



safely speaking

ISSUE No. 2
2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

NYS Education Department Newsletter
for School Bus Driver Instructors

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NYS DOT School Bus and Passenger Carrier Safety Conference topics included:

- NYS Public Transportation Safety Board's 20th anniversary
- Transit and school bus security
- High percentage defect findings
- Operator and staff awards
- Inspection facilities and work zone safety
- Preventative maintenance programs
- National Congress of School Transportation update

Prevention is the key Annual DOT conference focuses on maintenance, safety

It's all about connecting the dots, said Denny Cottrell, director of the New York State Department of Transportation Passenger and Freight Safety Division, as he described the purpose of attending the 19th Annual DOT School Bus and Passenger Carrier Safety conference held in Albany on Oct. 5-7.

Speaking to the audience of about 250, Cottrell opened the conference by inviting attendees to take an active part in the event by submitting questions and concerns that would be answered by NYSDOT staff at the end of the conference.

"The conference is not just about DOT putting out a message," Cottrell said. "For me, it's the highlight of the year because people from all segments of the industry are able to get together to discuss current topics and issues and share information."

Making it real

Cottrell said while the conference is an opportunity for DOT staff to educate attendees by providing specific information, it also allows the audience to take that information and put it into a real world context where they would "connect the dots."

"So often people are focused on the details — what the rules and regulations are—but it's more important to know what are good and safe practices and to make the right decisions," said Cottrell.

The conference, which mainly focused on maintenance and operations, featured speakers from state, county and federal



▲ Denny Cottrell, director of the State Department of Transportation Passenger and Freight Safety Division, welcomes attendees to the 19th Annual DOT School Bus and Passenger Carrier Safety conference held in Albany on Oct. 5-7.

agencies, private industry and not-for-profit groups including New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Metropolitan Transportation Authority/New York City Transit (MTA/NYCT), National School Transportation Association (NSTA), National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), New York State Office of Homeland Security (NYSOHS), Pupil Transportation Safety Institute (PTSI), New York School Bus Contractors Association (NYSBCA), Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), private bus compa-

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NYAPT training workshops and conferences offer professional development

by Bob Peters Peters is the transportation supervisor in the Liverpool Central School District

Professional development should be the cornerstone of all that we do in pupil transportation. SBDIs should take full advantage of the professional development opportunities, workshops and conferences across the state.

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation's (NYAPT) goals and activities center on helping transportation professionals across the state do a better job in transporting our children safely and efficiently.

The NYAPT Annual Conference, which will be held July 9-12, remains the centerpiece for the organization's annual program. The educational and professional development opportunities include up to 32 workshops held between Sunday and Wednesday. The workshops focus on issues and topics of interest to transportation professionals, including school bus driver instructors.

The winter workshop – which has been called alternately “Back to Basics” and “Safety and Maintenance,” is also a good professional development opportunity. This year's workshop will provide information on some of the key school transportation laws, regulations and practices as a means to improve local operations at a very basic level. The dates for this year's workshop are Feb. 23-25.

NYAPT's link to the national association's professional development training program has proved to be of great interest and value to New York transportation professionals. NYAPT offers these courses in conjunction with the annual conference and the winter workshop in February.

These courses are professionally prepared and offered by individuals

certified by NAPT. They range from the basic “School Transportation 101” to “Budget Development” to “Special Needs Transportation” and “Fleet Management.” They provide in-depth and practical looks at key areas of school transportation operations and systems.

NYAPT launched a SUNY certificate program in school transportation management in conjunction with Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica. The courses are all available online. The certificate program is a step in the direction of establishing a degree program through SUNY. Enrollment information is available on the NYAPT Web site (www.nyapt.org).

NYAPT has launched an ambitious program of regional workshops with the generous support of several corporate sponsors, including Team Bluebird (Ramp and New York), Leonard Bus Sales and Zonar Systems.

A series of one-day workshops for mechanics called “Mechanics are Managers Too” are being offered this fall and three more dates will be offered in March. Bill Hoosty will present the courses that will focus on dealing with the variety of people that we all deal with on a daily basis.

