



# Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium

## Bus News

Fall 2009

Welcome to the first edition of the RCJTC "Bus Stop News". This newsletter is intended to become a publication that will be distributed to Renfrew County Bus Operators to keep them informed of all ongoing or upcoming operational items.

### Request for Proposal (RFP)

The Ministry of Education issued a memorandum in September regarding the Contracting Practices Pilot. From the pilot, areas for refining the draft tools and procurement processes have been identified. The experience gained will also support the development of a suitable transition strategy for moving towards public sector procurement standards.

The three consortia sites that participated in the pilot deemed it to be a success in achieving their goals to improve contracting practices and establish clear expectations for service delivery and value for money. While the pilot revealed an interest in the marketplace for new entrants and existing operators who want to expand their business, the training provided by the Ministry and OSBA was also helpful in assisting medium and small operators to understand the process and in preparing their proposals.

With the completion of the pilot project, the Ministry intends to refine tools and processes based on the feedback and recommendations of those involved in the pilot. The Ministry is expected to issue a communication this fall to clarify their expectation for RFP for 2010-2011 and future years. In the meantime, however, consortia contracts are to be developed reflecting the fuel escalator/de-escalator and performance management clauses, and that all contracts be signed.

The original three pilot boards, Wellington/Dufferin, Halton, and York, who RFP'd 25% of their routes, have now received Ministry approval to RFP the remaining 75% of their routes. This year, the Ministry will develop the VOR process (a two stage procurement approach). Proposed VOR pilot sites are North East Tri-Board and the North Western Ontario Region (comprised of four Consortia being,

Rainy River Transportation Services  
Student Transportation Services Thunder Bay

Northwestern Ontario Student Services Cooperative  
East of Thunder Bay Transportation Consortium).

The implementation timeline is as follows.

1. 2010-2011 – RFP pilot sites to decide on appropriate procurement strategy for their contracts on remaining routes.
2. 2010-2011 – Two stage pilot consortia sites will begin using the tools and templates and will conduct procurement in the summer and fall of 2010.
3. 2011-2012 – The Ministry will provide consulting assistance to six to eight consortia on their selected procurement approach.
4. 2012-2013 – All Boards and Consortia are expected to have initiated their procurement of student transportation services to comply with the Supply Chain Guideline.



...the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step



The Consortia will provide further details as more information becomes available from the Ministry.

### **Fuel Escalation/De-escalation**

As indicated in memos and workshops regarding the fuel escalator/de-escalator and your contract, the Ministry has posted on their web site that fuel prices decreased in the month of September by 4.356% and in the month of October decreased by 4.148% (obtained from the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure). Therefore operators should be cognizant that this claw back will be adjusted to your operator payment once the Ministry has finalized the amount. This claw back could be as early as December.

### **Staggered Bell Pilot Program**

Overall, September start up went well, with very few concerns expressed by stakeholders considering the magnitude of change in the Pembroke, Petawawa, and Deep River family of schools. There have been a few modifications, five minutes either way to the bell times at the school, to original start/end times. Consortium staff are continuing to monitor the initiative. Thank you for your cooperation with this successful implementation.

In order to evaluate the pilot program, the RCJTC Governance Committee is developing criteria to be used to provide a report to the respective Boards in February 2010. This information will be instrumental to the Boards decision in March 2010 of whether to extend the staggered bell program. We will be conducting a survey during the next month for all those affected by the staggered bell pilot to have input. When you receive this survey, your timely response would be very much appreciated.

### **Reduction in Ministry Funding for Transportation**

It will be increasingly important for the RCJTC to ensure efficiencies in routing optimization in Renfrew County. The Ministry has announced it will reduce funding by 1 percent per year (cumulative) for boards that achieve less than a "high" rating in their routing and technology module of the E&E Review.

Additionally, the Ministry will further reduce transportation funding by implementing an enrolment adjustment beginning in 2010-11. For example, if a board's enrolment decreases by 5 per cent, its funding allocation will be reduced by 2.5 per cent.

### **Contracts**

The RCJTC will continue to use the Ministry Contract Template as the standard and the contracts should be ready in early July 2010 for signing.

### **School Bus Operators Association**

When or if the names and contact information for the committee members of the Renfrew County School Bus Operators Association change, the changes should be forwarded to Bob White at the RCJTC, 999 Cecelia St., Pembroke, ON K8B 1A4.



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