



The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia

VAPT NEWSLETTER
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
October 2007

As the incoming president of the Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation, I want to welcome you back to another school year. As I get older, it seems the time, especially the summer months, goes by so quickly.

Your association is looking forward to another challenging year as we prepare for the legislative processes in Richmond, coordinating the annual Special Needs Symposium in Charlottesville and the VAPT conference in Virginia Beach, working cooperatively with the State Department of Education Pupil Transportation Division on pupil transportation issues, and keeping you informed of all the activities in pupil transportation in the Commonwealth. It is my goal to provide the membership with information and opportunities to serve. It is only through the solidarity of the membership that our voice becomes strong when we need to be heard regarding the safety of children on school buses.

As I begin my tenure as President, I want to thank you for your support and membership in the VAPT. I also want to thank the members who are serving on the VAPT Board and on the many committees that are needed to provide you with professional activities and to make things happen in pupil transportation.

Again, welcome back. I hope each of your school openings was a great success and the remainder of your year is free of adversity and accidents.

Sincerely,

David L. Pace, President
Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation



2007 POSTER WINNERS

Division	Ranking	Name	Grade	Locality	School
I (K-2)	1 st	Cydney Talmage	2	Petersburg	Blandford Elem
	2 nd	Destiny Hurt	K	Petersburg	Lee Elem
	3 rd	Amaris Correll	2	Colonial Heights	Tussing Elem
II (3-5)	1 st	Jacinto A. Su	3	Fairfax County	Fairhill Elem
	2 nd	India Mata	3	Russell County	Lebanon Primary
	3 rd	Keairah Martin	4	Newport News	Hilton Elem
III (6-8)	1 st	Caleb Wallace	7	Dickenson Co.	Clintwood Elem
	2 nd	Kristen Kinneberg	7	Prince William	Lake Ridge Middle
	3 rd	Clarissa Garrido	7	Prince William	Lake Ridge Middle
IV	1 st	Austen Davis	5	Pittsylvania Co.	Southside Elem
	2 nd	Timothy Ruffin	11	Surry County	Surry Co. High
	3 rd	Nolie Robinson	10	Surry County	Surry Co. High
CAD	1 st	John Wilson	10	Goochland County	Goochland High

Update on Seat Belt Issue

On July 11, 2007, NHTSA convened a public forum related to school bus safety and the role, if any, that seat belts might play on school buses.

The NHTSA forum comes on the heels of a petition filed by the National Association for Pupil Transportation as well as communication from our association in line with the NAPT petition. The basic thrust of the NAPT petition is to urge NHTSA to complete its research on school bus safety as provided in FMVSS #222 and to issue guidance to the states in relation to seat belts on school buses that is based in that research. The NAPT petition (and similarly, a VAPT letter in support) strongly urges that no change should be made to the current FMVSS #222 unless and until it is shown that the change will contribute to and increase the safety of the children who ride our school buses.

The NHTSA forum offered an opportunity for sixteen organizations to present their point of view on the issue of school bus safety and seat belts and the NHTSA Administrator Nason was present for the entire forum. Presentations were offered by NAPT, NASDPTS, NSTA, the American Academy of Pediatrics, representatives of the state governments of California and Florida, school superintendents from Maryland and from Alabama, and others.

Most presenters complimented NHTSA's long history of safety improvements but challenged them to move the agency forward on this particular issue. Several also criticized NHTSA for not acting sooner and more decisively. This was the tone of our statement and the statement by NAPT: that NHTSA needed to step up and complete its research on seat belts and then make a reasoned determination as to what is safe for children. One point we made at the forum was that NHTSA could not leave an important issue like this to the interpretation of the 50 states and needed to come forward with national guidelines based in research and best practice—regardless of whether that included seat belts or eliminated seat belts from school buses.

