

# THE TRAINING WHEELS



*West County  
Transportation*

May 1999

West County Transportation Agency  
745 N. Main Street  
Sebastopol, Ca 95472

## High Lights...

Dragging Incident

Driver Safety Observations

## Inside this Issue

1999 - 2000 School Year

Summer Proficiency Training

Summer School Bidding

Renewal Class

School Bus Internet Sites

C.A.S.T.O Workshop

End of the Year Picnic and  
Awards

Roadeo

Crossword Puzzle

Word Search

**DRAGGING INCIDENT** The nine-year old girl stepped down from the bus but caught her arm in the door as it closed. She was dragged at approximately 35 mph but only sustained minor injuries. This particular incident occurred in Lakeport but could have easily have happened here in Sonoma County. With all the loadings and unloadings we do we have to be ever diligent to insure the safety of all students exiting or entering our school buses. What usually occurs over period time is we become complacent with the routine procedure. Always keep in mind the loading and unloading of passengers is the most dangerous procedure you do during the course of the day. Listed below are some guidelines that may help prevent such a tragedy happening to you:

- ◆ Never close the door until all students are at least 6 feet away (Never be in a hurry to turn off the red-lights or close the door just because you have motorists waiting - the Child's Safety comes first)
- ◆ When closing the door re-check the entrance for any students
- ◆ Account for all pupils before moving the bus
- ◆ Do not move the bus until all pupils are out of the danger zone
- ◆ Check and re-check the right side mirrors looking specifically for any pupils along side, underneath or returning to the bus prior to moving your bus.



**DRIVER'S SAFETY OBSERVATION** For your information all ride alongs are considered a proficiency check. You will receive a new proficiency date in your records after the ride along evaluation.

- Unfortunately we do make mistakes (once in a while!) when entering the proficiency in the computers, if you find a mistake on your driver's proficiency report please bring it to our attention as soon as possible.
- Don't be terrified if you receive two ride along evaluations this year, currently Dennis is doing one ride along with all the drivers and then the instructors are also doing a ride along.
- On the ride along evaluations you are not required to tell us everything that you are doing during the pre trip but we will ask you specific questions about the air brake check out.
- If the check out takes you longer than usual, please don't tell me it's because I'm there. If you do the same pre-trip every day, an instructor observing should not make it any longer. What this usually indicates is that you are doing more of a complete pre trip than you would otherwise do. You should always do a thorough and complete pre-trip on all the buses you drive.
- **FOR YOUR INFO; Recently Officer Bergmann had a concern over a driver and decided to observe this particular driver from a distance. Unfortunately the driver did the same pre trip that he/she does every morning. Officer Bergmann cited the driver for failing to do a legal pre trip. You never know who may be watching you in the early morning hours.**





# Summer Proficiency Training

The instructors will be extremely busy this summer but we will be offering proficiency training for those who are interested. Sign up sheets are located in the driver's room and on the bulletin board at the cannery yard.

***THIS IS A GREAT WAY TO CATCH UP ON INSERVICE HOURS!!!***

## SUMMER SCHOOL

### Bidding for routes:

Is on the last day of school, June 11 at 10:00am. Even if you think you don't have a chance to get a summer route, you can still call in each week for extra work that may be available during the summer.



**1999 - 2000**

### School Year

### Mark Your Calendars

- **August 16** Routes open for Inspection
- **August 23** Bid Day
- **August 24** All day In-Service
- **August 25** New Employee Inservice
- **August 30** School Starts

### Internet Sites

The following sites have a lot of educational and worldwide news on school busing.

If you haven't checked out West County Transportation's home page recently please do. There have been lots of updates and revisions

<http://www.angelfire.com/biz2/wcta>

School Transportation News

[www.stnonline.com/](http://www.stnonline.com/)

National Transportation Safety Board

[www.nts.gov./](http://www.nts.gov/)

School Bus Fleet

[www.schoolbusfleet.com/](http://www.schoolbusfleet.com/)

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[www.nhtsa.dot.gov./](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/)

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

[www.aaafacts.org/](http://www.aaafacts.org/)

### Bus Parking Changes

Route 203 will be parked at the Guerneville Yard for the next school year. The driver who bids on this route will be required to report to the Guerneville yard.

### New Laws?

Reminder - Of the new law concerning doors open while bus is in motion pertains to whether or not pupils are on board. In other words driving the bus over to the cannery or back to the yard from your route with doors open is against the law.

### End of the Year Picnic and Awards

*will be on Saturday, June 12 at Ives Park in Sebastopol. Starting at 11:00, lunch around noon and the awards at 1:00.*

*Hope to see you there!*

### Renewal Class:

You may take the classroom training up to 12 months prior to your certificate expiration date. However, the CHP written test can only be taken six months prior to expiration.

Next renewal class is scheduled for July 19, 20, 21, (8:30am – 1:00pm). Mike Rea will be the instructor.

