



Public Relations Contact:
Rebecca Scholer
IMMI Marketing
317.867-8283
rebecca.scholer@imminet.com

News Release

Dallas County Schools outfits all new school buses with belted seats

Westfield, IN – May 11, 2009 – As of June 2009, Dallas County Schools, which operates the fifth largest school bus fleet in the U.S., will have more than 100 buses equipped with belted seats, about half of them 19-passenger buses and the other half 77-passenger buses.

A year earlier, the progressive Dallas County School Board made the decision to outfit all new school buses with belted seats before Texas seat belt legislation takes effect. Using local funding until state funding is available, the school system has made a commitment to continue equipping its fleet until every student on its 1,650 buses is transported in a belted seat.

As president of the Dallas County Board of Trustees, Larry Duncan led the effort to equip buses with lap-shoulder belts, working collaboratively with school board leaders and members of top administration.

“Safety of our children is the most important consideration. We take it seriously and have made an absolute commitment,” Duncan said.

Duncan explained what drove him to initiate the charge toward belted seating. “Common sense and life experience tells me that our children need seat belts when they’re traveling in a moving vehicle,” he said.

Replacement seating is a part of the school system’s program as well, with 37 of existing buses in the fleet now outfitted with belted seats. “We couldn’t get it done fast enough if we only equipped new buses,” Duncan explained. “By retrofitting, we accelerate the pace of equipping the entire fleet.”

SafeGuard Sales Director James Johnson said flexible seating, pioneered by SafeGuard, is changing the dialogue in the school transportation industry. “Due in part to the availability of flexible seating technology, pioneered by SafeGuard, we are beginning to see an increasing number of individual school districts in states like Virginia, Texas, Indiana and Illinois voluntarily installing lap and shoulder belts on school buses,” Johnson said. “Dallas County Schools provides an excellent example of leadership, as the school district has moved forward with belted seating in advance of state legislation.”

For more information on the SafeGuard School Bus Seating line, visit safeguardseat.com, or call 877-447-2305.

About SafeGuard

The SafeGuard® division of IMMI®, based in Westfield, Ind., has been the industry leader in child and bus passenger protection for more than 30 years. Utilizing a modern crash-test facility, sophisticated engineering and advanced manufacturing operations, SafeGuard develops and supplies innovative, proven restraint systems and seating solutions for customers worldwide.

Bus seats made by SafeGuard undergo the most rigorous testing in the school transportation industry. Over the past decade, SafeGuard has conducted 12 full barrier crash tests on school buses to gain a full understanding of student occupant protection. To support development of the company’s bus seating products, SafeGuard has conducted more than 200 sled tests and 20 school bus rollover tests, and has performed tests on thousands of components to assure performance and durability.

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