

Behind The Wheel

Newsletter of the Maine Professional Drivers Association



Volume XIV, No. 4

“Committed to Safety, Courtesy, and Professionalism”

April 2004

LETTER TO THE BTW EDITOR

To the editor,

The past two newsletters have devoted a lot of space to the Turnpike's decision to ban trucks from the third lane. Everyone knows we opposed the ban before it was approved and still oppose it to this day. Since it is not going to be repealed, the question now is how we will live with it. Will we act like childish morons and harass the motoring public by excessive tailgating and using the breakdown lane to pass? Or will we act like mature professional drivers, sharing the road with safety and courtesy in mind?

I believe most members of MPDA plan to follow the latter route. But, how often have I heard statements like "if we can't use the third lane, SOMEONE ought to teach car drivers to get out of the center lane and how to merge at entrance and exit ramps"? Yes, SOMEONE should. And who better is there than MPDA to be that someone?

The Turnpike Authority has asked us to join with them in educating car drivers how to share the road with trucks in light of the new rule. They have offered us recognition as a full partner in their comprehensive education campaign. Will we spurn that offer? Or will we remember and apply the title of our ROADTEAM's brochure "Your Partners in Highway Safety"?

As a former MPDA Publicity Officer, I often wished for an opportunity like the one now before us to gain statewide recognition as the premier truck safety organization in the state. Will we pass it up and remain an unknown and irrelevant organization? I hope not!

We were outvoted on a political issue. Get over it. Let's show we really care about highway safety by accepting the Turnpike Authority's offer to make us a partner in doing those things we all know SOMEONE should do.

Roger Sproul

UPDATE - THIRD LANE RESTRICTION

As we approach the 5th of May we are continuing our discussions with the folks at the Maine Turnpike Authority. As you know, May 5th is the tentative date that trucks will start being prohibited from the 3rd lane on I-95 from South Portland to Kittery.

The **Maine Turnpike Authority** (MTA) is committed to making the road as safe as possible. Where so many changes have occurred on this road in the past few years, especially with trucks being restricted to the two right lanes, the MTA agrees with us that there is a need to focus future publicity on teaching people how to drive on this reconfigured highway.

Some of the points they want to emphasize in their upcoming educational campaign includes on and off-ramp behavior by cars, tailgating by both cars and trucks, lane selection when passing or going slower and general "sharing-the-road" information with everyone. A number of our member drivers have sat with the folks at the MTA and discussed situations that should be addressed concerning the new lane restriction and how it will affect us.

Publicity about the rule change will be distributed to all media outlets and also to trucking industry publications. Dan Paradee, spokesman for the MTA, has asked us to be involved in the process of putting the educational campaign together. And while we made it clear that we do not support this rule, we would like to assure that our drivers are as safe as possible and that car drivers are aware of those special needs that truck drivers require to keep all highway users safe as this restriction comes into effect.

We are getting involved with them because it is in the best interest of our members and of all truck drivers that we get input in these areas that affect us. We would be remiss in our duties if we did not take advantage of the opportunity to educate drivers on how to operate safely around trucks and make our jobs out on the highway easier. In other words, we will be working hard to "soften the blow".

MPDA will also be working with the State to educate younger drivers about the rule change, getting information out to the drivers' education classes and through our own ROADTEAM programs.

The Widening Project is still on schedule to finish in November, which presents a couple of logistical problems in implementing the new lane restriction rule. Some decisions remain to be made of how the restriction will transition with lanes that are still under construction. There is also a slight possibility that the restriction may be fully or in part pushed back until construction is done. Now that would make sense!

We'll keep you posted as things develop. If you have any comments, suggestions or just would like to talk about this, please give me a call or talk to any member of the committee. You can reach me during the day at 468-7373 or in the evening at 282-6346.

Denis Litalien - Chair, Turnpike Relations Committee

 **HANNAFORD TRUCKING** 

Shop'n Save **Shop'n Save**

Kris-Way Truck Leasing



Kris-Way has grown from a single location in South Portland, Maine to a company that now operates nine service locations in Maine, New Hampshire, and New York



... FROM UP & DOWN THE ROAD YOU NEVER KNOW 'TIL YOU ASK

Dear Chief McCamish;

As one of those fortunate few who has the privilege of working late night hours on a part time job, I have been somewhat disappointed to find the traffic signals on Western Avenue on full cycle rather than flashing between midnight and 5:00 am.

