



IPTA School Bus Stop

My School Bus, the Safest Form of Student Transportation!



Iowa Pupil Transportation Association - Keep Student Safety First

IPTA 58th Annual School Transportation Conference and Tradeshow



The IPTA 58th Annual School Transportation Conference and Tradeshow was held at the Des Moines Airport Holiday Inn on July 18-20, 2022. Over 191 transportation personnel from almost all 99 Iowa counties attended.

The conference had an outstanding lineup with topics covered by speakers that traveled to Iowa from seven different states, and every segment was presented by a first class list of presenters, that shared a wealth of experience and expertise with conference attendees.

The conference included Iowa's Largest School Transportation Tradeshow, having 41 exhibitor booths, with five school buses (2-electric powered) on display inside the spacious Iowa Exhibition Hall.

The Iowa Pupil Transportation Board of Directors would like to Thank everyone that attended this years IPTA Conference and Tradeshow! You are all definitely the most valuable asset for the continuing improvement in students and staff safety on Iowa's school buses. Have a safe and smooth 2022-2023 school year!

2022-2023 - First Quarterly Newsletter 58 years of serving student transportation

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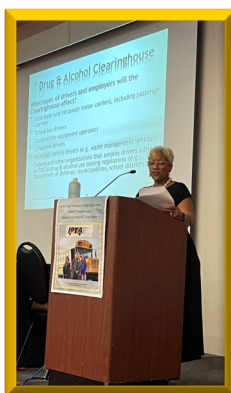
Conference July 18th Review



Day one of the IPTA 58th Annual School Transportation Conference and Trade-show began at 6:30 a.m., with our IPTA board members loading conference bags and setting up for registration.



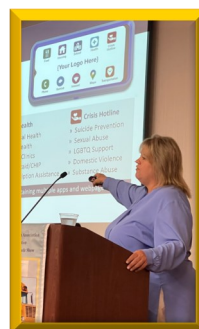
The keynote speaker was Andy Masters and he captivated everyone with his program "Love what you do!"



Next up was Gene Henderson with the very serious program, "Marijuana and School Bus Drivers Don't Mix".



Marc Steel, with Hoglund Bus Company provided a nice overview pertaining to IC Electric school buses. In the afternoon session Karen Main held the very informative program, "Speak Up Workshop"



Lea Boggle, Primer Wireless held a three person panel discussion with (Lt-Rt) Max Christensen, DE, Tim Lyons, Benton CSD, and Nathan Beal, Storm Lake CSD on how to leverage technology to increase student safety.



Conference July 19th Review



Day two of the IPTA summer conference opened with Annual Board of Directors meeting and breakfast.



The 2022 IPTA Vendor Tradeshow with 41 exhibitors booths, with five full size school buses on display in the Holiday Inn Iowa Hall. Two of the school buses displayed were the new generation electric buses. It was an outstanding trade show with over 191 attendees spending time reviewing products and services available that could make improvements to their school transportation departments.



2022 IPTA Award Recipients



IPTA Members Received Awards at the 58th Annual IPTA Transportation Conference and Trade Show.



Tom Horn "Memorial" Award Recipient: **Kim Ensminger**, Central Lee Community School District.
Pictured with IPTA Board President, Carlos Guerra.

(Lt-Rt) Betty Golay, Nancy Horn,
Kim Ensminger, and Max Christensen



Holly Hoglund Klein, Iowa Woman in Transportation Award Recipient: **Julie Nemmers** - Spencer Community School District
Pictured (Lt) IPTA Board President, Carlos Guerra, Julie Nemmers. Pictured (Middle) Tom Klein, Hoglund Bus Company and Julie Nemmers
Pictured (Rt) Julie Nemmers and IPTA Executive Director, Chris Darling



Longevity Award Recipients:

Pictured (Lt) **Kim Bleckwehl**, Odebolt, Arthur, and Battle Creek-Ida Grove CSD (33 Years) with IPTA Board Member, Robin Pickard.
Pictured (Middle) **Fred Schaffer**, Central CSD (39 Years), Jeff Harbaugh, Transportation Director, **Leighton (Ed) Nelson**, Central CSD (52 Years)
Pictured (Rt) **Richard (Dick) Kluiter**, Waverly-Shell Rock CSD (53 Years) with IPTA Board Member, David Johnson

The Awards Luncheon is sponsored by the Auto-Jet School Bus Parts Company. Congratulations to all of these very dedicated individuals for everything that they have done over the years in the service of the students in their communities.





