The Manitoba school bus transportation industry was well represented at the recent Canadian Pupil Transportation Conference (CPTC) held in Lake Louise, Alberta. This conference is held every second year at different locations across Canada. All aspects of this latest conference were well planned and meticulously executed by convention members and volunteers. Lake Louise is unlikely to be surpassed for its beauty at any time of the year.

The following is taken from the CPTC web page leading up to the start of the conference: **CPTC will give you extraordinary educational workshops, provocative and engaging plenary sessions and keynote speakers, in addition to valuable business connections! Industry experts supply insight into the latest developments and challenges of managing pupil transportation today, tomorrow, and the future.**

The educational workshops, plenary sessions, and keynote speakers met all expectations of extraordinary, provocative, engaging, and valuable. The presenters and their topics could not help but grab and hold your attention! Here are a few highlights from the sessions I attended . . .

**Dr. Allan Beane, Ph.D.:** **BULLYING.** This was an excellent session that looked at root causes of bullying, the effects that bullying can have on students, how the problem has escalated, what society can do to recognize bullying situations, and what actions to take if you witness bullying. It is not Dr. Beane’s credentials that necessarily made him a professional on the subject; it was the fact that his own son’s death was linked to bullying. Dr. Beane’s website is chock-full of information and recourses on bullying: [http://bullyfree.com/](http://bullyfree.com/)
PTU RIVERS OFFICE IS RELOCATING!!

Near the end of July, PTU’s Field Officer in Rivers, Sandy Campbell, will be moving to the Manitoba Provincial Building in Brandon. His new address will be B1K - 340-9th Street, Brandon, MB; R7A 6C2. His phone/fax number will be 204-726-6708. Once the move is complete, PTU will email school division transportation personnel with relevant information.

While on the topic of PTU staff, the four of us wish each of you a safe and enjoyable summer!

Chris, Sandy, Rick, and Vickie

SCHOOL BUS ORDERS

2011 Order - Summary

- 24 school divisions agreed to participate in the 2011 school bus tender process.
- Awarding of the tender was shared by International and Thomas.
- 52 school buses were ordered by 19 school divisions.
- 27 International IC standard units were ordered.
- 25 Thomas C2 units were ordered, including 4 wheelchair units.
- PTU’s inspection of the buses began July 20 and was completed November 24, 2011.

2012 Order - In Process

- 23 school divisions agreed to participate in the 2012 school bus tender process.
- IC Bus (Maxim Truck & Trailer) was awarded the tender.
- In total, 62 school buses (including one wheelchair unit) were ordered by 18 school divisions.
- As of mid-June, school bus units ordered through the tender are beginning to arrive at Maxim.

TENTATIVE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER INSTRUCTOR COURSE - PHASES I, II, & III

PTU has established dates to hold a School Bus Driver Instructor Course. If enough individuals register (the course cannot be held with fewer than 10 participants), Phases I and II would be held in Brandon - October 3-5 and October 17-19, respectively. Phase III, in Gimli, would be held October 31-November 2. Contact PTU if you wish to recommend someone for the training.
2012 SCHOOL BUS MAINTENANCE SEMINAR

Who Attended?

This year’s School Bus Maintenance Seminar, held March 27-28 in Brandon and March 29-30 in Winnipeg, was attended by 37 and 55 participants respectively. Presenters included Tereck Diesel (E-Guardian heater systems), International/IC Bus, Thomas Built Buses, and PTU. Click on seminar evaluation results to view participants’ feedback.

What Was Discussed?

In reviewing this year’s feedback from participants, it appears the seminar was a great success. We were privileged to have had two school bus manufacturers represented - Thomas Built Buses and International/IC Bus.

Thomas Built Buses provided an entire day of training on the C2 Saf-T-Liner. Techs were provided with a wealth of information on proper maintenance and diagnostics. Mike Stotler, a factory trained instructor, provided many resources and tools to ensure the product is understood. He covered topics such as emission systems, diesel exhaust fluid, coolant maintenance, multiplex diagnostics, etc. There is no doubt that every tech left the training session with a better understanding of the product.

Warner Bus Industries (the new Thomas dealer) took the opportunity to explain how they intend to do business in Manitoba. Warner Bus has secured a facility on Terracon Place in Winnipeg, and will also provide school divisions with the option of them travelling to the school division’s maintenance facility to perform repairs. Please contact Warner Bus for more details.

