

# Behind The Wheel

Newsletter of the Maine Professional Drivers Association



Volume X, No. 2

*“Committed to Safety, Courtesy, and Professionalism”*

Mar/Apr 2000

## Breaker, Breaker One Nine . . .

Hey Good Buddy, have ya paid yur MPDA membership dues yet??

Well ya better, or ya ain't gonna get this neat newsletter sent to ya anymore. I heard on this here ra-did-eo that March 31'st was the deadline.

So ya better send yur dues in if'in ya want'ta keep gettin it.

And don't ya forget!! Our next Officers and General meet'n will be April, 15, at MMTA's office in Augusta, Maine at 9:00 & 10:00am. Hope to see ya there Good Buddy !!



## CHAMPIONSHIP NOTES

Aside from our calendar of events, another good place to check for any state driving competitions is on American Trucking Assn's website. There they list the date and location of every competition in the United States. If you have internet access, check the following website address:

[http://www.truckline.com/cc/councils/smc/2000state\\_tdc.html](http://www.truckline.com/cc/councils/smc/2000state_tdc.html)

### STATE & NATIONAL TDC's.

There had been discussion about limiting entries

into the National Truck Driving Championships to members of ATA only, but this is not so for 2000. The decision still has not been made for 2001, though. Any driver, regardless of memberships in any organization may still participate in the State and National Championships.

The fee for all drivers competing in the Nationals has been raised to \$100.00. Cliff Gray will explain this further to all drivers who win the State competition when the time comes. State registration fee this year will be \$70.00 for MMTA members and \$80.00 for non-members.

MPDA will be hosting a hospitality room again this year at the State Championships to give everyone an opportunity to get together the night before the competition. We will be at the Bangor Motor Inn in Room 230 and we will have snacks and beverages (non-alcoholic) for anyone connected to the competition to stop by and visit. We will display pins that drivers have collected over the years at various competitions. If you have some, bring them in to show.

*Denis Litalien*

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★ SPONSORED BY ASSOCIATED GROCERS OF MAINE

★ **ThriftWay** Supermarkets

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## HOURS OF SERVICE

At press time, the Hours of Service issue was still in limbo as the proposed rules were being reviewed. Any day now, they should appear in the Federal Register with all the details.

Assistant Transportation Secretary Mortimer Downey claims that the new rules will have provisions for various types of trucking operations. That is, they will address the rest needs of drivers who are on the road for extended periods of time as well as drivers working in regional and local driving jobs that get them home every night.

The rules will also address the needs of drivers who work in the hours between midnight and 6:00am, reportedly the most demanding hours on a driver. Drivers running through the overnight hours usually tend to get less sleep during the daytime and less effective sleep.

The latest rumors, without getting into all the details, seem to point to the 14/10 or the 12/12 rules, where drivers will be allowed to work up to 14 hours, without regard to driving or working time (with 2 hours break time) and then take 10 off, or; work 12 hours and take 12 off. In any case the rules will be based on a 24 hour cycle, aligning with the circadian rhythms in the human body, affording drivers a constant wake/sleep cycle said to promote less fatigue.

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## FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

The new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has come into being as of January 1st, 2000. What does this mean to us? Plenty!

The FMCSA came into being after Congress looked at how safety issues were being addressed by the Office of Motor Carriers in the trucking industry and decided that an agency was needed that was on par with other transportation industries, namely rail, maritime and aviation.

As the agency begins to take shape, it's administrator, Julie Cirillo, who has headed the Office of Motor Carrier Safety, wants to tackle the hottest issues in the industry concerning safety as soon as possible. Among those issues are drivers hours of service, commercial driver licensing and standards for new motor carriers. Issues that affect each and every one of us with a CDL or a truck.

Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater says the goal of the agency is to help cut the truck accident-related fatality count to half in the coming decade. Plans to accomplish

this include stepped up safety enforcement in the industry, more research and targeting high risk operations.

The fatality count reflects actual deaths occurring in accidents involving trucks but does not take into account the increasing number of trucks on the road miles traveled and who was at fault in the accidents. While the fatality count actually dropped in from 1998 to 1999 by 3%, the fatality rate, which compares number of fatalities to number of vehicle miles traveled, dropped 34% in the last 10 years that figures are available. A tribute to the safety record of the trucking industry, but not a figure that anyone wanting more enforcement is likely to use. And remember, the majority of those accidents were NOT the truck drivers' fault.

While the creation of this new agency is not necessarily a bad thing, as government agencies go, it is noteworthy that our industry should look to more support from this agency to get research on accurate figures, to find ways to improve safety, and also to be aware that more enforcement of regulations is the order of the day.

If you have access to the Internet, you can get more information at this website: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/>

Denis Litalien

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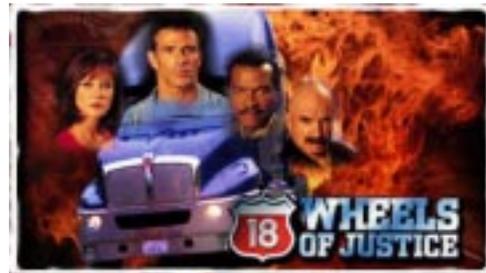
## 18 WHEELS OF JUSTICE

Has anyone seen the new TV series, "18 Wheels of Justice"? While it's great to see a show about our industry, we're hoping it will be a positive portrayal.