2022 IPTA Heroism Award Recipients



The IPTA Heroism Recipients: **Bonnie Lore**, School Bus Driver, **Isaac Oetken**, 9th grade, **Izak Houck**, 7th grade, and **Martin (Marty) Ashley** 5th grade, were all from the Charles City Community School District.

On Nov. 1, 2021, on a typical Monday afternoon a Charles City CSD bus headed out on a normal school bus route. At about 3:50 p.m. the transportation office received a call saying that they had a school bus that had rolled over in the ditch. Sam Gaston, tried calling Bonnie the driver but she received no response.

Within a few minutes Bonnie called back. Sam asked her if everyone was ok, she said we are all out. Sam told her that all of them were on their way and another bus was already dispatched to her location.

Bonnie had just stopped and let Isaac Oetken off. Within 75ft of where she stopped, she got too close to the edge of the gravel road and it sucked her in and the bus just flipped over on its side.

A Colwell Volunteer Fire Man lived a mile from the scene, he said, ***"When he topped the hill the kids were all sitting in the field. He said he was so impressed with everyone."*** Bonnie has prepared her riders by practicing evacuation drills and everything on this day went as practiced. As we investigated the accident, we kept hearing of three young men that put the other kids first before themselves. (*Isaac Oetken, Martin Ashley, and Izak Houck.*) When they reviewed the cameras, you could clearly see these three young men helping everyone off the bus to safety.



Isaac Oetken, 9th grader, is the young man that Bonnie had dropped off at his home. He remembers starting to walk up his drive way and hearing a loud thud and looked over and saw the bus flipped in the ditch. He started running over to it and calling 911 at the same time, but he was running so fast that dispatch could not hear him so he slowed down to talk. Isaac knew where he lived that the 911 dispatch rang into Chickasaw County, not Floyd County, so he had to tell them the accident occurred in Floyd County. All he could think of was half the kids on that bus were family. Isaac started helping the kids get out the back door and Bonnie was the last one they got out. When asked what the definition of a hero is, he said ***"Someone who is willing to do good and help others."*** He doesn't feel he is a hero, but feels good about himself for helping this day and that everyone was ok. In our eyes he is a hero and he defiantly went above and beyond to help others.

Izak Houck, 7th grader, in the video they could see him grab his hat turn around and started calming kids down telling them everything is going to be ok, and we need to get out the back door. He was so calm himself it was amazing to see. He checked on his friend and got him calmed down, then he started helping everyone out of their seats to the back door. He said, ***"I wasn't scared, I just wanted to make sure everyone was ok."*** He doesn't feel like a hero, he said, ***"It was something that was expected, to help people out, and it was the right thing to do!"*** In our eyes he is also a hero, and he went above and beyond to help others.

Martin (Marty) Ashley, 5th grader, is another one that grabbed his hat. He said, ***"I have had this hat for three years and we have been through a lot together, and it's comfortable."*** Then started to help everyone get out the back door when he heard Bonnie ask him for help. Marty went up and helped Bonnie. Bonnie was hanging in her seat from her seat belt. Bonnie asked Marty to push the button to release it. (She did have a seat belt cutter) but they thought this was the best way. They both just looked at each other knowing what was going to happen. Bonnie braced herself but she fell from her seat to the door. Marty immediately asked if she was ok, and helped her stand up. Once everything was ok, Marty helped her out the back door. For his age Marty is a hero and someone who helps a lot.



