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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School Bus Anti-Terrorism Training Program Announced

School Bus Watch to provide anti-terrorism training to school bus drivers across the country

Alexandria, VA--The National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) and the Highway Watch® program today announced a new collaboration called School Bus Watch that will soon begin delivering anti-terrorism and safety training to school bus drivers across the country.

Highway Watch® participants--transportation workers, commercial and public truck and bus drivers, and other highway sector professionals--are specially trained to recognize potential safety and security threats in their industry and avoid becoming a target of terrorists or to spot a terrorist threat to others. After completing training, participants use cell phones and other telecommunications equipment to contact emergency and law enforcement personnel through a special Highway Watch® hotline. School Bus Watch expands on the Highway Watch® training curriculum to include more school bus-specific training and scenarios. Highway Watch® is administered by the American Trucking Associations (ATA) under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

“School Bus Watch has been developed by the school bus industry, and is tailored specifically for our school bus professionals,” said Steve Kalmes, President of NAPT. “It incorporates the communication elements of the Highway Watch® Program in a manner that is specific to our school bus operators. The program addresses all of the important information that a school bus driver would need to know to fulfill the program goals.”

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“School bus drivers already play an important role in the safety and security of their communities,” added Dale Krapf, President of NSTA. “School Bus Watch represents an important part of continuing that role and gives them some additional tools that will help them to keep their communities, their vehicles, and our children safe.”

The School Bus Watch program will provide school bus drivers with some basic background on potential threats to school buses. It will give drivers a history on terrorism worldwide, outline how the typical terrorist attack is carried out, and will close by giving drivers some tips on how to prevent terrorism in the school bus industry.

“As a result of their daily driving routines, school bus drivers are some of the best resources on the road in each local community to notice something that is out of the ordinary,” said Pete Japikse, President of NASDPTS. “School Bus Watch will give drivers an outlet to make their reports and ensure that those reports are taken seriously by the national intelligence community.”

The premier screening of School Bus Watch for school bus drivers will occur at the International School Bus Driver Safety Competition in Washington, DC on July 16th. NSTA’s Krapf said, “It is highly appropriate that the best school bus drivers in the country also will be the first drivers in the country to be certified in School Bus Watch.”

Initially, School Bus Watch will focus on “train-the-trainer” sessions in selected regional or state locations. A few of those sites have already been announced: July 15th in St. Cloud, Minnesota; July 16th for school bus drivers attending the NSTA Annual Conference in Washington, DC; July 19th in Greenville, South Carolina, August 1st in Reno, Nevada and in 6 different locations across New York state on August 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 16th, 17th and 18th. Once existing school bus driver trainers are qualified under the School Bus Watch Program, they can conduct training for others. All training materials, driver handouts and other resources will be provided at no cost as the program is expanded to the Nation’s 600,000 school bus driver professionals.

“We’re very happy to have the assistance of these three organizations in delivering this very important training to members of the school bus community,” said Bill Jacobs, Vice President of Highway Watch®. “One of the Highway Watch® program’s primary goals is to see that all school bus drivers receive anti-terrorism training and this new collaboration will enable us to reach significant numbers in the coming months.”

School Bus Watch is provided free to all school bus drivers nationwide. Those districts who wish to sign up to receive School Bus Watch training should contact the School Bus Information Council at 888-367-7242 or visit their website at www.schoolbusinfo.org.

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