As you know, due to weight restrictions on I95 some of the heaviest trucks legally operating in Maine are forced into Augusta's two rotaries. Going up the hill on Western Ave. can be rather brutal on these trucks, if they are forced to come to a complete stop at Sewall Street and at the Shopping Center across from U-Haul. Having to start from a complete stop requires much more fuel and causes more wear on clutches than being able to roll through these intersections. That is why you see most truck drivers trying to keep moving rather than completely stop. The increased fuel use also causes a secondary effect of increased air pollution and noise.

It is understandable that these lights are on full cycle during the day to accommodate the needs of everyone using Sewall Street and the Shopping Center. However, at night, there is very little use of these side streets.

More often than not I see trucks having to stop for a red light when there is no traffic on any of the side streets wanting to cross or enter Western Ave. You can barely imagine how irksome this is for a truck driver to have to stop and start when there wasn't even anyone else waiting.

Please consider leaving the Western Ave lights on flashing mode between midnight and 5:00 am or perhaps even 10:00 pm to 6:00 am.

Thank you for your consideration.

Roger Sproul, Member
Maine Professional Drivers Association
35 Hospital Street
Augusta, ME

(Editor's Note - As a result of the above letter being sent to Chief McCamish, the lights on Western Ave. have been changed from 'working light' at night to 'flashing lights'.)

MPDA ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

I would like to bring the membership up to date on my activities as Executive Director in the last month. On March 8th Roger Sproul and I meet with management of the **Maine**

Turnpike Authority, and you will read more about this meeting in another article in this newsletter.

On March 11th, I took a trip in my automobile to Houlton, Maine. The purpose of this trip was to stop in all the truck stops between Portland and Houlton to meet the managers of these truck stops and set up a spot in each one of them where we could post the MPDA newsletters. There are seven truck stops on I-95 between Portland and Houlton. In every stop I made, the manager was glad to talk to me and to allow me to post the newsletters. It was a good trip and we made some good contacts.

On March 20th we had the MPDA general meeting at the MMTA office in Augusta. The turnout was good and we had some people attend the meeting that we have not seen for a while. To this I say thank you and keep coming.

On March 23rd as always I attended the Southern Convoy meeting in So. Portland. That committee is working hard and doing a fine job.

On March 29th I was present at another meeting with the Maine Turnpike Authority. Once again, you will read about this meeting in another article in this newsletter.

Last but not least, I just want to update you all on the Membership Committee Meeting. We had our first meeting on Fri. April 2nd in Saco, Maine. We are trying to come up with ways to increase our membership as well as more benefits of being a MPDA member.

Without going into detail here, as this will be addressed at our next general meeting, I do want to let you all know that we elected **Andy Holmes** to be the Chairman of the committee. Besides Andy, myself, Pete Mortensen, and Stan McLaughlin make up this committee. Thank you Andy for taking on this very important job. I know that you will be a great asset to the MPDA. Anyone with suggestions may contact one of the committee members to let us know what you are thinking

Dick Brown, MPDA Executive Director

SECRETARY'S REPORT

There is a proposed By-Laws change up for first vote at the next General Meeting on April 17th @ Cole Farms Restaurant in Gray

A by law change is needed to let the association be able to administer to business during lack of quorum. The proposed changes are as follow:

- Article VI, Section I

Add the following:

"G Administer the business of the Assn. In the event of a lack of quorum at a Board of Directors meeting or lack of sufficient Directors at a General meeting when there is a lack of quorum."

- Article IX / Add section IX

Section IX:

In the event of a lack of quorum at any Board of Directors meeting, the President shall have authority to make any decisions necessary to administer emergency business until directors can meet again. In the event the President is absent, then the Vice-President assumes authority,

(Continued on page 3)

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then the Treasurer, then the Secretary. After these options have been exhausted, then the Executive Director will acquire such authority.

In the event of a lack of quorum at any General meeting where there are not enough Directors present, the President shall have authority to make any decisions necessary to administer emergency business until directors can meet again. In the event the President is absent, then the Vice-President assumes authority, then the Treasurer, then the Secretary. After these options have been exhausted, then the Executive Director will acquire such authority.

In any other situation, decisions shall be tabled until a quorum of Directors meets.