You can catch it on TNN on Wednesday nights at 9:00pm and Saturday nights at 5:00pm. See what you think and let us know !!

*roadStar Magazine* reports some of the following comments from readers and bulletin board postings:

*"18 Wheels of Justice is so stupid it's funny. The show is also very unrealistic!!! I mean like really, a truck goes crashing through a building, usually some sort of warehouse, and the thing doesn't even get a scratch, let alone busting the snot out of the fiberglass hood of that KW. I mean come on here! The show is an insult to the*



18 WHEELS CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

**18 WHEELS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2**

intelligence of the average truck driver”, says driver David Gilbert.

“I’ve watched it each week since it came out and he hasn’t made a delivery yet.” “Does this guy have the faintest idea of how to lock up and secure a unit? It got towed off not once...but TWICE last night!” “At least in THIS episode, he remembered to hook up the air lines...” “Arizona to Atlanta by the next day — am I missing something here? I don’t believe I saw wings (or a DOT exception pass) on that KW”, include some of the bulletin board postings.

Check out the show’s website at <http://www.18woj.com>. On a positive note, there’s a section about trucks that offers tips for sharing the road with trucks safely. Under “Keep in Contact,” there’s a message board, where several truckers have been busy letting the producers know about the technical bloopers. Some truckers do like the show, despite the way it fails to portray trucking in any real way - after all, it’s really a show about a lawman hiding out from the gangsters. The trucking is just a disguise.

*from roadStar online*

**~~~ PLEASE TAKE NOTICE ~~~**

Evidently there are still some people sending mail items to the old Biddeford, Maine mailing address.



**PLEASE !!!** Send all U S Postage mailed items to the Augusta, Maine address. The correct address for Augusta is :

**Maine Professional Drivers Association  
P O Box 5672  
Augusta, Maine  
04332-5672**

Also... to help us get the mail from the mailbox in Augusta to the correct people, would you please put to whom the mail you send is for..

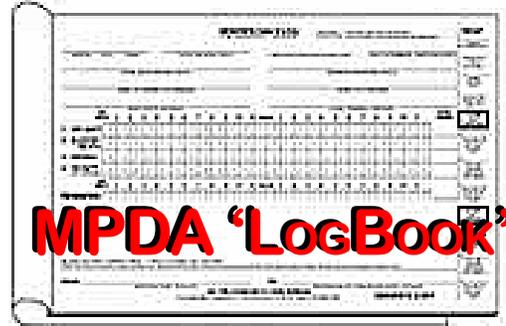
**For example** - if the mail you send is for the Membership Officer, please mark it “*Attn Membership Officer*”, if it is for the President, mark it “*Attn President*”, etc.

We would also like to let you know about our telephone number change - Please use the Augusta number,

as the Biddeford number is no longer in service.

The correct telephone number to use is **207-623-1396**. This number is available 24/7. If no one answers, there is a machine to take your message. Please leave a message with your reason for calling, a telephone number where someone can get in touch with you, the best time of day to call you, an email address if you have one, and any other pertinent information. Someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for helping us to be more efficient !!



**DOT ACCEPTING PAYMENTS VIA THE INTERNET**

The U.S. Department of Transportation is allowing customers to pay for goods and services, receive applications for registration and conduct other business with the department via the Internet.

The department’s new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration operates a website that lets you apply for registration and pay fines for violations of the federal motor carrier safety regulations. The FMCSA’s website is [www/fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www/fmcsa.dot.gov).

Plus, the Office of Hazardous Materials Safety website lets customers pay for Freedom of Information Act requests, assessments and civil penalties at <http://diy.dot.gov/hazmat>.

Also available is the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at <http://diy.dot.gov/nhtsa/>.



It is that time of year again - Road construction. Here are a few helpful guidelines to follow when you travel through a ‘Construction Zone’.

**HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION ZONE SAFETY**

- Watch for signs giving information and warning.
- Always pay attention.
- Be patient
- Always expect the unexpected.

**CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

As you may know, we sent out Membership Surveys recently. In the survey, we asked the question:

***“What do you have to offer the organization that would benefit fellow drivers”***

The results of this question was fantastic. The majority of you returned the surveys saying you could offer **‘TIME’**.

Now with that said . . .

We need some helping hands at our functions this coming year.

One function that is coming up soon is the Boston Truck Show. Jim Costa is the Chairperson of this show. He only has a few volunteers to help out as of right now. This is going to be the largest function this organization has ever participated in, as we will be located by the Main Entrance, and anticipate a need for a large number of people to help. We expect to have a large turn out at our booth.

If you can help with this show, please contact Jim - by email at jim-mona@cybertours.com, or by phone at 207-727-5349 and let him know.

This plea for volunteer help goes beyond the Boston Truck Show though . . .

We need volunteers for all of the events and functions that are listed in our ‘Events Calendar’ on the back page of this newsletter.