NYAPT has an “Excellence in School Transportation” series underway that includes dispatcher training, training for trainers and day-long mini-seminars for managers. A dispatcher training program was held in November, and a round of manager-focused workshops will be held in the spring.

I encourage all SBDIs to take advantage of these opportunities to help themselves grow. The cost to attend any of the courses is minimal, yet the rewards are great. Information can be found at www.nyapt.org or by contacting NYAPT at (518) 463-4937 or Bob Peters at (315) 453-0287. 

DOT conference continued from page 1

nies, school transportation services and more. Cottrell said the idea was to bring in many different speakers to provide a variety of perspectives.

A focus on security

One reoccurring message that came up during the conference was the important role that drivers play in the maintenance of vehicles through their daily pre- and post-inspections.

How organizations can ensure security on buses was another topic that wove through several presentations.

“When I look at the security message being put forth since 2001, we have come a long way in understanding the

role that drivers play in security and safety,” Cottrell said. “For any organization to be truly secure, everyone has a role in the responsibility. That concept has been refined as we've moved forward. The procedures are similar—basic awareness and training—whether it's drivers, dispatchers or maintenance. Each has a role and responsibility.”

Overall, Cottrell said that if attendees came away with one message it should be to take what is learned at the conference and apply common sense.

“Rules and regs don't tell you how to do the job—they are a guideline to help you do the right thing,” he said. 

An explosive topic

School bus security in a post-September 11 era

“The school bus has replaced the red apple as a symbol of American education,” Michael Martin, executive director of the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) said after showing a DOT conference audience chilling footage of a school bus being blown up.

The staged explosion, which took place during last year’s NAPT conference in Cincinnati, demonstrated the destructive power of one backpack filled with explosives.

In an effort to enable school transportation service providers to assess security risks on a state-by-state and local basis, NAPT is offering security training for pupil transportation officials.

The course teaches why security is critical, how to gather vital security information, current best practices and an assessment by NAPT of your organization’s school bus security.

“Our goal is to encourage people to begin thinking more seriously about their operations, current security, vulnerabilities and possible solutions,” Martin said.

Each year in the United States, approximately 440,000 school buses travel more than 4.3 billion miles, serving more than 24 million school-aged children—each busload of children representing a possible target for terrorists, Martin said.

And while our national airports, seaports and mass transit receive extensive federal funding for security in our post-Sept. 11 era, pupil transpor-

tation receives none, Martin said.

The emotional impact

Not only are school buses vulnerable (there is currently no federal school bus security program in place), but symbolically they represent the very core of our society.

“There would be nothing more emotionally devastating than an attack against our children,” Martin said, pointing out the pain and horror of the Beslan school siege which began when armed terrorists took hundreds of school-children and adults hostage on Sept. 1, 2004, at School Number One in the Russian town of Beslan.

According to official data, 344 civilians were killed—186 of them children. Hundreds more were seriously hurt.

Creating an emergency kit

At the conference Martin asked a few questions.

“Is your fuel source secure?” he asked as many

heads shook a negative. A few audience members even chuckled.

“Do your drivers understand and look for potential hazards?” Martin continued as he showed a slide of wires protruding from a bus gas cap and of a rear door propped open on a bus.



▲ NAPT Executive Director Mike Martin challenges conference attendees to think about the security and safety of their buses, fuel supply and facilities.

“Do you have a security emergency kit?” he questioned. NAPT is recommending that every transportation office have just such a kit.

Calling it a “unique concept,” Martin said the kit is basically a secure briefcase or suitcase that includes the layout of the physical plant, a list of the rolling stock and schematics of the facilities. It can also include basic emergency equipment, such as a flashlight.

“The idea is that if you have to evacuate your building, you can grab the case and go. If emergency responders need to have that information, you have it available,” Martin said.

“There would be nothing more emotionally devastating than an attack against our children.”
— Michael Martin

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School Bus Watch program is up and running

Homeland Security looks to school bus drivers to help uncover terrorism

School bus drivers—the eyes and ears of America's Office of Homeland Security?

