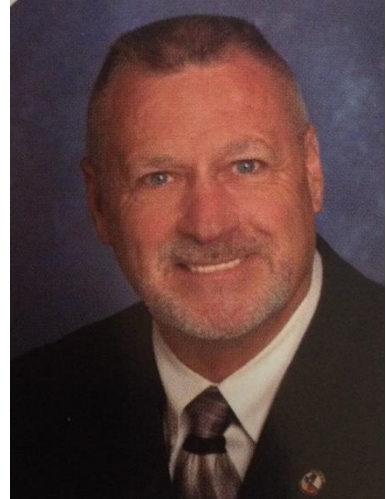




PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

September 2015

Greetings to everyone involved in TAPT and student transportation. I am excited and humbled to serve as your TAPT President this year. I pledge to you that the Executive Committee and I will work hard for the membership and our association. If you have an issue or concern during the year, please feel free to contact myself or any member of the Executive Committee.



I hope everyone is enjoying a smooth start to the school year. Here in Dallas, we have enjoyed a very successful startup because of all the amazing and talented individuals on our staff, together with our dedicated drivers and monitors. In talking to other Transportation Directors around the state, I find we are all having the same nagging problem we have always had - not enough drivers. We all have the most caring and dedicated employees you will find in any industry. The people in the student transportation field are genuinely concerned about the safety and welfare of our children and manage to get the job done.

There are several issues we face in our state regarding student transportation. The biggest issue is the use of seat belts on school buses. This issue resurfaced after the horrific school bus accident in Houston, Texas. Immediately after the accident, others and I were contacted by the Houston Chronicle and a local television station for statements and TAPT's position on the use of seat belts in school buses. This prompted us to look at our original position paper written in 2006. In summary, TAPT supports the option of lap-shoulder belts to enhance the safety of students riding a school bus. TAPT does not advocate that it is required but it should be encouraged only when purchasing a new school bus. Retrofitting used buses not manufactured to meet the seatbelt standards may not be warranted by the bus manufacturer and could create a liability issue. If a local district should purchase lap/shoulder belt equipped buses, they should establish a mandatory use policy and complete a training program for drivers, monitors and students. TAPT supports the NHTSA position that a local decision for lap/shoulder belts should not be done at the expense of students being displaced from school bus transportation.

I am extremely excited about this year's TAPT Summer Conference and Trade Show in Beaumont, Texas, June 24-30, 2016. We have already planned and booked our program and have gone back to the original program format we

had in previous years. Our theme this year is **"Let the Good Times Roll!"** We have lots of good educational opportunities, networking time and fun reuniting with good friends and family.

Certification classes will be offered on Friday (half day classes), Saturday and Sunday. The golf tournament will start at 8:00 AM and the bowling tournament will start at 6:30 PM, both on Friday, June 24th. The Road-E-O wheelchair and restraint classes, orientation, judges meeting and test will also be on Friday, June 24th. The Road-E-O's will be held at Ford Park on Saturday, June 25th. We are also offering something new this year for our shooting enthusiasts – a Sporting Clay Tournament from 9:00 AM to Noon on Saturday, June 25th.

The Awards Banquet will be on Saturday, June 25th at the Ford Park Arena at 6:00 PM. That will be our Mardi Gras theme night. Everyone is asked to wear your best Mardi Gras costume and their best mask. We will have prizes for the best dressed costume and the best mask. We will have a local Zydeco band to play for us, and of course, there will be dancing. Even with all of that, we still have a couple of surprises for everyone.

On Sunday, June 26th we will have an inter-denominational Church Service at 7:00 AM at Ford Park. Everyone is invited to attend. The Trade Show preview will be from 10:00 AM until noon and the regular Trade Show from noon until 4:00 PM. Lunch will be in the vendor area of the Trade Show from Noon till 1:30 PM. Prizes will be announced throughout the regular Trade Show. Sunday will be an open night for everyone to enjoy the night life of Beaumont.

On Monday, June 27th at 8:00 AM we will have the Past President & Retiree Breakfast at the Elegante Hotel. Opening Ceremonies will be at the Ford Park Arena starting at 9:00 AM. We will have a tribute to our military and first responders. Mr. Kent Gonsoulin will be our featured keynote speaker during the first session. Mr. Mike Martin, Executive Director of NAPT will join us along with our Industry Panel after lunch.

On Tuesday, June 28th we will have a continental breakfast at 8:00 AM and Ms. Peggy Burns will keynote our second session. This will be Peggy's last conference to keynote. Our breakout sessions will be from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM and we have several great presentations lined up for your section. Then, the President's Banquet will start at 6:00 PM in the Grand Ballroom of the Elegante Hotel. We will have dinner and dancing with the Texas Unlimited Band.

On Wednesday, June 29th at the Elegante Hotel we will start our Scholarship Breakfast at 7:30 AM. Mr. Mike Martin will present our last keynote followed with our third and final general session, final recognitions, and door prizes. At

noon we will say goodbye and start planning for next year in Frisco, Texas.

I am very proud to be a part of this great association and look forward to a wonderful year. On behalf of all of the students we serve and care for, let me say thanks to all of you for making a difference in a child's life.

May God continue to bless you and our organization and ***"Laissez Le Bon Temps Rouler!"***

Mike Williams

President

Texas Association for Pupil Transportation

P. O. BOX 488

Kemah, Texas 77565

866-561-2121 Mobile # 214-686-4280