

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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Public and Private Partnership Working for the Safety of our School Children

In recognition of National School Bus Safety Week, October 19-23, 2009, the Washington State Patrol, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Zonar Systems are proud to announce the results of a public and private partnership working for the safety of our school children.

The State of Washington is nationally recognized for its school bus safety and inspection program. The partnership between the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to achieve safe transportation of our school children exemplifies the highest standards of interagency cooperation. In 2003 the school bus inspection program was recognized with the Governor's Award for Public Benefit and Value.

Zonar has provided WSP/OSPI a technology solution to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the school bus inspection program. This technology has eliminated unnecessary paperwork and has provided an electronic database of school bus inspection information that will be used to conduct analyses on a local, regional, and statewide basis not previously possible with a paper-based system.

The WSP Commercial Vehicle Division (CVD) annually inspects 100% of all public school buses. During the winter months CVD conducts unannounced inspection of 25% of each school district's fleet. There are over 10,139 school buses in Washington and CVD spends more than 21,000 hours inspecting them. Each day almost 500,000 students ride the yellow school bus, a total of about 500,000 miles. Enough miles to drive to the moon and back, each day!

Over the last year, each team of school bus inspectors were provided a hand held device (RFID reader) similar to a TV remote that contains the software developed for recording a complete school bus inspection. Every school bus was supplied with an electronic asset tag (RFID tag) that accesses all information relevant to that particular bus. The hand held device electronically reads the RFID data on the school bus asset tag and a routine inspection is then performed. Each team of inspectors is equipped with an electronic upload system that meets the communication requirements for their geographic area. The inspectors upload the electronic inspection to a central database via cellular connection or a hardwire connection to an internet-enabled computer. During this year the total school bus inspections that occurred, (winter and summer) totaled 13,083. Of those electronic inspections, there were two that "failed" which means the inspections did not go into the database for some reason and needed to be resubmitted. The percentage of failed inspections is .02%. A success rate of 99.98% of

entering electronic inspections on a new system is incredible and speaks volumes about the training, equipment, and effort put forth in this new program.

Having the inspections done electronically and stored in a database give WSP and OSPI the ability to query the school bus inspection data and will allow targeted training programs to be developed in response to maintenance problems at state and district levels, resulting in a reduction of out-of-service rates and allowing school district analysis of maintenance trends. Providing consistent and uniform inspections will enhance the partnership between WSP and OSPI, school districts and industry professionals. The overall result will be to build on the national recognition WSP has received for its partnership with OSPI in maintaining an outstanding school bus inspection program.

Implementing an electronic school bus inspection system enhances the performance of the school bus inspection program, uses state of the art technology, and creates a more efficient and effective program. A member of the team said it best regarding the Zonar system; ***“school bus safety is now in the palm of our hands.”***

There will be a demonstration and question/answer time period on October 19, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. to kick off National School Bus Safety week. This will take place at Zonar Systems Cooperate Headquarters, 18200 Cascade Avenue S., Ste. 200 Seattle, WA 98188.

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