That is the idea behind a new program called School Bus Watch organized by the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) and the American Trucking Association's (ATA) Highway Watch program.

In July, these organizations announced the collaborative effort that is poised to begin delivering anti-terrorism and safety training to school bus drivers across the country.

Highway Watch identifies threats

Highway Watch participants—transportation workers, commercial and public truck and bus drivers, and other highway sector professionals—are specially trained to recognize potential safety and security threats in their industry and avoid becoming a target of terrorists, or to spot a terrorist threat to others.

After completing training, participants use cell phones and other telecommunications equipment to contact emergency and law enforcement personnel through a special Highway Watch hotline.

Adapted for school bus drivers

School Bus Watch expands on the Highway Watch training curriculum to include more school bus specific training and scenarios. Highway Watch is administered by the ATA under a cooperative agreement with

“Drivers are the fabric of the neighborhood. They are the first line of defense for recognizing a potential terrorists threat,” New York State Deputy Assistant Director of Homeland Security Eliud Pagan said, adding that drivers need to be vigilant and observant of any unusual or suspicious activity.



the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

“School Bus Watch has been developed by the school bus industry and is tailored specifically for our school bus professionals,” said Steve Kalmes, past-president of NAPT. “It incorporates the communication elements of the Highway Watch Program in a manner that is specific to our school bus operators. The program addresses all of the important information that a school bus driver would need to know to fulfill the program goals.”

Dale Krapf, president of NSTA added, “School bus drivers already play an important role in the safety and security of their communities. School Bus Watch represents an important part of continuing that role and gives them some additional tools that will help them to keep their communities, their vehicles, and our children safe.”

Training could prevent terrorism

The School Bus Watch program will provide school bus drivers with some basic background on potential threats to school buses.

It will give drivers a history on terrorism worldwide, outline how the typical terrorist attack is carried out, and will give drivers some tips on how to prevent terrorism in the school bus industry.

“As a result of their daily driving routines, school bus drivers are some of the best resources on the road in each local community to notice something that is out of the ordinary,” said Pete Japikse, president of NASDPTS. “School Bus Watch will give drivers an outlet to make their reports and ensure that those reports are taken seriously by the national intelligence community.”



Training is underway

The premier screening of School Bus Watch for school bus drivers debuted at the International School Bus Driver Safety Competition in Washington, D.C. on July 16.

“It is highly appropriate that the best school bus drivers in the country were the first drivers in the country to be certified in School Bus Watch,” Krapf said,

Initially, School Bus Watch focused on “train-the-trainer” sessions in selected regional or state locations including St. Cloud, Minnesota; the NSTA Annual Conference in Washington, DC and others sites.

Once existing school bus driver trainers are qualified under the School Bus Watch Program, they can conduct training for others. All training materials, driver handouts and other resources will be provided at no cost as the program is expanded to the nation’s 600,000 school bus driver professionals.

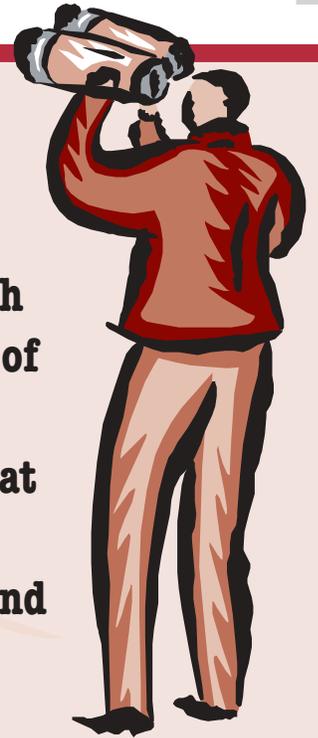
“We’re very happy to have the assistance of these three organizations in delivering this very important training to members of the school bus community,” said Bill Jacobs, vice president of Highway Watch. “One of the Highway Watch program’s primary goals is to see that all school bus drivers receive anti-terrorism training, and this new collaboration will enable us to reach significant numbers in the coming months.”

School Bus Watch is provided free to all school bus drivers nationwide.