Since that time, NAPT has taken the added and important step of urging the Administrator to notify the 50 states of her intention to issue a rulemaking. This was done in the hopes that it would avert multiple state actions relating to seat belts until the NHTSA rulemaking was issued. The concern is that the states are marching along enacting laws that might be contradicted by the NHTSA action and that this could be counter-productive and costly.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is likely to issue a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) relating to school bus seat compartment safety before the end of the year.

It has been suggested that the NHTSA decision will likely include the following key elements:

- * A clear statement as to the dangers of lap belts to children in school bus settings;
- * A definition of the specifications for the safe installation and proper use of seat belts on school buses, but with no mandate for such installation and use;
- * A requirement that those states which do decide to use seat belts must meet the standards established by NHTSA for installation and use.

Our association must be ready to address this with our legislators when the call comes again for seat belts on school buses in Virginia. It will be critical for them to know what is being done in Washington and that we should not enact any legislation until NHTSA completes their work

John W. Hazelette
Director of Transportation
Norfolk Public Schools
NAPT Region 2 Director

Region II Newsletter Information

A regional director's meeting was hosted by VA Beach Schools Transportation Department on Tuesday, August 7, 2007. The following topics were discussed:

- Bus Specifications
- Seat Belts
- Personnel Issues
- VA DOE Driver Physical Form Concerns
- Shortage of School Bus Drivers
- Fuel Costs – Budget Impact
- GPS Systems
- Regional/State School Bus Road-E-O Judging
- Region II Regional Information Spreadsheet – (Regional Salary/Benefits/Fleet Information Sharing)
- VAPT Report and Past and Future Conference Updates

Also at the meeting, WAVY TV 10 reporter Cheryl Tan interviewed several directors regarding the shortage of school bus drivers for the upcoming 2008 school year. In addition to the TV reporter, a reporter from the Virginian Pilot newspaper was there doing a report on transportation issues.

Region II would like to bid Steve Washington a Happy Retirement. Steve retired at the end of June with 20+ years of service to the Hampton City Schools.

We also wish to welcome David Benware onboard as the new director of transportation for Hampton City Schools. David has worked in various transportation positions in Missouri, Illinois, Florida, North Carolina as well as in Richmond, Virginia. Welcome to Region II Dave!

SUBMITTED BY: James Lash

The Campbell County Schools Annual School Bus Drivers Meeting was held on August 20, 2007 at Rustburg High School, Rustburg, VA.

The program included a presentation on Terrorism, and Recognizing Bullying Behavior. The presenters were:

Lt. Darren Bolling and Capt. Kevin Schmitt of the Campbell County Sheriff's Dept., Karen Tanner, Elementary School Assistant Principal, Doug Deacon, Middle School Administrative Assistant and Paul Nazigan, Assistant Principal, High school.

The transportation staff that was present included, bus drivers, bus attendants and mechanics. Our staff stated that this information will be valuable tools for them during the school year.

Submitted by: Barbara Scott

Commonwealth Bus Sales/ Blue Bird School Bus Updates

Emissions Updates –

All units being produced by Blue Bird are powered with the Caterpillar C7 2007 Emissions or the Cummins ISB07 diesel engines. Many school districts are receiving the new emissions engines and have many questions.

1. What is special about these engines? The answer is simple that the 2007 emissions engines use additional heat to meet the new emissions standards. All engines have changed to conform to the EPA Guidelines.
2. What about maintenance? The new engines are much more complicated and additional maintenance to include special lubricants, coolants and training.
3. How much heat is used in the process? The average temperature in the engines will rise about 15% but the after-treatment will rise to over 1300 degrees to burn the leftover ash/sulfur in the exhaust system. There is no longer a muffler on the units as the after-treatment on all diesel school bus engines use some type of PF (Particulate Filter).
4. The 2007 Technology will continue to improve as we look to much tighter 2010 EPA Emissions.

