



SETTING THE STANDARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

# STS EXPRESS

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## STS Board of Directors Decides on One Day State-Wide Conference; State's Travel Policy and Economic Climate are Contributing Factors

In April of 2008, STS sponsored its 44<sup>th</sup> successful Annual Conference and Vendor Show in Atlantic City. Now, for the second year in a row, STS will not be hosting a three day training event for its members. Instead, the STS Board, at its November meeting, decided to replace the three day conference with a one day conference to be held at a centrally located area of the State. The decision was not reached easily, but the State's restrictive travel policy, which disallows overnight travel within the State, and the uncertain economic climate were major factors considered by the Board.

Prior to the Board meeting, President Glenn Barry sent a letter to all members explaining the training options being considered by the Board. The options were either a two day conference similar to the traditional conference or a one day training conference. A training preference survey designed to gauge whether there was more interest in a one or two day conference was included with the letter.

In the Board's opinion, the response to Mr. Barry's letter and the surveys that were returned did not present a clear mandate. One of the major concerns with the two day conference was not knowing the number of members who would get the okay to attend, even considering the STS offer to pay for one night's lodging during a two day conference. After carefully considering the pros and cons of both options, the Board decided it would be more fiscally prudent to restrict the training conference to one day.

The program for the one day conference is currently in its planning stages. Many conference attendees in recent years have responded enthusiastically to the longer format of the Pre-Conference Workshop, so a similar format is being considered for part of the day, along with a number of

shorter breakouts. STS is also planning to include vendors who have expressed an interest in participating in the day's events.

There is strong sentiment among Board members and other STS members that the traditional multi day conference should be brought back as soon as conditions allow.

Gerry Oram, Chair of the Education Committee, emphasized that the length of the conference is not as important as the quality of the programs STS will be developing. The organization's chief goal will always be to provide programs that are responsive to the professional needs of its members.

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STS President, Glenn Barry

Finally it's that time of year again. We've gone through our school opening and submitted our DRTRS report and are getting ready for the holidays. As we approach our winter recess and prepare to welcome in a new year, let me take a few minutes to share with you some of the training we are currently working on for our members.

The driver seminars will be held in February and March of next year. As in the past we will have a northern and southern seminar. Once the dates and locations are finalized, we'll send that information out.

The conference committee is organizing a one day event for our members. We anticipate finalizing the details shortly after the beginning of the new year. We're planning to hold the event in April 2010 in a central location of the state which can accommodate our needs.

Gerry Oram, STS Education Chairman, is working on providing an 8 hour class on child passenger safety restraints in school buses. We will provide more details when they become available.

Also, in the summer we will look to host the Dick Fischer entry level and advanced level "Train the Trainer" courses. Each course is 40 hours long.

I encourage all members to provide feedback on the programs we offer. If you have any suggestions for programs you would like STS to sponsor, or comments on any other topic, please let me know. My email address is: [president@njsts.org](mailto:president@njsts.org)

As we get ready for the holidays, let me wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to working with everyone next year.

Glenn Barry, STS President

## NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

### Northern Region

The Northern Region fall meeting was held on Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at the Warren County Vo-Tech in Washington, New Jersey.

The meeting was attended by sixty-four people, including several Business Administrators and STS members from both the North and Central Regions. We were notified by the State about this DRTRS meeting too late to book a venue that was both centrally located for Northern area members and large enough to accommodate all attendees. We are sorry for the inconvenience this caused some of our members. For next year's fall DRTRS meeting we plan to ask the County Superintendent's Office to arrange for either the Fire and Police Academy or the County College of Morris. As we have previously discussed as a group, Morris County is centrally located for most of the Northern Region members.

Mr. Ray Zirelli and Mr. Greg Fera of the N. J. Office of Pupil Transportation reviewed the DRTRS Technical Manual and answered questions from the audience. One change in the report was related to the hazardous busing question. This question applies to districts that have a board policy for identifying hazardous routes and providing transportation to students along those routes.

Our next meeting will be held at the Morris County School of Technology in Denville on Friday, February 26, 2010. The topic will be Case Law. A buffet breakfast will be served at 9:30; the meeting will begin at 10:00. If anyone has suggestions for future meetings, please contact Pam Nicholais or Cathy Kelly.