International/IC Bus provided a half day of training. Michel Poissant, a trainer from Navistar, provided valuable information on OnCommand (Bus ISIS) and a proper performance diagnostics sequence. It was stressed that a tech needs to have a process in place to ensure proper diagnostics are performed, thus avoiding costly repairs and extended downtime.

Tereck Diesel provided training on Espar auxiliary heating units and shared some important maintenance tips to prevent unit failures.

PTU covered the importance of completing recalls on school buses and the process required to perform them. PTU is currently communicating with dealers and school divisions to address the issue of outstanding recalls. Please ensure you are proactive in getting recalls completed in a timely manner.

PTU also covered wheelchair securement training and proper maintenance of tie-down and track systems. From the feedback received, techs felt well-informed on the importance of proper use of the restraints.

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Open Forum and Presentation Topics

Listed below, by manufacturer, are links to more specific information on topics discussed at the Maintenance Seminar.

**Thomas Built Buses (Warner Bus Industries) -**
- Crossview Mirror Fixed Mount
- Crossview Mirror Hardware Improvement
- Customer Performed Warranty Agreement
- Fuse Block Reposition
- MBE900 - Oil Fill Collar
- Recall - Body Battery Cable Pass-Through Corrosion
- Recall - Side Marker/Directional Lights
- Unintended Wiper Cycling

**International/IC Bus (Maxim Truck & Trailer) -**
- Open Forum Concerns

**SCHOOL BUS DRIVER INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION SESSIONS**

Earlier this year, PTU hosted information sessions for current school bus driver instructors and school division transportation supervisors. The sessions, held in Winnipeg and Brandon, were attended by 45 and 38 participants respectively. Each two-day session included a review of the recently revised School Bus Driver Instructor’s Manual, a presentation by Bob Fosty of Manitoba Public Insurance, and a review of teaching strategies by Manitoba Education’s John Shaw. Click on information session evaluation results to view participants’ feedback.

A wide variety of information, in various formats, was presented at the sessions (e.g. websites, video clips). There was consensus among participants that receiving information on accessing this electronic media would be useful as they prepare their own training sessions. PTU is in the process of developing an email group of school bus driver instructors. Once established, PTU will be able to electronically share pertinent information. If you obtain or become aware of resource material you feel could serve as a training aid, PTU would welcome the information.
Kevin Cameron: THREAT ASSESSMENT. As an expert commissioned to head up threat assessments and develop a template for emergency response plans after high publicity school shootings, this gentleman was able to provide insight and knowledge of deep-rooted problems of attackers’ backgrounds. He discussed how the warning signs of the incidences he investigated were ignored, and how appropriate action could have prevented these school shootings. He continues to educate school system staff about historical school shootings and how to play a preventative role in keeping students and staff safe. This website is worth checking out. http://www.cctatr.com/articles.htm

Dausen Kluin: ARM YOURSELF FOR LIFE. This young man was born with cerebral palsy and has limited mobility on the left side of his body. He spoke about obstacles he has had to overcome in achieving his goals of becoming a motivational speaker, and being recognized as a world arm wrestling champion. Each of us has probably been involved in the transportation of special needs students, and listening to this young fellow gave a very unique insight into the potential special needs students can have. To learn more from Dausen, visit http://dausenkluin.wordpress.com/

Jacob's Story: THE WRIGHT FAMILY TELLS ITS STORY. Six year old Jacob was run over by his school bus; an accident witnessed by his 8-year old brother, in front of the family’s Missouri home. Parents, John and Terri, now have a life mission to tell Jacob’s story and present messages about school bus safety. Hearing a message from the parents of a child killed by his school bus and how it affected his family, friends, and community really drove home how important it is to pay attention to all aspects of student safety. When you recall Jacob’s story, ridership training, driver professional development, and well thought out routing takes on renewed importance as we perform our transportation roles. More at http://www.jacobsstory.ca/

Alvin Law: KEYNOTE/FAREWELL. Born without arms, Alvin is one of the first identified thalidomide babies. He has spent a lifetime overcoming obstacles identified for him by other people, not necessarily by himself. He has gone on to prove them wrong in many cases. It is worthwhile taking a few minutes to watch a portion of his presentation - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFup940bA3Y More information can be obtained on his website http://www.alvinlaw.com/about.php The school bus transportation industry can learn a lot from Alvin about the potential of some of the young special needs passengers we work with each day.

