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## Highlights

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- ❖ In-Service Workshop
- ❖ Special Needs Inservice
- ❖ Rodeo Fun Day – Skills Building Workshop

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# The Training Wheels

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July 2003 Issue

## **BID DAY**

**August 18, 2003**

**8:00am – 4:30pm**

**Location: Main Yard**

Bidding for all drivers starts at 8:00 am and continues until 12:00 noon. Each driver has a maximum of 5 minutes in dispatch to decide on a route.

Beginning of the year Orientation meeting will be from 1:00pm – 4:30pm – we are often done by 3:30.

NEW DRIVERS IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BID PROCESS PLEASE CALL OR REVIEW YOUR CONTRACT.

ALL DRIVERS! PLEASE BE PREPARED WITH YOUR CERTIFICATE, MEDICAL CARD, DRIVER LICENSE AND FIRST AID CARD IF APPLICABLE! I WILL BE MAKING NEW COPIES FOR YOUR FILES DURING THE BIDDING PROCESS!

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## **In-Service Workshop**

**August 19, 2003**

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Is scheduled from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm tentative location is the Analy



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

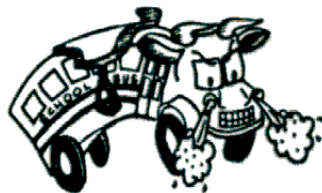
High School Cafeteria or auditorium.

Topics will be a surprise!!!

Lunch will be provided for you from 12:00 – 1:00. Bring a hearty appetite for one of our fantastic barbecues.

DON'T MISS THIS IN-SERVICE WE WILL BE HAVING GREAT DOOR PRIZES THIS YEAR!

## **RODEO FUN DAY**



SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOP  
August 21, 8:00 am – 2:00 pm

Location:

**Sonoma County Airport**

This is a great hands on workshop which will help you develop your driving skills and depth perception. We will have numerous events set up to help you improve on your skills. The events will include serpentine, parallel park, backup stall, diminishing clearance, offset alley and numerous other obstacles for you to maneuver your bus through. You must sign up for a specific time. The sign up sheet will be posted on bid day for this skills building workshop.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

### **IN-SERVICE**

**August 20, 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM**

This in-service is for drivers who are driving special needs routes this next year and for all standby drivers as well. If your intent is to bid on a special needs route or standby position, plan ahead to attend this in-service. We will be covering protocol, confidentiality, notice to parents, route sheets, etc.

## REMINDER:

School begins for the 03 - 04 school year on August 26, 27, the week before Labor Day, for some of the schools we serve and September 2<sup>nd</sup> for the rest of the schools. If you're not sure when your school starts check with dispatch.



## 2003- 2004 School Year

### Mark Your Calendars

**August 11** >> Routes open for Inspection

**August 18** >> Bid Day

**August 19** >> All day In-Service

**August 20** >> Special Needs In-service

**August 21** >> Skills Building Workshop

**August 26, 27 or Sept 2** >> School Starts \*

\* Not all schools start on the 26<sup>th</sup>, please check with dispatch for your schools start date.

## RENEWAL CLASS

Renewal Classes are scheduled for  
Nov 2003, March 2004  
& July 2004  
Times and Dates to be announced.

## PROFICIENCY & EXPIRATION REPORT

### Driver's Report

Please be very careful when checking your proficiencies not only check which types of buses you are proficient to drive but also the specific ones within that proficiency category that you are not allowed to drive.

If there is a mistake please do not wait until bid-day to notify me.

**I HAVE HI-LITED IN YELLOW PROFICIENCIES YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK ABOUT ATTAINING.**

## FIRST AID CLASSES

We no longer have a qualified Red Cross First Aid / CPR Instructor at West County.

See Debbie for a list of Red Cross First Aid classes.



## EVACUATION TEAM

Thanks to every one who helped with evacuations last school year.

