

# The

# DATTCO



# Traveler

A Quarterly Employee Newsletter

Fall 2018



## SCHOOL BUS IN FULL SWING!

### Welcome Back and Welcome Aboard!

We hope everyone in our school bus division enjoyed the summer! We welcome everyone back, with a special thank you to those New Britain staff who stayed on with us. Your loyalty means a lot! Start-ups went smoothly for the most part, and we thank everyone for their effort on this.

We welcome our newest school transportation contract, Thompson, managed by Karena Burnham. Congrats and welcome to the family!

We wish you all a successful year!

### Active Shooter & School Bus Security Training

DATTCO's safety training for all its bus drivers has a new component this year – active shooter and school bus security awareness. This new training program follows Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Federal guidelines. It includes how to be more aware of surroundings, what to do in the event of an active shooter situation, and proven tactics to disarm and overtake if needed. This training has established uniform guidelines on how all drivers respond to a security threat.

This new training component provides drivers with a mental preparedness level and set of reaction tactics to be used in the event of an active shooter on a school bus. They learn what to do if a weapon is fired, if an intruder gets on the bus, how to use the bus as a defense mechanism, and how to handle a bomb threat. The primary objective in this type of situation is to escape harm and ensure rapid deployment of first responders to the scene while minimizing injury and collateral damage. Drivers are taught “Seven Steps to Safety” that can be utilized to meet this objective whether the bus is in motion or parked.

For more on this story, visit our online Newsroom at [www.DATTCO.com/news](http://www.DATTCO.com/news).



## Tourism Leaders Celebrate Refunding of State's Regional Tourism Districts

The Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with DATTCO, hosted a guided motorcoach tour of businesses that are considered 'hidden gems' along the lower Connecticut River Valley. The participants - a group of tourism leaders and chamber members - discussed the importance of tourism and the impact it has on local businesses and the economy.

The tour also celebrated the restoration of funding for the State's regional tourism districts. Don DeVivo and Paul Mayer have been involved with the Chamber's Tourism Steering Committee since its inception in 2016. This committee has been working to market Middlesex County's tourism industry to travelers in the absence of state-funded regional tourism districts. The group applauds the leadership of the legislators who recognized the economic return in investment for regional tourism marketing, and they are confident that a strong partnership between the Chamber and the Districts will maximize the investment.



# AWARDS SEASON AT DATTCO

# SALES & SERVICE SCOOP



## Motorcoach Driver Awards

### John Davis Recognized as Connecticut's Motorcoach Driver of the Year

We are thrilled to announce that DATTCO's own John Davis has been named Connecticut Bus Association's Driver of the Year! John's qualifications are among the best in the industry, practicing safe, accident-free driving while providing superior customer service. John started working at DATTCO in 1986 and has been a leader among our drivers for the past 32 years. John is the official driver of the Hartford Wolfpack and has driven every trip for the past 21 years! He is also one of our most-requested drivers. John completed another accident-free year in 2017, with over 75,000 miles driven! We are proud to have John as part of our DATTCO family. Congratulations on a well-deserved recognition!



### DATTCO Recognizes Motorcoach Drivers of the Year

Drivers of the Year for the Motorcoach Division are chosen based on their exemplary history of being a safe driver, having exceptional customer service skills and professionalism and courtesy exhibited while working with our team and clients. We congratulate Hector Medina, 2018 Otis Dames Driver of the Year, and Keanisha Johnson, Contract Services Driver of the Year! Thank you for your pride, dedication and hard work!



### Mark Sullivan Celebrates His 40th Anniversary

DATTCO celebrated the 40th anniversary of one of its finest motorcoach operators, Mark Sullivan. Don Devivo presented Mark with a certificate of appreciation. Mark has driven more than 3.5 million miles over his career. His professionalism and customer service have made him one of our most-requested drivers. Mark has driven famous dignitaries, government officials, professional and collegiate athletes, and tour groups throughout North America. His favorite and most unforgettable trip was the first time he drove a group to British Columbia, Canada, in 1982. He spent 30 days touring the Canadian Rockies. Congratulations Mark!



### Veteran Motorcoach Operator Retires

We wish a very happy retirement to one of our veteran motorcoach drivers, Huegette Arton. Huegette drove for DATTCO for 45-years; first as a school bus driver, and then transferring to motorcoach in 1992. We wish her a happy and fulfilling retirement!

## 2018 Annual Safety Awards

The 2018 Safety Awards were presented at our annual School Bus Managers Meeting in August. North Smithfield received The Safety Excellence Award; the runner-up was Plainfield. Woodstock was recognized as most improved! Our Circle of Safety Winners were New Britain, North Smithfield, Region 13, Plainfield and South Windsor Public. Congrats to all who put in the extra effort to earn these awards for their yards!



### 15 Minutes of Fame for Driver, Mel Gillus

Mel Gillus, a school bus driver for Windsor, was featured in a story on NBC Connecticut about school bus safety. Mel did a fantastic job demonstrating how we keep students safe on our buses. If you'd like to see Mel's story, please visit our online Newsroom at [www.dattco.com/news](http://www.dattco.com/news).

### School's Out Forever - Happy Retirement!

We'd like to wish a very happy retirement to Burrillville, RI school bus driver, Vickie Eddy, and her monitor, Paulette Fontaine. Vickie Eddy drove a big yellow bus for a total of 30 years, six of them with DATTCO! Paulette worked as a monitor for eight years. They were a dynamic team! We wish them well!