So please contact the person listed as the contact person and let them know that you want to help out this year.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP MPDA A  
RESPECTED NAME IN THE TRUCKING  
INDUSTRY!!**

**CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

- Abide by the posted speed limits (remember fines double in construction zones)
- Be alert for slowed or stopped traffic.
- When stopped, turn on your 4-way flashers.
- Watch for lane shift and lanes that are closed  
Slow down when lanes narrow and and gave on coming vehicles as much room as possible.
- Watch for drop off at the edge of the road, a 2-inch drop-off can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- If your vehicle runs off the edge of the road, do not immediately steer back on to the road. Slow down to less then 20-mph check traffic and ease back onto road.
- Slow down and be alert when worker or machinery are near travel lanes. (workers or machinery could enter your lane at anytime)
- When driving in construction zones at night, use your high beams and adjust your speed to conditions.
- Be ready to “Give ‘em A Brake”



# ASSOCIATED GROCERS OF MAINE, INC.

**IS PLEASE TO SUPPORT THE MAINE  
PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS ASSOCIATION IN THEIR EFFORTS  
TO PROMOTE SAFER DRIVING**

*P.O. BOX 1000  
1000 BRUNSWICK AVENUE  
GARDINER, ME 04345-1000  
TELEPHONE: 1-207-582-6500 / FAX: (207) 582-3461  
TOLL FREE 1-800-598-9228 & 1-800-852-6550*

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## Our Mission Statement

**To Support the Operations and Enhance the Success of the  
Independent Retailer**

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Associated Grocers of Maine, Inc. is a retailer owned full-service grocery wholesaler servicing independent retailers in Northern New England.

"AG of Maine" offers all the product selections, advertising programs, technical services, retail counseling, expansion and development support, etc. needed in today's competitive and fast changing marketplace.



# MPDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2000

## April

- 14-15 Wal-Mart Driving Competition - Raymond, New Hampshire
- 15 - MPDA Officers and General Meeting, MMTA/MPDA office, Augusta - 9/10am - contact Doug Pickard at dpickard@cybertours.com or (207)-353-4042
- 27 4th Annual Maine Transportation Safety Conference - Augusta Civic Center - contact Debbie Dodge at the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition (207)-287-4288
- 29 Sysco Driving Competition - Sysco terminal, Westbrook - contact Andy Reed at 800-759-9848
- 29 Carl Smith Foods Driving Competition, Hermon (*date changed*)
- 30 Great Grocery Grudge V - Hannaford/Shaw's Driving Competition - Shaw's Truck Terminal, Scarborough 9:00am - contact Denis Litalien at dentruck@hotmail.com or (207) 282-6346 (***Not the changed date***)

## May

- ? Sysco National Driving Competition, Houston
- 4-6 New England Truck Show - Bayside Auditorium - Boston contact Jim Costa jim-mona@cybertours.com or (207) 727-5349
- 6 Northcenter Foods Driving Competition - Augusta - 8:00am - contact Mike Coulombe at oldgranite@juno.com / cfrickels@aol.com or (207) 547-3964
- 18-19 Westbrook Regional Vocational Center will be hosting the "***First Annual Maine Public School Truck Driving Championships***" - contact Dick Dolloff - rdolloff@maine.rr.com or (207) 854-0820
- 19 State Championships set-up day @ Dysart's & MPDA 5-10pm get-together at Bangor Motor Inn (Room 230) Contact Cliff Gray - grayc@mmta.com or (207) 623-4128
- 20 Maine State Truck Driving Championships - Bangor/Hermon Contact Cliff Gray - grayc@mmta.com or (207) 623-4128
- 20 New Hampshire State Driving Championships

## June

- 3 Northern Convoy for Kids - Bangor/Brewer - contact Irvin Smith at brianb@hobouchard.com or (800) 432-1727
- 3 Douglas Gentle Memorial Truck Rally and Roadeo, Houlton -sponsored by Transport for Christ International. Contact Roger Sproul at rasmpda@hotmail.com or (207) 626-0833
- 10 Poland Spring Driving Competition & Family Day - Point Sebago - 9:00am Contact Mona Lowell at jim-mona@cybertours.com or (207) 727-5349
- 17 Soap Box Derby - South Portland - Contact Dick Brown at rbrown9@maine.rr.com or (207) 799-1030
- 24 Massachusetts State Driving Championships - Devens, Mass. - contact Fred Schenk fschenk@rcn.com or (508) 453-3632

## August

- 9-12 National Truck Driving Championships, New Orleans, Louisiana Contact Cliff Gray - grayc@mmta.com or (207) 623-4128

## September

- 10 4th Annual Northeast Professional Truck Drivers Charity Challenge - Devens, Mass - contact Fred Schenk fschenk@rcn.com or (508) 453-3632
- 16 Sysco Driving Competition - Sysco terminal, Westbrook
- 23 Associated Grocers/ Progressive Distributors Driving Competition - Gardiner - contact Jim Widdoes at jwiddoes@agofme.com or (207) 582-6500

## October

- 8 Maine Trucking for Kids Convoy, South Portland/Portland