Transportation officials that wish to sign up to receive School Bus Watch training should contact the School Bus Information Council at (888) 367-7242 or visit the Web site at www.schoolbusinfo.org. 

“School bus drivers already play an important role in the safety and security of their communities. School Bus Watch represents an important part of continuing that role and gives them some additional tools that will help them to keep their communities, their vehicles, and our children safe.”

— Dale Krapf



School bus security continued from page 3

NAPT further recommends that operations supervisors keep the case in a remote location—another facility or even keep a second case at home in the event they are cut off from getting to their offices.

Training is available

The information for the training program can be found online at www.napt.org at the School Bus Security Academy link. The program is labeled NAPT Professional Development Series Course 901.

Martin said that the course is available for all—whether or not they are NAPT members.

Anyone interested in the course must contact NAPT Regional Director Bob Peters at (315) 453-0287 to make a request to receive training.

Martin said the fee for the program is between \$300 to \$500 which covers the expenses of the speaker. There is also a course fee per participant.

Course participants who are NAPT members can take the class for free or \$15 depending on the number of classes they have taken that year. Non-members pay \$25 per course.

“Security is becoming more and more important as we move forward in time. I think we are currently the safest form of ground transportation in America,” Martin said. “Our focus on safety is transcendent. The next logical thing is to focus on security. It’s increasingly important.” 

FAQ about the flu

It's flu season. Taking precautions may keep you healthy.

A little snuffle. A cough, a hack and a double sneeze.

It's that time of year, and sure enough as the sneezes and coughs multiply, it's only a matter of time before the germs find their way from the kids to you. Everyone who works with children, including school administrators, teachers, staff, school bus drivers and parents, are concerned about the flu.

The people who work in the school system are instrumental in keeping their communities healthy by taking actions such as posting information about hand hygiene in restrooms, providing flu prevention messages in daily announcements, and being vigilant about cleaning and disinfecting materials children have touched and their surroundings.

There are steps that adults who are in constant contact with children can take to help lessen their chances of being out of work because of the cold or flu.

The following information, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provides answers to commonly asked questions:

What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza, commonly called "the flu," is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

How does the flu spread?

The main way that influenza

viruses are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. (This is called "droplet spread.") This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled (generally up to 3 feet) through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby.

Though much less frequent, the viruses also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

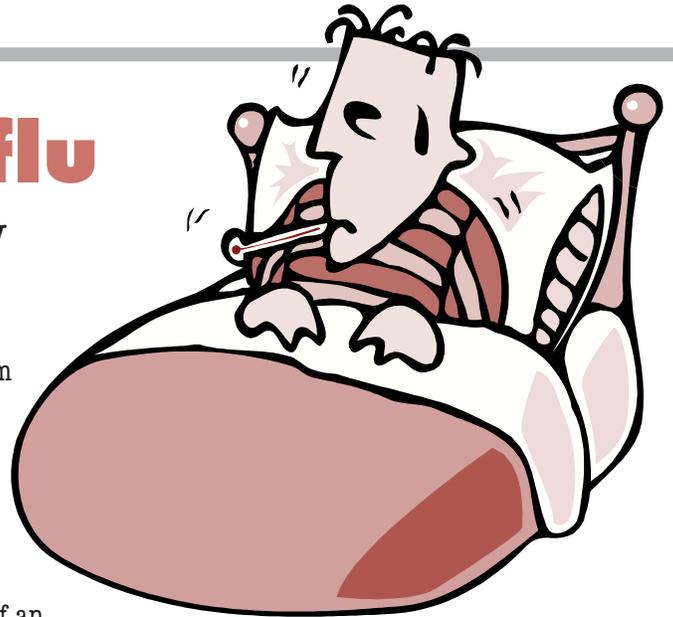
Influenza is a respiratory illness. Symptoms of flu include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches.

Children can have additional gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, but these symptoms are uncommon in adults.

Although the term "stomach flu" is sometimes used to describe vomiting, nausea, or diarrhea, these illnesses are caused by certain other viruses, bacteria, or possibly parasites, and are rarely related to influenza

How long is a person with the flu virus contagious?