**IPTA 2022 Heroism Award Recipients (Lt -Rt):
Martin (Marty) Ashley, Izak Houck, Isaac Oetken, Bonnie Lore,
with IPTA Board Member Julie Nemmers**



How do you measure the true meaning of heroism? It can be defined in several ways. 1. Heroic conduct especially as exhibited in fulfilling a high purpose or attaining a noble end. 2. Acting voluntarily for the service of others who are in need, whether it is for an individual, a group, or a community. 3. Performing actions without any expectation of reward or external gain. 4. Recognition and acceptance of the potential risk, or sacrifice made, by taking heroic actions. How ever you define it, the over 200 in attendance understood the potential risk and sacrifice made by these individuals, and gave them a standing ovation in appreciation for their true heroic actions.

Heroism consists of putting others first, even at your own peril, and the IPTA was honored to present Heroism Awards to these four worthy individuals.



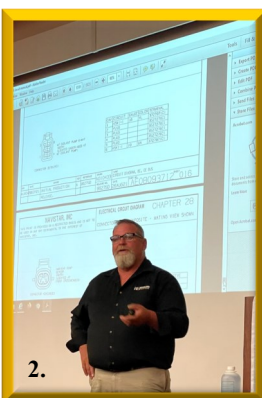
Conference July 19th Afternoon Review



In the afternoon the Truck Center Companies with Nick Musto, Central Region District Manager, Thomas Built Buses, had an informative session providing an overview of the new Thomas Electric School Bus.



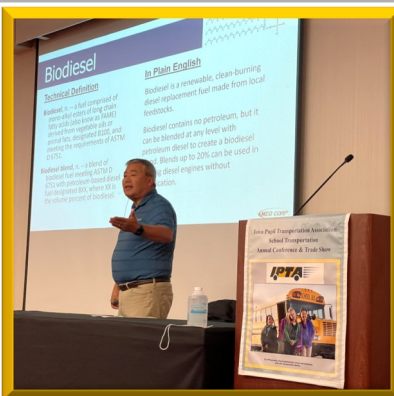
Max Christensen, Education Consultant, for the Iowa Department of Education presented the ever popular school bus hall of fame. In this program Max shows actual pictures of school bus deficiencies found by the Iowa School Bus Inspectors during the first and second half state wide inspections, keeping the school districts involved completely confidential. This session always shows good examples of deficiencies that no school bus mechanic wants to find on their communities school buses.



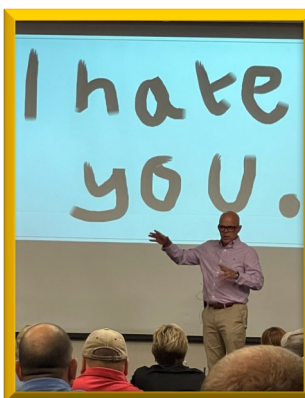
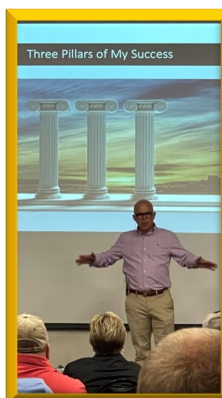
On Tuesday afternoon the afternoon break out programs (Picture 1) Dave Weyler, with the Truck Center Companies held a Thomas workshop. Doug Yager, Hogleund Bus Company (Picture 2) had a breakout session for IC bus, and Karen Main, (Picture 3) held a small group session for conference attendees to hone their communication skills. Lou Demario and Emily Budesheim, Tyler Technologies, (Picture 4) held an informative break out for the computerized school bus routing. As always the break out sessions were well attended and they provide a small group environment that encourages a great deal of in depth discussions.



Conference July 20th Review



Day three for the IPTA Conference began with Hoon Ge and the program, “Busting Biodiesel Myths” Hoon broke down the myths in great detail with this informative session. (Hoon Ge is pictured with Lisa Coffelt, Iowa Renewable Fuels Association.)