We will be having a meeting and in-service program for all members of the evacuation team and for anyone who might be interested in doing evacuations or for those who just need a few hours of in-service September. Date and time to be announced.

## West County Transportation Agency Presents the EMPLOYEE REWARDS

It is designed to give recognition to its members for their day -to-day dedication, enthusiasm, and team work. It also wants to recognize members, who, through a vast array of activities, go above and beyond the call of duty, lending their time, talents, and expertise to promote the professional school bus driver and school bus safety. After all, you are among the best in your field and why wait until the end of the school year to be acknowledged for what you do every day. Get the credit you deserve.

There are many ways to earn rewards points, both individually and by team. Here are just a few:

- Attendance (daily)
- Appearance (uniform)
- Vehicle condition (cleanliness)
- Safe Driving
- Attending meetings
- Parades (meetings, planning, & participation)
- National School Bus Safety Week (meetings, planning, & participation)
- School Bus Roadeo's (support, practice, or participation)

Members are divided up into teams by a random drawing. Team members earn points throughout the month.

At the end of each month the team with the highest total will be recognized and rewarded at the monthly awards

Lunch. Each month begins a new scoring period.

## **KINDERGARTEN ORIENTATION**

*We are looking for professional dedicated school bus drivers interested in spending time with a class of potential bus riders. Every year prior to school starting we offer a kindergarten orientation to any school with the hopes of starting these young riders off on the right track. We use a professional and well-received program developed by a bus driver in California. B six three four five five nine four This program is called S.A.F.E. The program consists of a dry erase board and magnets that the driver uses to teach basic school bus safety and ridership. We have a video that the driver can watch to see how the program should be delivered. After delivering the program in the classroom, the children will be allowed the opportunity to ride your bus around the block to practice what you taught them in class. If interested in participating in this exciting program, please contact Justin to set up a time to view the video and practice the program.*

## **Interesting Internet Sites**

West County Transportation Agency  
[www.schoolbusing.com](http://www.schoolbusing.com)  
How Stuff Works  
[www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com)  
Sonoma County Chapter of the American Red Cross  
[www.redcross-sonomacounty.org](http://www.redcross-sonomacounty.org)  
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/)  
School Bus Information Council  
[www.schoolbusinfo.org](http://www.schoolbusinfo.org)  
California Association of School Transportation Officials  
[www.castoways.org](http://www.castoways.org)  
National Safe Kids Campaign  
[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)  
Parents Soup  
[www.parentsoup.com](http://www.parentsoup.com)

## **NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK POSTER CONTEST**

We will be having our local poster contest for children attending a school that West County provides transportation for. There are five divisions (Level 1 - Grades K-2, Level 2 - Grades 3-5, Level 3 - Grade 6-8, Level #4 – Grade 9-12, Level 5 – Special Education)

Prizes will be awarded for first place in each division as follows:

1st Place and Overall Winner: A Field Trip for the classroom & a \$100 Savings Bond. (\*Limited to 4 hrs.)

1st Place Winners of remaining 4 divisions: A \$100 Savings Bond

Poster and slogan must harmonize with the theme for 2004 of:

### **Theme To Be Announced.**

The Winners will be qualified to enter in the CASTO (California Association of School Transportation Officials), Local and State contest in January.

Poster Specifications can be found at our web site [www.schoolbusing.com](http://www.schoolbusing.com) Click on Safety Week and then poster contest. Applications and poster specifications will be delivered to all our schools in September and will be distributed to each class during the evacuation drills.

## **DRIVER'S SAFETY OBSERVATION**

commonly known as the ride along is one of the best ways for a driver to learn what areas may need improvement and what areas that they excel in. Hopefully after a ride along, the driver will incorporate whatever recommendations we provide in developing or improving the necessary skills to enhance or maintain their professionalism as a school bus driver. To help you improve your ride along, we came up with a list of common and re-occurring mistakes we tend to find each year. Take a close look at them and ask yourself if maybe you could improve in these areas of your pre trip or driving skills.

