout the year through a series of classes that focus on all aspects of school bus driving. Vehicle, students, and driving environment are focused on through a series of classes. Spotsylvania County Schools further enhances driver training through use of topical experts. In 2007, experts from local law enforcement, power companies, and the homeland security’s Highway Watch program all participated in Spotsylvania County Schools driver training program.

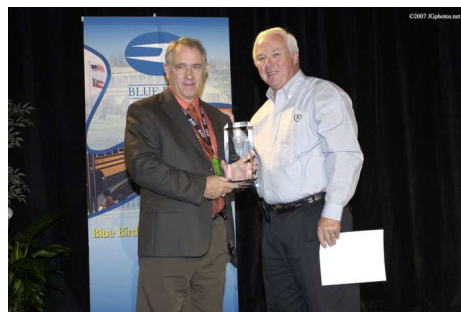
In addition, they have added training specifically geared toward the individual driver. Through improved documentation, and trend analysis, they offer additional focused training to the individual driver based upon his or her driving history.

The results have shown the programs effectiveness, with accidents down drastically from previous years.

“School bus drivers have one of the most important jobs in the world – getting our children safely to and from school every day,” said Michael Cancelliere, Vice President and General Manager of IC Corporation. “We applaud the efforts of Spotsylvania County Schools – and all school districts – that take a proactive approach to developing programs that can improve the performance of school bus drivers.”

About IC Corporation

IC Corporation, the nation’s largest integrated school bus manufacturer, is an affiliate of International Truck and Engine Corporation. International produces school bus chassis, mid-range diesel engines, medium trucks, heavy trucks, severe service vehicles, and is a provider of parts and service sold under the International brand. Both IC and International are affiliates of Navistar International Corporation (NYSE: NAV). Additional information is available site at: www.ic-corp.com.



News Announcement

(For Immediate Release)

November 21, 2008

Sonny Merrryman, Inc. to Relocate Northern Virginia Facility

In June 2007, Sonny Merryman, Inc. – Virginia’s Bus Company opened a new sales and service center in Woodbridge, Virginia. The facility provides a convenient service point and parts outlet for area school bus operations and offers excellent exposure for increased sales opportunities in growing commercial bus markets. The company’s expansion into Northern Virginia has been hugely successful. So much in fact, the company will relocate into a larger, more modern facility in 2008.

The “new” Sonny Merryman, Inc. Northern Virginia branch is conveniently located in Prince William County near the Manassas Airport at the intersection of Route 28 (Nokesville Road) and Route 234 (Prince William Parkway). The new facility consists of more than twenty thousand square feet of service bays, parts warehousing and offices. The site also boasts ample secured parking areas.

“This relocation represents a significant capital investment in our company’s future”, says Sonny Merryman, Inc. President and CEO, Floyd Merryman. “Providing our statewide customers with accessible service locations and responsive parts deliveries is key to continue the growth we’ve enjoyed in the past two decades.”

Sonny Merryman, Inc.’s headquarters is located just south of Lynchburg in Campbell County. The company also operates a Hampton Roads based facility in Chesapeake. Established in 1967 and with more than one hundred full time employees, Sonny Merryman, Inc. is the state’s largest and most experienced bus dealer. Product lines include school buses manufactured by Thomas Built Buses and shuttle buses from the STARTRANS Bus Division of the Supreme Corporation. Currently, nine employees are based at the Northern Virginia location. Plans are to increase the workforce as demand dictates.

The move into the new facility is scheduled for February 2008. A customer open house is planned for Spring 2008.

THANKS TO ALL FOR THE WONDERFUL NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Donna C. Carter

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!!