Next up was Scott LeRette the author of the book, and soon to be released movie, “*The Unbreakable Boy*” Carlos Guerra, IPTA Board President hosted this session and Scott took the conference attendees on his journey dealing with the emotions of addiction while raising a boy with autism and broken bone disorder. Scott just an average guy from Iowa shared his journey with honest and brutal candor. He received a standing ovation at the conclusion of his presentation. (Lt-Rt Chris Darling, Scott LeRette, Carlos Guerra)



Max Christensen, DE Education Consultant, and Chris Darling, IPTA Executive Director, spent a productive session reviewing data from the newly released DE survey.

It was an in-depth group discussion on what benefits districts have available to attract and hire new school bus drivers.





Conference July 20th Review



Operation Lifesaver, train safety presented by Leroy Dobson, BNSF Railroad. Leroy provided an informative overview of rail crossing procedures, and tips for school bus drivers. Trains are closer and faster than they appear. Multiple tracks may mean multiple trains. Look for additional trains on adjacent tracks. Observe signs, signals and pavement markings. Always **stop, look and listen** for a train.



The last large group session of the day was a panel discussion lead by Megan Ellsworth, DMCC and Dan Roberts, Davis County CSD. Both Dan, Megan and their ELDT training teams provided attendees a good overview of what their ELDT Training programs included. They also talked about the differences between the community college program and having your own in-house community school program.



The 2022 IPTA conference ended with a very well attended New Directors Training Workshop.

Max Christensen and the Iowa DE Staff spend approximately four hours reviewing everything that new transportation directors need to know as it pertains to **laws, rules, regulations and best practices**.

The dates for next years IPTA Conference and Tradeshow will be July 17-19, 2023

IPTA 2022 Board Member Election Results



Carlos Guerra,
Norwalk CSD



Julie D. Nemmers,
Spencer CSD.



Dan Walston,
Bedford CSD



Mary Jo Hetrick,
Bondurant-Farrar



Randy Merrigan,
Sioux City CSD.

2022 Board of Directors Election Results: We have 3 returning board members, *Carlos Guerra*, *Julie Nemmers*, and *Dan Walston*, all were re-elected to the IPTA Board. *Marry Jo Hetrick*, Transportation Director at Bondurant-Farrar was elected to her first term on the board. Everyone here at the IPTA would like to welcome Mary Jo to the board and we are looking forward to working with her over the next three years.

Changes in our IPTA Board of Directors are natural transitions. We wish Randy Merrigan, our former IPTA board member and good friend, the best in whatever he chooses to do in the future. Randy **"Thank you"** for everything that you have done during your many years on the board of the Iowa Pupil Transportation Association, and for your continued support to the Sioux City CSD.

IPTA 2022 Conference Nightly Entertainment



This year on Monday night for the Hogland Bus Company Banquet we heard the amazing vocals of Bonne Finken.



1st - Carlos Guerra,
Norwalk CSD and
Emily Budesheim,
Tyler Technologies

2nd - Scott Wing,
Cedar Rapids CSD,
and Steve Chyma,
South Tama CSD



3rd - Steve Clayton,
Okoboji CSD
and Brady Lucy,
Schaller Crestland CSD



4th - Mark and Danya Adair,
Interstate 35 CSD



On Tuesday evening the 3rd annual Cornhole tournament was held during the Truck Center Companies Thomas Family Barbecue. This year the Cornhole tournament was a double elimination event with 80 participants making up the 40 teams competing in the tournament victories. Congratulations to everyone that played and to the four teams that finished at the top of this fun event.

Life: What you believe, What you desire, What you have to do!