The period when an infected person is contagious depends on the age and health of the person.



Studies show that most healthy adults may be able to infect others from one day prior to becoming sick and for five days after they first develop symptoms.

Some young children or people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for longer than a week.

What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

The flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses.

Because these two types of illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone.

Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone.

Special tests that usually must be done within the first few days of illness can be carried out, when needed to tell if a person has the flu.

What are the symptoms of the flu versus the symptoms of a cold?

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness,

and dry cough are more common and intense.

Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.

What are influenza antiviral medications?

Influenza antiviral medications are drugs that suppress the ability of influenza viruses to reproduce. When used correctly, they can reduce the duration of symptoms and some complications from influenza virus infection.

How are antiviral medications used for flu?

Antiviral medications are used along with vaccines to prevent and treat influenza.

They most often are used to control flu outbreaks in institutions, such as nursing homes or hospitals, where people at high risk for complications from flu are in close contact with each other.

What can I do to protect myself against the flu?

By far, the single best way to prevent the flu is for individuals, especially people at high risk for serious complications from the flu, to get a vaccination each fall. However, there are other good health habits that can help prevent the flu. These are:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.



Just the facts

- ▶ Approximately one-fifth of the U.S. population attends or works in schools. (U.S. Department of Education).
- ▶ Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to 2 hours or more on surfaces, such as cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.
- ▶ Nearly 22 million school days are lost annually due to the common cold alone. (Centers for Disease Control)
- ▶ Addressing the spread of germs in schools is essential to the health of our youth, our schools, and our nation.

(source: www.cdc.gov/flu)

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. 



FIXING THE PROBLEMS

DOT identifies high percentage defects

Bus drivers are a key component to any good preventive maintenance program, according to Mike Nuber, an intermodal transportation specialist with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).

“The bus drivers are quite important because they are out there with the vehicle,” Nuber said. “They are the ones who are in the buses and are familiar with the vehicle. They might hear a noise they hadn’t heard before, or feel something isn’t quite right. They can notice a small problem before it becomes a breakdown.”

NYSDOT mandates that vehicles be inspected every six months. In addition to the actual vehicle inspection, required maintenance records, preventive maintenance program and driver inspection reports are also checked by NYSDOT. The inspections are conducted based on the requirements contained in Sections 720 and 721 of the NYS Transportation Regulations. Contained in these regulations are the passenger vehicle Out of Service (OOS) Criteria. Discovered defects that meet the OOS criteria result in the following actions depending on the class of defect discovered:

- “A” rated defect - vehicle is placed out of service, no inspection certificate is issued until the defect(s) is repaired and a reinspection is conducted;

- “B” rated defect - vehicle is issued an inspection certificate but defect must be corrected prior to carrying passengers;

- “C” rated defect - vehicle is issued an inspection certificate but defect must be corrected within 15 days from the date of the original inspection.

For the past three years NYSDOT has been compiling statistics on the defects most discovered during NYSDOT inspections. Based on the 300,000 inspection reports covered in the survey, they looked at defects in the driver’s area, the passenger compartment, the exterior and the undercarriage. In addition, a road test was also conducted. Inspectors took a close look at Driver Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR) records and Preventive Maintenance (PM) records.

When they put together the report, the group found that out of 300,000 inspections, 68,819 (22.9 percent) of DVIRs were not present, were incomplete or not addressed. When looking at the PM records they found that 39,903 out of the 300,000 inspections (13.3 percent) either were not present, were incomplete or exceeded.

Following are the results of the high percentage defect findings study:

Drivers Area	
Type of defect	Number of defects and rating
Horn	B-885
Directional I/C	A-728
Wipers	A-536, B-2,999
Washers	B-2,678
Defroster	A-630
Speedo	A-562
Brake Warning L/B	A-3,290
Fire Extengisher	B-2,117
Drivers seat	A-415
Passenger Compartment	
Type of defect	Number of defects and rating
Fire blanket and sbc	B-819
Floor covering	B-1,694
Step well	A-48, B-801, C-1,534
Seats	A-B-C- 26,853
Emergency door	A-832, B 2,789
Emergency window/hatch	A-1,317
Wheelchair lift-operation	A-825
Road test	
Brake stop serv.	A-3,083
Brake Stop emg.	A-2,591



