

9.13.17 Region 13 Transportation Supervisors Meeting Notes

Attending were Rob Crum from Vandercook Lake, Jim Acker from Springport, Carl Lincoln from the Jackson ISD, Brian Rochowiak, from Northwest, Lori Grantham from Michigan Center, Bill Bradley from Columbia Central, Chuck Jacobs from Hudson, Phil Stark from Onsted, Doug Moeckel from Grass Lake

Each of our attendees gave brief histories of their careers that have brought them to this place as directors of transportation for their respective districts. We have a tremendous store of knowledge in our Region 13 and I encourage everyone to tap into our knowledge base if questions come up. Along with those who attended this meeting, our partners in transportation from across our three county area are knowledgeable, supportive, capable and available. We are very fortunate.

We discussed Jackson Northwest's move to Dean Transportation and Brian reported that the transition went very well and that his drivers actually have an improved work situation with higher pay, better benefits, and excellent training programs for their drivers. CPR, First aid, Crisis Prevention. They also have a 401K program. Brian Thrasher and Pat Dean are the contacts for more information from Dean.

We discussed the use of propane-powered buses. Jackson Public Schools has made a major commitment to using propane buses using Holland Bus Company and Bluebird buses. We at Grass Lake have followed Jackson's lead with the purchase of our first propane bus. We are extremely happy with our 77 passenger Bluebird with a Ford Roush V-10 engine and Ford transmission. It is quiet, clean, rides very well, and warms up very quickly. Like a gas engine, there is no plugging in of block heaters and no need for warm-up times.

We are following break-in protocol suggested by JPS that will maximize our economy. The protocol includes dropping the original oil and oil filter, putting in convention 5W30, waiting for the engine to stop using oil, then switching to high quality synthetic 5W30. The engine holds 8 quarts of oil when changing the filter. JPS is achieving over 8 MPG with their buses while using this protocol. With this purchase and not ordering any IC buses newer than 2015, we anticipate never needing to have DEF in our inventory. Carl Lincoln mentioned that Mason Schools is also using propane buses extensively.

Phil mentioned that John Lazere was at Onsted doing inspections concentrating a lot on seatbacks and the body undersides, particularly body supports and firewall cracks. Also, on Bluebirds there is an issue with turn signal levers that are not automatically returning to the home position, which has resulted in red tags.

We discussed transportation software and the discussions revolved around PolyPlot, Transfinder, and VersaTrans. Columbia now is using Zonar where their younger students have an ID card scanned when they are getting off and on to help identify the children's status in real time. There is also a parent application available that allows parents to track their children's whereabouts. The subscription price for the Zonar at Columbia is \$18.99 per month per bus.

We were reminded that long-time Western Schools transportation employee Joyce McMurtrie passed away unexpectedly. We share our thoughts and prayers for her Western family and friends.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 7, at 10 AM at the Artesian Well Sportsman Tavern.