Highlights of the March 20th General Meeting

The ROADTEAM Safety presentation was given by Mike Frith on Cargo Securement. The group previewed a tape on safe cargo securement procedures and booklets were handed out. Drivers are responsible for their own loads. Especially at this time of year, with potholes and frost heaves everywhere, securement of the contents in trailers is very important.

Hats were purchased from Brady Screenprint in Biddeford with the MPDA logo on them for sale at upcoming events.

TDC info:

- The Maine State TDC will be held on May 15th, at Dysarts in Bangor. Anyone interested in helping with or participating in the TDC may contact Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com>
- The ATA Nationals will be held this year in Salt Lake City, Utah from August 17 - 24.
- The U.S. Professional TDC will be held in Milwaukee, September 23- 25.
- A discussion was had and a motion was made in regards to how the association feels about load limits on the Maine interstate system. The motion: "In the interest of safety, if loads over 80,000# are legal anywhere in Maine, they should also be legal on the interstate system." The motion passed unanimously.
- Each year, MPDA gives an honorary membership to the recipient of MMTA's Driver of the Year. **Lawrence Haskell**, driver for Macomber Trans was the recipient of this years award and honorary membership.
- The winner of a \$25 gift certificate to the Olive Garden was **Michael Coulombe**.

Elsewhere in this issue are reports on the Turnpike committee, ROADTEAM happenings and other events that the organization has been busy with, also discussed at this meeting.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Dear Members:

There have been some changes made to our MPDA Website. Please take a moment and check them out. We value your membership and opinions. If you have any comments or suggestions, please feel free to let us know. E-Mail us at: dstuart@mainepda.org or morty@maine.rr.com. We have a new link to our website - mpda.org (mainepda.org still works too - both with or without the 'www' in front of the address)

Thank You, MPDA Webmasters

NEWS FROM THE ROADTEAM

On Friday May 28, 2004 the MPDA ROADTEAM will be hosting a free 'Coffee Break' for the motoring public including our fellow truck drivers.

We are still looking for volunteers to work at this event. You don't need to be a member of the ROADTEAM to help out. If you are able to help us, please call me at home at 207-582-1343 or on my cell phone at 207-632-3385. You can even drop me an e-mail at tfthomp5349@aol.com.

We will be setting up at the Northbound weigh station in York, Maine at 10:00AM and staying until around midnight or before if traffic and business slows down.

Ron Hutchins will be there with the MMTA Training Unit and **Mike Conroy** will hopefully be able to bring **Pottle's Transportation's** No-Zone trailer. We will also have the MPDA trailer.

I also have a safety concern I want to address. Those of you who stop at **Howells Truck Stop** in Kittery and are headed north when you leave, be advised you are not supposed to turn left out of their driveway to go north. You are not only dealing with two lanes of southbound traffic on Route 1, but also with the traffic that comes off the southbound ramp from route 236 and I-95 which is right by the entrance to Howells.

The safe and legal way to do this is to exit the truckstop from the rear and make two left turns. This will then put you at the traffic light just beyond Howells. It is only a matter of time before someone gets hit crossing three lanes of traffic while turning left out of Howells yard.

That's it for this issue and I'll see you on the boulevard.

Fred Thompson MPDA ROADTEAM Captain

**Maine Professional Drivers Association's
Behind the Wheel Newsletter & Board of Directors**

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MPDA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting courtesy, safety and professionalism in the field of commercial driving. Articles of interest to members, advertising copy, inquiries, payments, change of address, comments, and newsletter submissions should be mailed to:

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Website - http://mainepda.org & http://www.mpda.org**



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Hannaford Trucking



In the late 1800's when Arthur and Howard Hannaford began their venture on the waterfront in Portland, Maine, transportation was a big challenge. At that time, a round trip to Boston, Massachusetts, could take four days, depending on the weather and if road conditions were passable for horse and wagon. Today we make the trip in four hours from our South Portland, Maine, terminal.