## DTEC Reaches a Five-Year Milestone

DATTCO's Technical Education Center (DTEC) graduated its 2017/2018 class on August 3. The group had a unique opportunity to work on a propane bus project for Navistar this summer; an experience that is not usually part of the training. Congratulations to Ryan Mishou, Dan Gobin, and Mike Gibilisco. These graduates will spend the next year working in various DATTCO shops before finding a more permanent home with the company.

Our fifth class, or "DTEC Gen 5" (officially dubbed by their mentors), started on August 6th. Alex Torres was a referral from a previous participant and a recent graduate of Meriden's Wilcox Technical High School. Antonio Torres, graduated from Plainville High School last year and joined DATTCO as an intern in our Christian Lane shop. Also, from Plainville High School, Denzyl Rosado excelled in the school's shop program. Matt Wilson Jr. joins us after completing Lincoln Tech's training program seeking to increase his skills and knowledge working on buses.

DTEC participants spend five full years at DATTCO learning on the job and honing their skills. 2019 marks the completion of the first group in the program as their 5th year ends; Walter Moore currently works in our property management division (Accelerated Property Management), and Eric Miller works for Thermo King Northeast, Windsor Locks.

If you are curious about the DTEC program, stop by DTEC at 315 South Street to learn more and meet the students!

## Scott Rooks Wins a Trip to Alaska

DATTCO was recognized by Cummins for achieving one of the highest percentage increases in parts sales performance in 2017/2018, designating us the East Region winner of The Alaska Challenge, Cummins' annual business growth contest.

Our Sales & Service Parts team held an internal raffle to choose who would go on this trip of a lifetime! Scott Rooks, parts manager for Thermo King Northeast, Windsor Locks, was the lucky winner to take this all expenses paid trip that included two and a half days of guided fishing on the world-famous Kenai River. Congrats Scott!



A special thanks to all who assisted with this growth. Keep up the great work!

## Mike Butterfield Participates in the Navistar Technician Rodeo

Congrats to our own Mike Butterfield who competed in his first Navistar Technician Rodeo this August at Navistar's Training Center in Woodridge, IL. He had a strong showing for his first time at this event finishing as runner-up in the school bus portion of the competition.

Mike was one of 20 technicians selected from a field of the top 900 Navistar Diamond Certified techs from across the U.S. and Canada. Technicians competed head-to-head in a series of stations designed to simulate service areas for air conditioning, brakes, drive train, electrical and Navistar and Cummins engines. Scoring was based on how quickly and effectively technicians navigated their way through the stations, diagnosing and fixing the simulated problems.

To read more, visit [www.DATTCO.com/news!](http://www.DATTCO.com/news!)



## In Other News...

### From Spitfire to the Magic Food Bus

In 2016, Middlesex Community College purchased the Spitfire charter bus from DATTCO. It was converted by Vinal Tech students into the Magic Food Bus. Officially opened on September 21, 2016, the Magic Food Bus seeks to alleviate the challenges of food insecurity faced by college students and their families. The bus provides non-perishable food, toiletries, and other items to students and staff. To date, it has served more than 730 students and nearly 3,000 household members.

### The Official Quinnipiac Athletics Team Coach

DATTCO was pleased to present Quinnipiac University athletics with its new official team coach, fully wrapped in Bobcat awesomeness! The bus was presented to Bill Mecca, Senior Associate Athletic Director on August 24th, just in time for the women's soccer team to depart for their game versus Dartmouth.

### DATTCO Employee Receives Scholarship from New England Bus Association

Congrats to Laura Haspeslagh, Charter Representative, for receiving a scholarship from the New England Bus Association! Laura is in the process of finishing up her Communications degree at CCSU. Once completed, she plans to study for her master's degree.



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## What Customers Are Saying About DATTCO

*"I just wanted to let you know that the MIT band trip was really successful thanks to DATTCO. You were very helpful to us in setting up the itinerary, and very accommodating. In addition, Peter Giossi was a fantastic driver."*  
-Rachael Skye

*"I am writing to give the highest recommendation of Karol Seidel, our Bus Driver for the Education First/Explore America tour to Washington, D.C. Karol exhibited the best bus driving I've ever experienced and engaged all 38 students and 4 adult chaperones in a manner that achieved outstanding customer satisfaction."*  
-Cate Kominsky, EF Explore America

*"I want to compliment DATTCO on the outstanding experience we had on a student tour to Boston and NYC. Not only was the bus great but more importantly, our experience with our driver, Ted Haussler. Ted went above and beyond to ensure our trip was a pleasant one."*  
-Richard Smock, Nebraska

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Open Enrollment

Open enrollment for health benefits begins on November 23, 2018 and ends on December 7, 2018 for medical coverage starting January 1, 2019. Stay tuned for more information from our Human Resources Department.

### Black Friday Trip to NYC

The annual Black Friday shopping trip to New York City is scheduled for November 23, 2018. The deadline for reservations is November 6, 2018.

### 2018 Holiday Party

The annual holiday party will be held Friday, December 28th at the Aqua Turf in Southington with DJ Keith Allen.

The DATTCO Traveler is a quarterly newsletter brought to you by your Marketing Department. If you would like to contribute material to the next newsletter, contact Eliza Baron at [eliza.baron@dattco.com](mailto:eliza.baron@dattco.com) or ext. 5690 or Elyse Fernandes at [elyse.fernandes@dattco.com](mailto:elyse.fernandes@dattco.com) or ext. 5674.