As many of the school districts may know, Caterpillar has announced a recall on all 2007 emissions C7 engines. Caterpillar informed all customers that the fuel pumps on all 2007 emissions engines had a design flaw and would be replaced immediately. CBS had not delivered any of these engines to school districts so there were no problems.

Blue Bird Corporation has moved their Type "A" Product Production Line to Fort Valley, GA. Blue Bird Canada had built the Blue Bird Microbird product for over fifteen years and due to the current exchange rates along with increased shipping costs of raw materials and delivery charges, it was a move to better serve the Type "A" customer base in the United States.

Blue Bird's Canadian operations were established in 1958 and have produced quality bus products for the past 49 years. More recently, the Canadian plant has been dedicated to Micro Bird manufacturing. Tony Kerwin, General Manager of Canadian Blue Bird Coach Ltd., emphasized that the company would implement an employee assistance program to help their Canadian workforce. "Our Canadian facility will finish its production in a manner that is consistent with the quality reputation it has earned. And in these difficult circumstances, Blue Bird is committed to dealing compassionately with our excellent employees."

Blue Bird Corporation has started production of the Blue Bird Vision Propane-Powered School Bus

Freightliner LLC Announces Company Name Change

Freightliner LLC has announced the upcoming change of its corporate name to Daimler Trucks North America LLC. Effective January 7, 2008, this corporate identity will reflect the company's role as steward of several highly regarded brands in a number of different industry sectors, and its role as the North American presence of the world's largest commercial vehicle producer.

In parallel, the shareholders of the former DaimlerChrysler AG approved a corporate name change to Daimler AG at a special meeting on October 4. Freightliner LLC has been a part of Daimler AG or one of its predecessor companies since 1981.

A new Daimler logo was unveiled yesterday in Stuttgart and in Daimler business units worldwide, underscoring the company transformation which commenced with the divestiture of the former Chrysler Group (now Chrysler LLC) on August 3. At the same time, the name of the former DaimlerChrysler Truck Group was changed to Daimler Trucks.

Freightliner LLC, soon to be Daimler Trucks North America, manufactures, distributes, and services products under the nameplates Detroit Diesel, Freightliner Trucks, Freightliner Custom Chassis, Mercedes-Benz engines and transmissions, Sterling Trucks, Thomas Built Buses, and Western Star Trucks, and is a leader in each of the markets in which it competes.

In historical terms, the brands represented by Freightliner LLC have played an integral part in North American and global trucking for many years (brand inception dates noted):

- Mercedes-Benz (1926)
- Thomas Built Buses (1936)
- Detroit Diesel (1938)
- Freightliner (1942)
- Western Star (1967)
- Sterling (1998)

Elsewhere in the world, the company is affiliated with Mercedes-Benz Trucks, and Mitsubishi Fuso Trucks and Buses, each, in turn, leaders in their competitive arenas and part of the global Daimler Trucks division.

"Our business has changed dramatically in the past decade, and our name should reflect that reality," stated Chris Patterson, president and chief executive officer. "The transition occurring in our parent company presented us with the opportunity to stop and examine our own organization and position in the industry. The time is right to implement a name change that reflects both our global DNA and our broad responsibilities within the NAFTA region."

Company officials stress that existing operations, structure and brand strategies will not be affected. They also affirm that the name change will not impact dealer operations or supplier relationships. "We are confident and comfortable that our employees, dealers, customers, and suppliers will see this as a non-issue in their day-to-day operations," stated Patterson. "Our strength has always resided in the products we produce under our various nameplates and the services we provide," he added. "That won't change at all."

Virginia Delegation
57th Annual Southeastern States Pupil Transportation
Conference July 15-18, 2007
Knoxville, TN.



Information received from Sonny Merryman, Inc. regarding Detroit Diesel's Approach For Meeting 2007 EPA Standards have been posted on the RESOURCES Page of the VAPT Web at www.VAPT.org .

Please forward all newsletter articles to donna.carter@frco.k12.va.us