

Region 8 meeting hosted by Judy Truer at Caledonia Public Schools Transportation on February 8, 2011.

Twenty-two people attended the meeting and a good discussion was held regarding a number of topics from roadeo, state police inspections, to zonar, to physicals for this coming year.

Jane Byker of Hudsonville Public Schools shared information about the local regional roadeo which will be held May 21 at Allegan Public Schools, located just off M-40 in Allegan. Information will be sent out soon. Our roadeo always runs smooth because of all the extra help from the volunteers. It was mentioned that the state roadeo will be June 24, 2011 at West Branch, the weekend before the conference up at Boyne Mountain the last week of June.

Talked about State Police inspections, or lack thereof. All membership districts can pull up a letter on the MAPT website which their Superintendent can fill out asking the State Police when they are going to inspect your fleet, if you have gone past the yearly inspection date. There is lots of discussion on what yearly means. People in the field, and our friends at the State Police Department, have some different understandings of what current year means. So therefore, if you have any questions regarding your State Police School Bus Inspections, make sure you get the letter and have your Superintendent sign it and send it to the State Police regarding your school bus inspections.

Talked about MAPT legislative committee priorities. Their number one priority is to secure a responsible level of funding for the school bus inspection program. More information should be coming out soon.

Reminded everybody that the MAPT Membership Conference and Mechanics Expo runs from June 26-29, 2011. There was quite a discussion on the scholarships that are available. Dave Meeuwsen reminded folks that last year there was money left in the scholarships fund. At this time nobody has been turned away from mechanics or supervisors if they've applied for a scholarship. Please go on the MAPT website to get the information on scholarship application for the MAPT Scholarship Program. Everybody should be filling out that paperwork and all the money should be used for our conference/mechanics expo this year.

Discussion was held regarding the Tech and Parts Store Expo offered by Auto Value in Grand Rapids. This February event encourages sharing of new information with mechanics and technicians.

Zeeland and Caledonia Public Schools have received new information from their school liaison officers on a Bomb Threat Assessment Tool For Schools. It gives very specific instructions and information along with a training DVD. It's new and can be used by your school district regarding bomb threats for schools.

Arlan Cribley talked about zonar systems. Grandville Public Schools has gone to the GPS systems and overlayed it with the routing maps that they use in the routing system for all of their school buses. It has been very interesting and very helpful so far as they have been starting up their program since the first of January. More information on zonar, contact your local zonar folks, or Arlan at Grandville Public Schools.

Dave Meeuwsen shared a form used to update special education student information. It is sent out to the Special Education Director and he makes sure it gets sent to the teacher, and returned to the transportation department by May 1st so that there is accurate student information. The information given to the district transportation department is a “heads up” list of who their students will be, what school and the grades for the next school year.

There was a discussion about the new DOT guideline regulations for our physicals. It has come to our attention that when you ask for things sometimes you are given more than you really want to deal with or can bargain for. The new DOT guidelines focus on folks with diabetes have to jump through some extra hoops, however, some of that is good. Another area under closer scrutiny will be sleep apnea. It has come to the attention that Doctors doing the DOT physicals for school bus drivers will be more observant of sleep apnea factors during the physical. A bus driver who meets two of the following: has a BMI greater than 35, a neck circumference of 17” in men, and 16” in women, and has hypertension (new or uncontrolled), or unable to control with less than two meds that these drivers will be subject to a sleep apnea study.