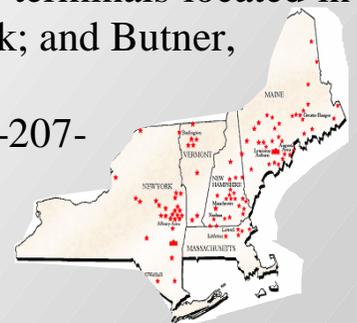
For the trucking business, 1982 brought a new era. Deregulation of the trucking industry allowed us to become a common carrier - hence, Hannaford Trucking Co. was born! We set forth on a new road with experience and the ability to meet all of our customers' high expectations. With an elite fleet of drivers, a very knowledgeable dispatch staff, and late model, well maintained equipment, we moved forward to meet those needs and have grown to become one of the premiere carriers on the East Coast.



Today, Hannaford Trucking Co. operates out of four (4) terminals located in South Portland, Maine; Winthrop, Maine; Schodack, New York; and Butner, North Carolina.

We can be reached via our new phone number at 482-5665 for more information or any questions you have.

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Hannaford Trucking is pleased and proud to be a Supporting Member of the Maine Professional Drivers Association.

MPDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2004

(As of March 30, 2004 - includes events that our members are involved in, or are of interest to our members)

April

- 17 **MPDA General Meeting** - Cole Farms Restaurant
8:00 - 9:00 AM, Breakfast Hour & Officer's Meeting
9:00 - Noon, General Meeting - Contact Ron Hutchins
at 207-623-4128 or <ronh@mmta.com>
- 20 **Maine State School Bus Driving Competition**
Westbrook Regional Vocational Center, Westbrook
contact Dick Brown at 207-318-7395 or
<rbrown@maine.rr.com>
- 25 **Great Grocery Grudge VIII** – Hannaford/Shaw's/
Hutchins Driving Competition – Hannaford Warehouse
South Portland – 8:00AM – Contact Denis Litalien at
<dentruck@hotmail.com> or 207-468-7373
- 29-30 **N. American Truck Show** Baltimore Convention
Center, Baltimore, MD - FMI contact Jim Costa at
<jcosta@sacoriver.net> or 207-727-5349

May

- 1 **N. American Truck Show** Baltimore Convention
Center, Baltimore, MD - FMI contact Jim Costa at
<jcosta@sacoriver.net> or 207-727-5349
- 1 **Deadline for Behind the Wheel Newsletter
Submissions** - Contact Dave Stuart @
<dstuart@mainepda.org or call 207-727-3704
- 5 **THIRD LANE RESTRICTION TAKES EFFECT – MAINE
TURNPIKE & MAINE I-95**
- 14 **TDC Set-up Day** – Dysart's Truck Terminal, Hermon
Noon - contact Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com>
or 207-623-4128
- 14 **MPDA Hospitality Get-together** (for everyone
involved in competition)– Room 230, Bangor Motor Inn
Contact Everett MacMaster at 207-797-6330 or
<emac@maine.rr.com>
- 15 **Maine State Truck Driving Championships**
Dysart's/Bangor Motor Inn – 5:30am - contact Cliff
Gray at <grayc@mmta.com> or 207-623-4128

28 **'Coffee Break'** – Maine Turnpike - Northbound Weigh
Station - I-95, Kittery/York, Maine – contact Fred
Thompson at 207-582-1343 or
<Tfthomp5349@aol.com>

June

- 6 **Northern Convoy for Kids** – Bangor/Brewer - contact
Stan McLaughlin at <swiftrucker@aol.com> or
207-827-7209
- 17-20 **American Lung Association of Maine - Trek
Across Maine** contact Fred Thompson at
207-582-1343 or <Tfthomp5349@aol.com>

August

- 17-24 **ATA National Truck Driving Championships**
Salt Lake City, Utah - contact Cliff Gray at
<grayc@mmta.com> or 207-623-4128

September

- 23-25 **US Professional Truck Driving Championships**
Wisconsin Center District, Milwaukee - contact
Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com> or 207-623-4128

October

- 9 **Trucking 4 Kids Convoy Set-up Day** – 9:00am
Portland - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net >
or 207-727-5349 or <trucking4kids@aol.com>
 - 10 **Maine Trucking for Kids Convoy**, 7:00am - Portland/
South Portland - contact Jim Costa at
<jcosta@sacoriver.net> or 207-727-5349 or
<trucking4kids@aol.com>
 - 24 **10th Annual N. H. Truckers Drive for Kids**
Steeplegate Mall, Concord, NH to Hopkinton
Fairgrounds, Hopkinton, NH – 7:30am - Contact Linda
Rafeal at 603-435-6366 or <LndaRfl@nhpda.com>
- (Corrections or additions should be sent to Pete Mortensen at
morty@maine.rr.com or 284-4933)

CHANGES IN YOUR NEWSLETTER

Have you noticed something different in the last three issues of *Behind the Wheel*?