Exterior

Headlights	A-1,629
Marker/tail	B-6,684
Directional	A-1,483
SB warn/Stop arm	A-1,897
Stop lights	A-2,893
All tires	A-1,959
Ext. mirrors & brackets	A,B,C 1,176
School sign lights	A-188 B-2,677
Body panels	A,B,C 7,638



Undercarriage

Exhaust leaks	A-5,082
Exhaust hangers	A-1,535
Axle	A-2,290
Hydraulic brake-all	A-4,094
Air brake-all	A-7,727
Emergency brake	A-761
Tranny leaks-fire	A-862
Engine leaks	A-1,875
Drive shaft guard	A-7, B-637
Springs	A-951
Frame/Unibody	A-1,095
Outrigs/Sill/CL	A-882 B-1,271
Fuel tank leaks	A-439
Engine cleanliness	A-561
Air compressor-all	A-346
Battery & cables	A-1,119



DVIR-PM Records

PM records-OK	145,389 in-compliance
PM Records-exceed	N/C 24,716
PM Records-incomplete	N/C 5,725
PM records-NP	N/C 4,295
DVIR-not present	N/C 30,625
DVIR-incomplete	N/C 33,899
MC300 missing	N/C 5,167
DVIR repairs not completed	N/C-4,295

▲ Mike Nuber, DOT intermodal transportation specialist, inspects just a few of the many areas he scrutinizes on a New York school bus.

Out of Service (OOS) Defect Ratings Key

- "A" rated defect - vehicle is placed out of service, no inspection certificate is issued until the defect(s) is repaired and a re inspection is conducted;
- "B" rated defect - vehicle is issued an inspection certificate but defect must be corrected prior to carrying passengers;
- "C" rated defect - vehicle is issued an inspection certificate but defect must be corrected within 15 days from the date of the original inspection.

Holding out for a hero

Quick thinking bus driver earns kudos from eyewitness

The morning route had been uneventful: a bus full of kids chatting to each other, earphones plugged into their music devices, some catching up on a few extra minutes of shut-eye.

Bus driver Patricia Mahoney, driving for Levittown Union Free School District on Long Island, knew the route well, a busy two lane road in West Babylon she traveled every day.

The ordinary events of the morning were suddenly interrupted when a tractor-trailer coming off an exit ramp swept into her lane.

"I saw him coming, and I thought to myself, 'He is not going to stop,'" Mahoney said. Without a second to think, Mahoney gave a quick glance to the left (thankfully clear) and swung the bus into the left lane—avoiding what would have become a tragedy.

"If I had been in my car I wouldn't have been so calm," Mahoney said of her demeanor after the incident. "My job is to make sure my children are safe."

What Mahoney didn't realize was a witness in a car behind the event was so impressed by her "truly quick thinking and even quicker reaction," that he wrote to the bus company to comment on what he had seen.

"I honestly thought that the bus, which looked to be full,



Bus Driver Patricia Mahoney poses with (left) Jim Tedesco, M.I. and director of safety and training and Ron Baumann, president of Baumann and Sons Buses. Mahoney received recognition for her "truly quick thinking and even quicker reaction."

"I honestly thought that the bus, which looked to be full, was doomed," Ed Carroll wrote. "If that tractor trailer hit that bus, it would have turned it over, and he would have been on top of them. We are all grateful for drivers like her on the road."

was doomed," Ed Carroll wrote. "If that tractor trailer hit that bus, it would have turned it over, and he would have been on top of them. We are all grateful for drivers like her on the road."

Jim Tedesco, M.I. and director of safety and training for Baumann and Sons Buses, was impressed by Carroll's letter.

"It was a beautiful letter," Tedesco said. "Everyone complains, but few take the time to sit down and type a letter of thanks."

In December Mahoney is slated to receive a safety award, Tedesco said.

"It's very nice to be honored," Mahoney said. "However, I don't need a pat on the back. I'm just grateful and thrilled that the kids are OK." 



