

Two Cutting Edge School Bus Web Sites

As web sophistication increases, the school bus industry has joined the trend with more than 100 sites has posted to the Internet. Here, STN reviews two sites on the cutting edge of development.

CYBERSPACE -- The revamped web site of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers a broad range of information and resources for the pupil transportation community.

Located at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/buses/> the web site offers limited graphics and lots of functionality.

The strongest feature of this web site is its organizational structure. It is one of the easiest web sites to navigate about and find what you are looking for. In fact, the site is so well organized that users will find information and resources they had no idea existed.

The site is organized into five broad categories: general information, children, vehicle regulations, occupant protection, and additional resources. When users click over to any of these categories, additional information -- usually in the form of another NHTSA document or link to another resource -- is listed alphabetically. In each section the alphabet is shown at the top of the page. Simply click on a combination of letters to find the resource you are looking for.

For example, when you click on occupant protection, under the "A-C" you will find "Child Transportation Safety Tips" which offers 14 child transportation safety tips. Under "M-O" users will find "Number of Persons that

web sites. Of particular interest is the link to the U.S. DOT's Docket Management System. Referred to as the DMS Web this feature represent the future of democracy in the electronic age.

DMS Web allows users to comment directly to NHTSA -- and other agencies of the DOT -- about pending regulations. The system allows readers to post comments directly to the Docket from their home or office computers. The process is designed to allow the general public to participate in the shaping of federal regulations.

Altogether, at the present time NHTSA's web site provides leads to nearly 30 resources offered by the agency, nearly a dozen pupil transportation resources offered by organizations such as the National Safety Council, industry associations and publications, and other web sites involved in pupil transportation safety. This is definitely a web site worth bookmarking.

School Transportation Group

Another web site that offers ease of navigation is the School Transportation Group (STG). This web site can be found at <http://itre.ncsu.edu/PT/index.html>. It resides on the homepage of the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) at North Carolina State, and is a joint effort by the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program and the North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction.

The only slight inconvenience is that the STG section it is not the top domain; you have to drill down two levels to find it. But once you do, be

sure to bookmark it as this web site will draw you back time and again.

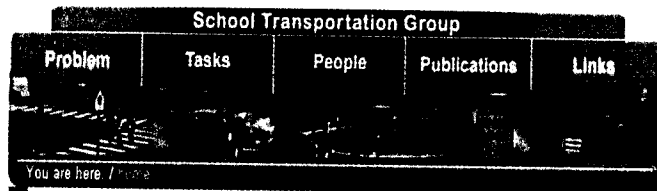
The School Transportation Group is a research organization that addresses multi-modal school transportation issues. According to the web site, the mission of the School Transportation Group is to "conduct research, education, and technology transfer activities concerning the application of transportation technology, policy, and planning to all modes of school transportation." The long-range goal of the STG



Institute for Transportation Research and Education

is to develop a public/private-funding base to ensure the group addresses multi-modal school transportation issues.

The STG is one of three activities within the Pupil Transportation program of ITRE. The other two activities include the Transportation Informa-



tion Management System and an Operations Research Lab. The STG web site features an attractive, well-organized interface that helps users easily find their way around. A colorful header at the top of each page allows users to navigate through five main categories of information and the several activities of the site.

STG publishes the findings of its research projects on the site in PDF format. Currently four projects are posted there. In addition it publishes its research schedule on the site to keep users apprised of its activities.

The research projects STG undertakes promise to be on the cutting edge of industry research for years to come. A visit to this web

site will give you a glimpse into the future of pupil transportation.

Both the NHTSA and STG web sites have earned *School Transportation News'* four-star rating.



Highway Prevention » School Bus Safety



can Safely Sit on a School Bus Seat," which offers NHTSA's policy on that subject.

In the occupant protection section users will find a links to NHTSA's synopsis of the federal motor vehicle safety standards it administers, the October 28, 1998 NPRM about the agencies School Bus Research Plan, and more.

The site also offers links to other



Visit Safety City from NHTSA's home page.