Another school year is about to begin. Are your school bus drivers ready and properly trained for the important mission of transporting Illinois’ children (our precious cargo) to and from school safely? The Annual School Bus Driver Instructor Trainings have been completed and we are confident that each instructor in Illinois is ready to teach the initial and refresher courses for Illinois School Bus Drivers for safe and successful transportation operations.

Instructors Take Test at Annual Training and the Results:
One of the requirements for this year’s training was taking the test that is given to potential school bus drivers at initial courses. Genoa had an average score of 98%, Collinsville, 89% and Chatham, 87%. The reason Collinsville and Chatham did not fare as well is because some people missed answering an entire page of the test which skews the entire percentages. At all 3 locations, a question missed often was “Illinois law requires that all bus-riding students must experience a practical school bus evacuation drill at least once a year that is held on school property.” The answer is true. A law called, “The Less Red Tape” Bill SB 2829 became Public Act 94-0875 on June 16, 2006 and mandates school districts to only hold one evacuation drill per year. This was changed from school districts mandated to hold two per year previously. Overall the instructors did very well on the test.
Below - Linda Slemp and Barb Rizzo manage the registration table (Chatham High School, July 25, 2006).


**Bills passed into Laws**

**Federal**

- **Part 383 Commercial Driver’s License Standards; Requirements and Penalties**
  This federal law would impact school bus driver’s license if they were to be convicted of any of the listed offenses. If a school bus driver was convicted of any of these offenses, then their license would be cancelled and that information would be sent to the school bus driver’s employer. This law will allow a school bus driver’s license to be taken away if the driver commits any of the listed offenses (even in their own personal vehicle) and they will no longer be allowed to drive for their employment as well as their personal vehicle. Previously, a person may lose their personal license but was allowed to continue to drive for their company if they committed the offense in their personal vehicle. It appears that this law is for the purpose of preventing states from allowing a CDL permit holder from continuing to drive in that capacity with any of the listed convictions (zero tolerance). The specific citation from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration can be located at the below internet address.  
State

- **Public Act 94-0845** - Excessive Idling - Prohibits a vehicle using diesel fuel with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating of more than 8,000 pounds (including a school bus) from idling its engine for more than five minutes within any 60 minute period in the counties of Cook, DuPage, Lake, Kane, McHenry, Will, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe and townships in Grundy and Kendall. Provides for certain exemptions to these requirements. Effective July 1, 2006. It can be found at: [http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0845&GA=094](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0845&GA=094)

- **Public Act 094-0792** - Epinephrine auto-injector, - School districts will need a policy in place with the entire criterion stated in the new law and must allow the students to carry and administer the medication. You may educate the bus driver on the use of this medication; but as the law states, the parent or guardian must be made aware that the school district's personnel will not be held liable for any injury, etc. from the administering of this medication, etc. It can be found at: [http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0792&GA=094](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0792&GA=094)

- **Public Act 94-0346** - Beginning July 1, 2006, any diesel powered vehicle owned or operated by this State, any county or unit of local government, any school district, any community college or public college or university, or any mass transit agency must, when refueling at a bulk central fueling facility, use a biodiesel blend that contains 2% biodiesel, as those terms are defined in the Illinois Renewable Fuels Development Program Act, where available, unless the engine is designed or retrofitted to operate on a higher percentage of biodiesel or on ultra low sulfur fuel and can be found at: [http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0346&GA=094](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0346&GA=094)

- **Public Act 94-0439** - Amends the School Code. In a provision allowing a school board to provide free transportation when conditions are such that walking constitutes a serious safety hazard, provides that the school board shall annually review the conditions and determine (rather than certify to the State Superintendent of Education) whether or not the hazardous conditions remain unchanged. Effective July 1, 2005 and can be found at: [http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0439](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0439)