Phil Callaway: LEARNING TO LAUGH AGAIN. It is important to laugh during our day and to find humour in some of the situations we face at work. Phil entertained us for his entire presentation and showed us a positive way to approach each day. http://www.philcallaway.ab.ca/

I welcome you to follow any of the links above. There are a whole host of interesting videos, articles from other sources about each of the presenters, and related links. Simply search each name.

Manitoba representatives (with spouses who attended) met for a group picture. Each of these people can attest to how well this conference was staged. Feel free to contact any one of us to learn more about the Lake Louise experience.
You may be wondering why I chose to provide so much detail of my CPTC experience. Well, I’m about to deliver a message: “OUR TURN IS COMING!”

At the conference a meeting was held to decide the location of future events. Manitoba and Saskatchewan are the two provinces yet to play host. In two years, Saskatchewan will host the CPTC. By default then, Manitoba will host the CPTC four years from now in 2016. Admittedly, this is a daunting task and one which will require Manitoba school bus industry representatives to commit a lot of time and effort. Ultimately, however, we want to ensure that Manitoba’s efforts maintain the excellent standard of past conferences.

I want to encourage each person involved in student transportation in Manitoba to consider attending the 2014 CPTC in Regina. It is a truly international event with participants coming from across Canada and the United States. Attendance at the Saskatchewan conference will allow us to gain an in-depth understanding of the magnitude of the event, and insight into how the conference operates. Armed with this knowledge, Manitoba organizers will have a better understanding of how to meet - and hopefully exceed - participants’ expectations and provide a memorable experience. In addition to the “fact-finding and planning objective” for our own conference, Manitoba representatives will have the opportunity to experience excellent professional development at the Regina conference.

2016 sounds like a very distant date, but when OUR TURN IS HERE, it will seem like the years flew past! It’s important we begin considering the planning process now.
Training is essential on any product a tech works on. It is strongly encouraged that school divisions continue to review and implement a training plan for school bus techs. Technology on buses is changing rapidly and a proper understanding of the product is essential to ensure efficient and safe repairs are performed. Does your school division have a training plan for school bus techs? PTU encourages all school bus techs to pursue the idea of becoming the best at what they do. Our children’s safety depends on it!

In this and future issues of The Signal, I will share some ideas on implementing a training plan for school bus technicians. This is Part I of a 3-part series. It is my aim that all school divisions who maintain their own fleet of buses make a training plan a priority in the professional development of its employees.

One of the first things a transportation supervisor needs to do is recognize the need for a training program. Journeymen school bus techs may have their ticket or red seal that qualifies them to be certified, but the training doesn’t stop there.

Today’s school bus technology is advancing at a great rate, at times comparable to the auto industry, and techs can fall behind in their understanding of the different systems on the bus. Training must be part of the plan in order to perform a proper preventive maintenance (PM) program for the school bus fleet.

Training comes with a cost. It will cost the school division both financially and time-wise to implement the training plan. Therefore, it is imperative that you include tech training in the school division budget. This will allow you to invest in techs who have the responsibility of making sure your buses are safe for transporting your students.

Computer skills are another important training area. Like it or not, computers are here to stay. They are a key component for manufacturers to communicate information to end users - engine software, transmissions, ABS brake systems, and multiplex systems to name a few. At many of the inservices I conduct, the constant feedback I hear is “I don’t like using computers”. I think this stems mostly from not understanding how to perform tasks on the computer. However, some of it can also be an attitude of not wanting to learn new things. (I touch on this more in Part II of this series.) Without comprehension of the basics, you’ll be frustrated and not able to properly complete the tasks required of you. Education is key to ensuring school bus techs are comfortable and confident using computers, and understanding how systems work on the bus in the day-to-day activities of the bus garage.

Time for training seems to be another obstacle. Techs should work out a training plan with their supervisor with goals in mind. The key is to block a time for training and stick to it! I like to call this time management, and proper time management is the only way to accomplish goals. I would encourage all parties involved to review how their time is spent throughout the day.

“An individual step in character training is to put responsibility on the individual.”

Robert Badon-Powell

It is a major responsibility to maintain a fleet of school buses, but a well-trained staff will benefit the school division not only in cost savings, but by ensuring safe operation of the school bus.

In Part II of this article, I’ll touch base on the “professional school bus tech”.

TRAINING PLAN FOR SCHOOL BUS TECHS - PART I
(by Rick Penner, Field Officer)