OPERATION SAFE STOP: Taking safety and enforcement to the streets

On Oct. 6, for the 12th year in a row, the people behind Operation Safe Stop (OSS) took their message of promoting school bus safety through education and enforcement to the streets.

Districts across the state worked with local law enforcement, elected officials and the media to spread the message that passing a bus with flashing red lights is not only illegal, but also dangerous and potentially costly.

More than 42 counties across the state participated in Operation Safe Stop Enforcement Day (up from 35 last year) resulting in 1,250 traffic tickets for drivers who passed stopped school buses.

This year's event included 71 law enforcement agencies and more than 654 police officers. The officer count

does not include NYPD officer tallies which were not available.

Started 12 years ago by a group of transportation supervisors in the Mohawk Valley, Operation Safe Stop is a cooperative effort between the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, the New York State Education Department, NYAPT, the New York School Bus Contractors Association, as well as state, county and local law enforcement agencies.

"Although we've been vigilant in our efforts to educate the public over the

"We've taught bus drivers, children and motorists about safe crossing and this program just completes the circle when it comes to the education. Everybody needs to be involved—nobody wants to live through the tragedy of a lost life."

— Paul Overbaugh

past 12 years, we also realize that there are now more cars on the highway than before and even more people to educate," said Paul Overbaugh of

the Greenville Central School District. Overbaugh has chaired the NYAPT Operation Safe Stop Committee for the past two years.

"The statistics in New York State prove that education pays off because we have reduced fatalities," Overbaugh said.

Overbaugh was encouraged by the amount of positive press that accompanied the campaign.

Thanks to a grant that the committee received, OSS will promote a new program this year called, appropriately, "STOP," which stands for "Safety Through Outreach and Partnership." The program aims to reach out and form alliances with law enforcement agencies, district attorneys and judges.

The purpose is to educate them on the importance of the laws regarding stopped school buses and to reiterate the price that is paid when just one child dies because of a driver who doesn't heed the law.

"We've taught bus drivers, children and motorists about safe crossing, and this program just completes the circle when it comes to education," Overbaugh said. "Everybody needs to be involved—nobody wants to live through the tragedy of a lost life." 



Kindergarten students from the Syracuse City School District sing "The Wheels on the Bus," and deliver a safety message while speakers watch in the background. The press conference announcing Operation Safe Stop 2005 took place on Oct. 5, in Syracuse. The event drew media from across the state.

NAPT 31st Annual Conference and Trade Show: A mix of old and new in Austin

NAPT's 31st Annual Conference & Trade Show, held in Austin, Texas started off with a big Texas hello and ended with a heartfelt send-off.

Held from Oct. 30 through Nov. 4, the conference was a mix of the old and new. New software and technology answers to old dilemmas, old friends saying hello, new laws, regulations and standards, and even dancing to old familiar Beatles tunes.

Highlights of the conference included:

- The 31st Annual Trade Show featuring everything from the newest engines and bus styles, to a photo-opportunity with look-alike actors portraying one of television's most

famous bus drivers, Ralph Kramden and his wife Alice, from the 1950s show "The Honeymooners."

- Workshops ranging from emissions reduction technology and funding, to fuel supply and price issues in school transportation.
- Awards and recognition honoring hard workers and high achievers.
- New York State's own Lenny Bernstein, of Haverstraw-Stony Point Central School District in Garnerville, taking over as president of the NAPT board of directors.
- Inspirational speakers such as, Bill Bond who was the principal at Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky in

1997 when a freshman student shot eight students; Randy Snow, who after being paralyzed in an on-the-job accident, went on to become a wheelchair athlete; and Jana Stanfield, a multi-platinum song-writer professional speaker and recording artist.

- Sessions that taught attendees everything from personal skills for management to budget development, and,
- Need-to-know information about alien wheelchairs, biodiesel vehicles, safe bus stops, case studies on lap/shoulder belts and more.

Safely Speaking's next issue will detail in words and photos all the news and newsmakers.

Safely Speaking is a bimonthly newsletter for School Bus Driver Instructors published by the New York State Education Department

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