If you plan on renewing during the summer, please schedule behind the wheel with your instructor in advance.

Next years renewal classes will be scheduled for November 1999 and March 2000.

**MEDICAL CARDS:** If your card expires during the summer, please notify your instructor when you are available for an appointment. If you intend to go to your own doctor, we will need copies of your DL51 and your medical card for our records.

### C.A.S.T.O Workshop

(California Association of School Transportation Officials) Your local Chapter 13 will be holding a fall workshop where you may receive in-service hours. Tentatively, this workshop is scheduled for August 25, 1999.

This is a great way to get a jump on your 10 hours required each year.



## Some thoughts on Road-EO...

I recently competed in the Northern California Sectional School Bus Road-EO, held in Sacramento.

While I was sitting under a shade tree,

(Trying to calculate my score!!), I took a good look around. I noticed that there was an overwhelming atmosphere of encouragement and support for all who were there participating in the road-EO.

I saw people walking around handing out these cute little candy flags that said "Good Luck to All Rodeo Contestants From Stockton Unified",

(yes I got one!!). I noticed quite a large crowd gathered at the starting line, and they were cheering every contestant who entered the course. (They had pom poms & picket signs wishing good luck.). I noticed that every one seemed to be smiling...

I was suddenly being surrounded by large groups of people who were gathering to await the awards presentation. (There were over 200 people there!) But wait there was one more event. This one was for the mechanics and shop truck event. I joined in as everyone cheered the contestants on as they changed the front tire on a bus (a simulated breakdown), it took a whopping 5 minutes, very impressive!

Finally the time had come. The scores were tallied and the trophies were in place it was time to award the winners. There were a total of 27 awards. 21 based on the highest scores for their category, 1 highest Novice score

(A novice is a new driver who is competing for their first time within the first 2 years of their drivers certificate.), 3 for highest team total, (Teams

are 3 drivers from the same employer-unfortunately I did not have a team, Maybe next year ☺). 1-for best represented shop truck (there's a lot more to this one than just a good-looking truck!).

The last award, "The Best Represented Award"- This award recognizes the whole organization for it's hard work, dedication, positive attitude, and professionalism. It's also designed to recognize the many efforts of all of those involved including the administration, dispatchers, mechanics, drivers and their families.

As the awards were handed out, there was so much enthusiasm coming from the crowd, I thought to myself how truly proud I was to be a member of this profession. I would like to encourage all of you to participate at some level at least once. Not only would it give you a great sense of pride, it would also sharpen your driving skills and depth perception, especially during backing maneuvers!

A final thought... Before I left for this road-EO, I had said that this would be my last one (I lied!), I will be there again, next year. And next year wouldn't it be great to see "West County Transportation" competing in the "Best Represented" category? With your support we will be a team and it will happen.

I would like to thank my support team:

Leann, Kevin, Roger, & Sue S., without whom I wouldn't have had such a good looking bus, and of course Mike Rea, who is there every year, (rain, wind, cold, & sunburn.) Hat's off to all of you!  
Jonna

### **MOVING, CHANGING ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBERS;**

If you would like to receive the July issue of the Training Wheels newsletter please make sure to update your employee files with Tami on any new phones numbers or change of address that may occur during your summer break.

Have a great summer vacation and hope to see all of you back next year.

## Of All The Jobs There Are.....

**By: Nancy McCaffrey**

You drive a bus you say?  
Yes, I do it for the children every day.

Why, with all the jobs there are?  
Well, quite frankly, for me it's the best by far!

How can I explain it to you?  
I guess the truth will have to do!  
It won't be easy, but I'll try  
To explain the reasons why.



You see these children are incredible to me, even though you  
find that hard to see.  
Each one is an addition to my day, in a unique and special  
way.

Personalities as different as they can be but they need  
attention, just like you and me.

Some come with smiles, some with frowns, some with anger  
and some act just like clowns!

Being a bus driver is almost like being Mom and Dad.  
Sometimes I'm happy, sometimes sad, sure I can even get  
mad.

We've reached their stop, a smile and wave and they're on  
their way.  
Anxious to share at home what happened in their world today.

I love being a small part of their life day in and day out, my  
job is about them no doubt!

It's a pleasure for me to see them all the big, the small, the  
short and tall.

Their ages span the years, kindergarten to eighth grade to be  
clear. Every child my child, each one very dear.  
My life is more complete having them near.

Have you ever had a child tell you they love you or give you a  
hug, just because you made them feel safe and snug?  
Well, then, now you understand why I drive that bus,  
it's for the children, for me,  
it's all about "us".



*THE TRAINING WHEELS is published by West  
County Transportation Agency, Instructional  
Department  
Phone 707-823-7036 Fax 707-823-2061  
Editorial Staff: Debbie Morgan, Jonna Riley &  
Dennis Petri*