Department of Education News and Reminders

Max Christensen, Education Program Consultant
Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of School Business Operations



Where in the world did the summer go? I know we say this every year at this time, but seriously it does seem as if the last few years the summer season is here and then it's gone! It probably has something to do with getting older, but things have changed so much since the pandemic in regards to how we do things – all the way from how we communicate to how we do our jobs. I guess that was the “old” normal and I believe we're still trying to figure out the “new” normal. And while the end of the last school year seemed like such a relief, in some ways the start of this new 2022-2023 school year is also a relief. How so, you ask? The big thing is it's been three years since we've had any type of normal start up to the school year due to Covid restrictions, masks, and other issues associated with the pandemic. I think we're all just happy to get past that and move on with whatever the new normal might bring our way.

And with the new school year comes lots of energy and anxiety, which is nothing new. As a transportation director in my earlier years in this profession, no matter how much planning I did, or how clean I had my buses, or how prepared my drivers and routes were, that first day was always pretty high stress and full of unknowns. If I could get through that first day without any vehicle breakdowns, losing any kids, or having any drivers quit on me, I felt pretty darn successful!

The first few days into the first week usually saw everything calming down and getting into a nice groove. The pickup times evened out, allowing the bus routes to begin to flow like clockwork. The bus drivers would begin to know their student passengers by name, any potential mechanical problems with the buses would be getting taken care of, and best of all, there were far fewer parental phone calls asking anything from “Where is my kid?” to “What time will the bus be here?” to “Which bus does my child ride?” If you've been in the business anytime at all, you've experienced these same questions and emotions, and likely even more. And we all have our special “first day of school” stories to share. It's all part of our jobs and truly helps to make for some great memories.

I was reminded of this recently when I renewed contact with an old friend of mine that I had driven school bus with about 25 years ago. We'd lost contact but reconnected on Facebook recently, and I actually picked up the phone (old technology, huh?) several days ago and called her to visit. She's once again driving a school bus for a district here in Iowa, and between the reminiscing about the old times we'd shared, and talking about her new job driving a school bus, we discovered that many things really haven't changed that much in the past 25 years. There's the old guy who is well beyond his prime who probably shouldn't be driving a bus full of kids anymore. Then there's the driver who seems to think that bus routes are some sort of racing competition where the motto is ‘peddle to the metal’. And of course, on the opposite end of the scale is the driver who can't seem to get out of their own way, let alone anyone else's. Plus, you always have the driver who is willing to help out in any way they can, or the driver who brings treats for all the drivers every Friday, or the driver who just seems to know all the latest gossip. Our school bus driver break rooms are truly a microcosm of the world at large. And while sometimes they can get on our nerves, a more dedicated, and quite frankly, talented group of people than your staff of bus drivers would be hard to find, and even harder to replace. Enjoy it, and take it all in. If you don't normally, take a moment and just listen to the chatter and chit chat in your driver's breakroom. I guarantee, you will hear something that WILL bring a smile to your face. It might be something shocking, or it might be something funny, or maybe just something sweet, but there will be something that you'll smile about and take with you for the rest of the day or maybe even longer. Trust me, it's worth the listen.

I wish all of you a great start to your school year, and also wishing you a great year in general! Happy 2022-2023, and let's make it one of the best and most memorable years ever!



Iowa Pupil Transportation Association

IPTA Diamond, Gold, Silver and Bronze Sponsorship Partners including 2022-2023 Sustaining Members

Thank You to all of our Diamond, Gold, Silver and Bronze Sponsorship Partners! Thank you to all of our IPTA Sustaining Member Companies!

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IPTA Board Members: Carlos Guerra, President, Norwalk, Merrill Mueller, Jr., Vice President, Algona, Julie Nemmers, Spencer,
 Randy Merrigan, Sioux City, Betty Golay, Des Moines Christian, Woody Harden, Washington, Robin Pickard, West Des Moines,
 Nathan Beal, Storm Lake, David Johnson, Van Meter, Cherokee, Bobbie Finley, Interstate 35, Leo Reigelsberger, Humboldt,
 Dan Walston, Bedford, Max Christensen, DE Representative, Chris Darling, IPTA Executive Director