- **Public Act 94-0309** - Provides that if a pupil's change of residence is due to the military service obligation of a person who has legal custody of the pupil, then, upon the written request of the person having legal custody of the pupil, the residence of the pupil is deemed for purposes of enrollment, for the duration of the custodian's military service obligation, to be the same as the residence of the pupil immediately before the change of residence caused by the military service obligation. Provides that a school district is not responsible for providing transportation to or from school for a pupil whose residence is determined under these provisions. It can be found at: [http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0309&GA=094](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0309&GA=094)
• **Public Act 94-0493** - Effective immediately, this legislation amends the Department of Transportation Law of the Civil Administrative Code by providing that, upon enactment of a federal transportation bill with a dedicated fund available to states for safe routes for schools, the Department of Transportation shall, in cooperation with the State Board of Education and the Department of State Police, establish and administer a Safe Routes to School Construction Program for the construction of bicycle and pedestrian safety, and traffic-calming projects, with construction grants being made available to local governmental agencies. It can be found at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0493&GA=094

• **Public Act 94-0519** - This legislation amends the Illinois vehicle code by adopting federal motor carrier safety regulations regarding drug, alcohol and controlled substances testing, training requirements, financial responsibility and transportation of hazardous materials. Violators of motor carrier safety regulations are subject to civil penalty prescribed by federal regulations. In addition, the driver of any bus that meets specified requirements for a school bus must, in addition to following all other required procedures, **turn off all noise producing accessories before crossing a railroad track or tracks.** Any school bus manufactured on or after January 1, 2006 must be equipped with a noise suppression switch capable of turning off noise producing accessories. It can be found at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0519&GA=094

• **Public Act 94-0600** - requires school districts to conduct anywhere from 1 to 8 less drills than previously required. The legislation requires school officials to meet with first responders to review emergency response and drill plans annually. School Boards are to report to Regional Superintendents annually that they have conducted the annual review. The Regional Superintendents are required to provide a compliance report to the Illinois State Board of Education. The Illinois State Board of Education is required to file, maintain, and ensure access to records concerning compliance of school districts with the annual school safety review requirement. This directly affects school bus evacuation drills. Previously, 2 drills were required and presently because of the passing of this Public Act, school districts are only required to provide one school bus evacuation drill per school year. It can be found at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0600&GA=094

• **Administrative Rule 275.100(a-h)** can now be located at Title 23: Education and Cultural Resources, Subtitle A: Education, Chapter I: State Board of Education, Subchapter a: Public School Recognition, Part 1 Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision, Section 1.510 Transportation. Below is the internet address. (http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/023/023000010E05100R.html)
**Tidbits**

**Congratulations** are in order for two individuals from Illinois for their competing in the Lake Tahoe International Roadeo given by NSTA. In the category of Conventional Competition, **Jesse Alexander of St. Charles** placed First in Illinois and went on to the Nationals to place ninth (9th). In addition, I want to commend **Debbie Carlo** who placed 2nd in Illinois (same category).

If you are looking for an **initial or refresher course** for your school bus drivers and none are available in your area for whatever reason, there is an internet web site at [www.iarss.org](http://www.iarss.org) (Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools) and you will need to click on Bus Driver Training to look for a class nearest. YOUR Regional Office of Education (ROE) will need to be notified if you or any of your drivers will be taking a class in another area.

**Communication** - Encourage your school administrators and school district employees to ride a school bus route for a different perspective, try to get interaction with your school district’s employees, teachers, principals, superintendents, custodians, cooks, etc. this may help get any of your transportation or children’s behavior problems solved if other school employees are more aware of “What’s happening to the children before they arrive at school.” Children need all the positive reinforcement they can get from all school personnel.

**Independent School Bus Drivers** (those that are not employed currently, but want to keep their permits up to date) can contact “SAFE RIDE” at 217-782-7674 for information.

**School Bus Driver Requirements can be found at:**

**State directors are receiving School Bus Driver Training Video from Operation Lifesaver International (OLI)**
(OLI) a DVD containing the new school bus driver training video entitled "DRIVE SMART, ARRIVE SAFE." This is the final version of the video that was previewed in Warrensburg, Missouri and incorporates numerous changes suggested on the evaluation forms.

The 18 minute video - in DVD format - is the centerpiece of the training curriculum. In the next few months, OLI will be adding additional training materials to the DVD, including crash simulations, driving examples, the Trainer and Student Guides and accompanying review and quiz. A NASDPTS committee has worked closely with OLI in the development of the video and will continue to provide input to the final training product.