*Submitted by Pamela Nicholais,  
Northern Director  
continued on page 8*

### **STS EXPRESS is the Newsletter of School Transportation Supervisors of New Jersey**

<b>President:</b>	<b>Glenn Barry</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Ray Keuhner</b>
<b>Editor:</b>	<b>Stephanie Tompeck</b>

**STS of NJ**  
**P.O. Box 66**  
**Raritan, NJ 08869**  
**email: [info@njsts.org](mailto:info@njsts.org)**  
**website: <http://njsts.org>**

*Susan Davis, a Supervising Engineer with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, was a guest speaker at the December 4<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting. She was kind enough to provide us with the following summary of her presentation.*

### School Bus Retrofit Program

As of November 1, 2009, the Diesel Retrofit Program within the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has approved over 5,700 closed crankcase ventilation systems (CCVSs) for installation on regulated school buses in NJ. The Department has received certifications that approximately 2,800 of those approved CCVS have been installed.

The deadline for all regulated school buses to have a CCVS installed is July 6, 2010. After this deadline, no school bus can transport children to and from school without an installed CCVS.

If you have not complied with the Diesel Retrofit Program rules, or have questions about the program, please contact the Diesel Retrofit Program at (609) 292-7953 for assistance. For school bus guidance documents and CCVS submittal spreadsheets, please visit our website at [www.stopthesoot.org](http://www.stopthesoot.org)

### "Green" School Buses

There are many ways to go green. The easiest is to comply with the NJ Idling Requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:27-14. School districts can also complete the "No Idling Pledge" that was handed out at the meeting. Through this pledge, the school district makes commitments to reduce harmful soot through several voluntary measures like turning off idle engines, maintaining buses, and training school-bus drivers on cleaner operating practices.

Other considerations include buying newer, cleaner buses that use cleaner fuels. For questions regarding voluntary clean-up of buses, you may contact Melinda Dower at (609) 292-7953.

### Biodiesel

At this time the NJDEP does not have an official position on biodiesel. Not all blends of biodiesel are associated with a reduction in emissions. There are some studies that have shown certain blends of biodiesel may increase NOx (a precursor to ozone) and green house gas emissions. In general, second generation biodiesel (as long as it meets ASTM standards) is better than first generation biodiesel (produced from soy oil) from the GHG emissions reduction viewpoint.

Biodiesel must be approved by the USEPA for on-road use and must meet ASTM standards. Used fry oil does not meet this criteria. Medford Township has been using biodiesel in their school buses for several years through a grant from the Board of Public Utilities (BPU.) For more information regarding this grant, you can contact the BPU at 1-800-624-0241.

Also, there may be restrictions for biodiesel use in 2007 or newer engines that are equipped with a diesel particulate filter (DPF). Certain blends of biodiesel may foul the DPFs and void the warranty. You may contact your dealer or engine manufacturer to determine which biodiesel blends may be used.

**FACT: Children are especially affected by soot. Their lungs are still developing and they breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults.**

Taking the written test at the Rodeo



**SPREAD THE WORD!!**

Next Year's Rodeo will be held on May 1, 2010 at Hurricane Harbor



Cathy Kelly, Northern Director

## Drivers Training Drivers

I am always looking for topics and ideas for my driver safety meetings. This year my drivers will be assisting in the training.

My drivers will be divided into teams of three. Each team will choose a captain. It is beneficial to assign the teams instead of letting the drivers choose the teams themselves for two reasons: you can ensure a mix of personalities, including at least one person on each team whom you would consider a good leader, and you can make sure nobody is left out by accident!

Each team will give a presentation on a safety topic chosen from a list of topics I will provide. The topics may include accident procedures, railroad crossings, Megan's Law, winter driving, bullying and harassment, drug and

and alcohol, blood borne pathogens, and being prepared for terrorist attacks. With my approval, teams can also choose another topic that interests them. The presentation will be no shorter than a half hour and no longer than one hour.

Drivers are encouraged to be creative and hands-on by using games, role playing, or demonstrations. Videos will not be allowed.

To get the drivers started, I will provide the teams with information on their topic. The drivers may also obtain information from the internet, from training materials available in the transportation office, or materials distributed in previous training sessions. The drivers will have the opportunity to work on their presentations during safety meetings. I will be available to offer suggestions or assistance.

Presentations will be given at safety meetings throughout the year.

At the end of each presentation, audience members will be asked to complete, anonymously, an evaluation form. The criteria for evaluating the presentation will include the usefulness of the information presented and whether the information was clearly stated, understandable, and accurate. After all the presentations are completed, the team will be asked to do a self evaluation of their own presentation.