### **PRE TRIP**

- Standing up while starting the bus.
- Forgetting to check the oil pressure gauge after starting bus.
- Failing to check for the fuel cap
- Neglecting to open the first aid kit or reflector box to make sure all contents are inside
- Not knowing the legal limit to the Air Brake System test

*{Do not tell me you can't remember the numbers but it is "ok" because you know when something is wrong. I had a driver pump the service brake down to 60 psi to check the governor cut in and assumed it was "ok" because the air pressure started to build back up. If you don't know the legal limits you can't possibly know if the bus is safe to drive, you only know when something is different with your bus.}*

#### **BEHIND THE WHEEL**

- Failing to cancel turn signals while loading or unloading students
- On the Thomas buses a very common error is to use the gear selector to set the parking brake. – parking brake should always be manually set.
- Changing gear selector from a forward gear to a reverse gear while the bus is still moving forward
- Stopping too close to students during the loading process
- Speed limit in 25 MPH zones – some drivers are pushing the limit on this
- Failing to re-check the right side mirror when pulling away from bus stops
- Pulling away from bus stops too fast



## **School Bus Idling**

The California Air Resources recently passed an Airborne Toxic Control Measure that would limit school bus idling and idling at or near schools only when necessary for safety or operational concerns.

The ATCM is intended to reduce diesel exhaust particulate matter and other toxic air contaminants and air pollutants from heavy-duty motor vehicle exhaust.

Children are more vulnerable to air pollutants because they have higher inhalation rates, narrower airways and less mature immune systems, according to CARB.

The ATCM applies not only to school buses, but also to school pupil activity buses, youth buses, general paratransit vehicles, transit buses and heavy-duty vehicles operating at or near schools. The ATCM requires that the driver of any of the aforementioned vehicles to manually turn off the bus or vehicle engine upon arriving at a school and restarting no more than 30 seconds before departing. In addition, the driver is subject to the same requirements when operating within 100 feet of a school and is prohibited from idling more than five minutes at locations beyond schools, such as parking or maintenance facilities, school bus stops, or school activity destinations. Idling necessary for health, safety, or operational concerns are exempt from the restrictions.

Motor carriers are expected to ensure that drivers are aware of the new requirements, which are to take effect in July 2003.

***THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF SCHOOL*** you may have a number of new stops not listed on your route sheet, use your best judgement and then be sure to follow the outline below for adding new bus stops:

#### **NEW BUS STOP PROCEDURES:**

- 1)** Fill out a "request to add new bus stop" form and turn into Pat, Patricia, or Amy: they may have a record of a previous stop in or near the same location.
- 2)** If dispatch is unable to approve the new stop: An instructor will check the bus stop as soon as possible and notify you of the approval or if the stop needs to be approved by the CHP.
- 3)** NO Stops are to be made unless approved by dispatch or an instructor.

## **"Kids Say**

### **the Darndest Things"**

A little girl asked her mother, "Can I go outside and play with the boys?" Her mother replied, "No, you can't play with the boys, they're too rough." The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked, "If I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?"

During our weekly grocery shopping my 4yr old began begging me for "Lucky Charms" cereal. She tried everything and I kept resisting ... finally I said "I'm sorry, I'm not going to buy it because I just don't like "Lucky Charms". Thinking that was the end of it. She thought for about 3 seconds then quickly added "That's okay mom, I won't make you eat any!"

My clutch was going out on my car, but I had no choice but to drive it. So we were cruising along at 20mph and all the other cars were passing us. I guess they seemed to be going awfully fast because my son was in the back seat saying, "He's gonna get a ticket, and he's gonna get a ticket, and he's gonna get 2 tickets because his car is too ugly to be going that fast."



West County Transportation Agency,  
Instructional Department, publishes  
**THE TRAINING WHEELS.**  
745 N. Main Street, Sebastopol CA 95472  
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Editorial Staff: Debbie Strain