OLI was urged to make the video available before school starts so that school districts might have the opportunity to share it with school bus drivers before the opening of school in the fall. Feel free to duplicate the DVD if you are able to make use of it this month. (If you are not able to use the materials right away, then you might want to wait for the full release of training materials.)

In addition to the DVD, the video is being posted to the NASDPTS web site so that it can be played on computer using Windows Media Player. The file is about 70 MB but downloads quickly from a fast connection. This is probably the quickest method to get something to school districts. The direct link to the Windows Media video is: [www.NASDPTS.org/documents/movies/SB_large.wmv](http://www.NASDPTS.org/documents/movies/SB_large.wmv)
The Kankakee Motor Speedway took on the challenge of drawing a weekend crowd for this year's annual Kankakee County Fair. So, first-year promoter Sherri Heckenast has thrown in a new attraction to the standard Friday night racing program -- school bus racing.

Office of Head Start has a new website called, “Transportation PathFinder” and can be located at: http://pathfinder.cleverex.com/ and has 3 informative areas 1) Laws and Regulations; 2) Policies developed by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF); and 3) Supplemental Resources.

October 15-21, 2006 – NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

Important Reminders for School Bus Riders, Student Walkers, Parents, and Motorists for safe trips to school

- Walking
  - Children should walk to school in groups; neighborhoods can organize “walking school buses,” where parents take turns walking the groups.
  - Children should use “walking routes” designated for each school.
  - If they live close to school, children should be encouraged to walk to avoid traffic congestion at attendance centers.
  - If approached by a stranger, in or out of a vehicle, children should run the opposite direction.
  - If accosted, they should yell “this is not my parent (Mom or Dad)” and run to a safe place (occupied business or house) and notify police.
  - Suspicious persons should be reported to school authorities and police.
  - Children should be aware that no adult ever needs their help.

- Cycling
  - Cyclists must know and follow the same rules of the road as other vehicles.
  - Ride predictably and communicate by making eye contact and signaling.
  - Always wear a helmet.

- Busing
  - Be on time for the bus
  - Never run to or from the bus
  - Children should stay at least three giant steps away from the bus and street until boarding. Be alert and DO NOT push or shove anyone
  - Children should stay seated and remain orderly and not distract the driver (do not yell or shout)
  - Always obey the bus driver
  - Any misconduct should be reported to the bus driver
  - Care should be taken in getting on and off the bus
  - Wait for the driver’s signal before crossing the street
  - When parents or children make changes in their routines (different pick up person, child off at a different stop) schools must be notified so bus drivers can be made aware.
• Safety
- Teach children their address and telephone number.
- Children should not wear clothing bearing their name.
- Tell children who will pick them up create a designated “code” word, in case a parent is delayed.
- Tell children who to contact in an emergency (teacher, police, etc.).

• Motorists
- On a two-lane highway, drivers traveling in both directions are required to stop. On a four-lane highway, the law only requires drivers going in the same direction to stop. But, even if you are in the other lanes, slowing down is a good idea.
- Failure to stop for a school bus is a mandatory $150 fine and three-month license suspension, said Williams. If it happens a second time within five years, the suspension is one-year and the fine hits $500.
- Speeding in a school zone is another problem. That will net you a $200 fine with $50 going to the school for use on school safety items, such as crossing lights and signs.
- Drivers should re-acquaint themselves with the rules of the road regarding school buses, and drive with extra caution in school zones, and where children are waiting for buses and walking to school especially at the beginning of school where everyone is learning a new routine.
Source: American Red Cross

REMEMBER……………………

Pupil safety is our first priority..........make sure it is yours.

QUOTE

"I want you to know that I am counting on you to make a difference so you can count on me for help any time you think I can too."

Stated by the late Peter Grandolfo

Good Luck and Best Wishes to you for a safe and successful 2006-2007 school year
Cinda Meneghetti
State Director of Pupil Transportation
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217-782-5256

If you have any information or subject you would like to see in the newsletter, please email me and let me know. Thank you!