I think this will be a great learning experience for all the drivers and should be quite interesting.

*Submitted by Cathy Kelly*

*The Editor invites members to submit their ideas for training for publication in a future edition of the STS EXPRESS.*

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## School Bus Drivers' Workshop

The spotlight will be on autism at this year's School Bus Drivers' Workshop. A speaker from the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation will be the presenter.

The Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation was founded by NFL quarterback Doug Flutie and his wife in honor of their son, Doug Flutie, Jr. who was diagnosed with a rare form of autism at the age of three. The goal of the Foundation is to provide families with a place to turn when they are in need of support and autism resources.

The Workshop will take place in the South at the Northern Burlington Regional Middle School on February 20<sup>th</sup>. The Workshop will be held at Parsippany Hills High School in the North. A date has not yet been determined but the Workshop will probably take place in early March.

For information, contact Sandra Hanson, Chairperson of the School Bus Drivers' Workshop. [shanson@nburlington.com](mailto:shanson@nburlington.com)

## The STS General Membership Meeting



Dot Shelmut

*More than one hundred school transportation professionals attended the STS General Membership Meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup> at the Old York Country Club in Columbus, Ohio. Following are highlights from the meeting.*

### GUEST SPEAKERS

- ❖ **Sharon Davis**, Supervising Environmental Engineer, N. J. Department of Environmental Protection, gave an update on the Diesel Retrofit Program, green buses, and diesel fuel. See the article on Page 3.
- ❖ **Dot Helmut**, NJ State Acting Director, Student Transportation and Shared Services, reported that DRTRS data collection went smoothly. The inclusion of student identification numbers helped avoid reporting students more than once, saving time and making the reports more accurate.
- ❖ The New Jersey Administrative Code, which is readopted every five years, is currently in the comment phase. The proposed code is posted on the DOE website. There are no major changes like those introduced in the last review cycle, but everyone is invited to review the Code and submit comments. Adoption is scheduled for February, 2010.

Ms. Helmut also noted that the state legislature, which is currently in a “lame duck” session, is trying to push through a lot of bills with school transportation attached to them. She suggested that everyone should look at pending bills (listed on the STS website) and send comments to our legislators for consideration.

There have been some inquiries from state legislators about how school transportation costs are affected by homelessness. The DOE is trying to determine an approximate average cost to transport homeless students back to their home districts. Ms. Helmut asked attendees to send her any data they have on busing homeless students in their districts. She stressed that the information doesn't have to be exact. At this time it won't be used in any evaluative manner. *(See page 8 for more on the homelessness issue.)*

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ Membership - Nancy Rosikiewicz

There are currently 237 STS members.

Regional Directors will be getting a list of members in their area who have not paid this year's membership fees. The Directors are asked to send one more reminder to the members from their area before their names are removed from the membership list.

- ❖ Education - Gerry Oram

There are a number of training opportunities planned :

The Annual Conference in Atlantic City is being replaced this year with a one day state-wide conference. Several locations are currently under consideration for a possible April date. The format may include a keynote speaker, breakouts, and involvement from Vendors.

The Supervisor's Professional Day, which hasn't been held in several years, is being considered for a comeback this year.

Gerry is trying to gauge the interest level in both the forty hour entry level Driver Training Course to be held this summer as well as the advanced level course. Please contact Gerry with the numbers of drivers you are considering sending to each of the courses.

The eight hour NHTSA Child Passenger Restraint program is designed to train one member of your staff who in turn trains the rest of your staff. Based on availability of instructors, this course may be offered sometime in the spring or early summer.



Kathie MacDonald and Ruth Pille

The First Observer course covers topics such as terrorism, bombs, and recognizing suspicious behavior. The government has contracted with a new training group and revamped the program to rid it of problems it was previously experiencing. Sixteen participants are needed to bring this program in-house.

❖ Bylaws – Wendy LaFontaine

The process of reviewing and updating the STS Bylaws is continuing. Please send any comments you have to Wendy for her consideration.

❖ Legislation - Paul Henry

There has been no significant movement on any bills before the state legislators.

❖ Safety Poster Contest – Ed Treadaway

This is the third year STS is running the Safety Poster Contest since taking it back from the State. Flyers announcing the contest have been sent to schools. Extra entry blanks are available on the STS website. This year's theme is "Be Aware – Know the Danger Zone." The deadline for submittal is March 1, 2010. Ed asked the following sponsors of the contest to stand to be recognized for their contributions which make the contest possible:

Wolflington Body Co.  
American Bus and Coach  
H.A. De Hart & Sons and Son of Thomas School Buses

Thomas School Buses  
Appollo Video Technology  
Jersey Shore Bus Sales

❖ School Bus Roadeo – Al Olkowitz and Gretchen Biancone-Groff

Al reported that planning for the 2010 School Bus Roadeo on May 1 is going well. He described how impressive the drivers who compete in this competition are and what they get for their \$60.00 registration fee, (buffet, park rides) in addition to participation in the driving competition. He invited everyone to come down to watch the friendly competition (watching is free!) He also encouraged more districts to send their drivers.

Gretchen said they are looking into including Special Education vans and bus aides in the competition.

Glenn Barry, STS President, also encouraged more districts to send their drivers to the Roadeo. He said, "Step up to the plate and get involved." He rewards his drivers who participate in the Roadeo with a day off.

Gerry Oram commented on a Bakersfield, California video in which a driver credited her part in avoiding an accident to the training she got by participating in a California Roadeo.

❖ **Rutger's Transportation Supervisor's Certification Program - Cathy Kelly**

A committee of STS members has been working with Rutgers University for the past eighteen months to develop a new Supervisor's Certification Program. A new section, Emergency Management, has been added to the subject areas covered by the original DOE Tier I program. The program will be open to everyone, not only people working as school transportation professionals. Rutgers is hoping to offer the courses in three different locations, including a section on Saturdays. Members who completed the original Tier I program, who want to be certified, will be able to take a one day review course. The review course will also cover new material being introduced for the first time in this program.

Cathy reported that this has been a very long, time consuming process. Course content developed by STS is given to Rutgers to be put into a proper curriculum format. The process has been complicated by the retirement of the Rutgers liaison and the demands of the full time transportation jobs held by the STS committee members.



**NEWS FROM THE REGIONS** *continued from page 2*

**Central Region**

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Central Region held its first meeting of the new school year. The meeting was hosted by the East Windsor Regional Schools. Mr. Greg Fera and Mr. Ray Zirilli from the Office of Student Transportation presented the revised DRTRS program. There were some very interesting questions and informative answers as we worked our way through the program. There were more than eighty people in attendance. Refreshments were sponsored by H.A. DeHart and Sons.

The Central Region Directors are interested in getting some feedback from their members on what kind of programs they would like to have at their area meetings. Al Olkowitz sent a memo to every central region member asking them to let him know their thoughts and comments. If you know of someone who can present a program that would interest the members, please include that information along with your comments.

*Submitted by Al Olkowitz,  
Central Region Chair*

**Southern Region**

The Southern Region held a meeting on October 2 at the Camden County Educational Services Commission in Clementon, New Jersey. Mr. Greg Fera and Mr. Ray Zirilli of the N. J. Office of Pupil Transportation presented on DRTRS information collection. There were approximately 85 attendees.

Southern Region members should look for an email regarding their next regional meeting sometime in February.

*Submitted by Pat Lerch,  
Southern Director*

*"Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest wrinkles the soul."*  
**Douglas MacArthur**

## Internet Articles Worth Checking Out

### Homeless Kids Have Special Needs, Too

An increasing number of homeless students are adding to already strained budgets. Several schools nation-wide have used federal American Recovery and Reinvestment funds to hire dedicated homeless transportation coordinators. Despite an increase in the number of homeless students, there is no increase in funding for next year. Members of NASDPTS support efforts to seek dedicated federal funding to offset costs of transporting homeless students. Read the entire article at. <http://stnonline.com/blogs/special-needs-rides/1617-homeless-kids-have-special-needs-too>

### Linda Bluth is the New President of NAPT

Linda Bluth, a popular presenter at STS Conferences and School Bus Drivers' Workshops, is NAPT's new President. Read School Bus Fleet's interview with Ms. Bluth. <http://www.schoolbusfleet.com/Channel/Management-Training/Articles/2009/11/Taking-the-Reins-of-NAPT.aspx>

### Top Ten Rules for Safe Winter Driving

This article was reprinted by School Transportation News with the permission of the Thinking Driver Corporation from its winter newsletter. <http://stnonline.com/blogs/daily-routes/1524-top-10-rules-for-safe-winter-driving>

## SAVE THE DATE

School Bus Drivers' Seminar	South	2/20/10
Northern Region Meeting		2/26/10
School Bus Drivers' Seminar	North	TBA
Roadeo Safety Competition		5/1/10