Starting with the February 2004 issue, we have changed our format for our sponsors' ads. Since changing from a bi-monthly to a monthly publication, the Board of Directors thought it would benefit and be more cost effective for our sponsors to have an ad for 12 months.

Our sponsors will still have the bottom ad on the front page as well as the full page ad inside of their sponsored edition.

Behind The Wheel
Newsletter of the Maine Professional Drivers Association

"GOOD STUFF... TRUCKS BRING IT!"

MAINE TURNPIKE GOOD NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THIS EDITION OF BEHIND THE WHEEL IS SPONSORED BY
THE ANDREW W. HOLMES - GENERAL EXECUTIVE REPRESENTATIVE

The changes are -

1. Sponsors will also have 11 more months of advertisement in our valuable newsletter
2. Our sponsors will now be advertising in a larger area.

We have increased the number of newsletters published, from approximately 400 copies to just under 1000 copies per month.

The *Behind the Wheel* a copies are now being distributed to truck stops from the Kittery / Portsmouth area to Houlton Maine.

By increasing the geographical area our newsletter is distributed in, it gives a better value and larger exposure for our sponsors. Where else can anyone get more for the money?



US HOUSE PASSES SIX-YEAR TRANSPORTATION SPENDING BILL

The US House on Friday passed a \$275 billion bill (HR 3550) to reauthorize surface transportation funding for six years by a vote of 357 – 65. The bill reauthorizing TEA-21, which is set to expire at the end of April, will now go to a House-Senate conference committee.

Despite the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T & I) Committee imposing huge cuts to its original \$375 billion version of the bill, the Bush Administration issued a “statement of administration” on March 30, comprising a detailed list of objections to the House bill. The Administration outlined three principles that could trigger a veto of the bill, including: no fuel tax increase; no transportation bonding or “other mechanism that conceal the trust cost to federal taxpayers; and no tapping the general fund to finance highways.

The Administration, which previously called for a total spending cap in the legislation of \$256 billion over six years, also expressed its opposition to a so-called “reopener clause,” which would enable Congress to re-consider the total spending levels again in 2005. Their opposition was based on an analysis that the reopener clause effectively turns the six-year legislation into a two-year bill, and that its purpose was to obtain significantly higher funding levels by threatening a shutdown of the highway program next year.

Representative Don Young (R – Arkansas), the Chair of the House T & I Committee and chief sponsor, said he will continue to fight for a higher ultimate spending level as a legacy to the nation’s economic future. Other members of the T & I Committee, including Maine Congressman Michael H. Michaud, concurred.

During the floor debate, the House defeated two amendments to increase the overall funding level of the bill to the Senate level of \$318 billion.

Current funding for the federal-aid highway and transit programs will expire on April 30, and many in Washington believe it is unlikely that a conference agreement can be reached in that time, meaning another short-term extension of TEA-21 would be necessary.

Members of the House T & I Committee should be commended for their efforts in winning passage of the bill, despite tremendous pressure from the White House to make even deeper cuts to the legislation. To thank Congressman Michaud for his leadership as a member of the Committee, contact him at atrep.mikemichaud@mail.house.gov.

The Congressman was able to secure \$45 million in earmarks in the bill for some Maine transportation priorities in his district. These included:

- ◆ \$16 million for the Waldo-Hancock Bridge
- ◆ \$5 million for the Calais/St. Stephen border crossing
- ◆ \$4 million for the North-South Aroostook highway

- ◆ \$1 million to improve highway access around Madawaska
- ◆ \$2 million for the Penobscot Riverfront Development project
- ◆ \$5.8 million for the Lewiston/Auburn Downtown Connector
- ◆ \$1.5 million for improvements to Route 108 in Rumford
- ◆ \$400,000 for Routes 11, 6 and 16 in Piscataquis County
- ◆ \$1 million for a bicycle/pedestrian bridge in Orono
- ◆ \$500,000 for an interconnecting trail system in the Katahdin region
- ◆ \$1 million for the covered bridge in Norridgewock
- ◆ \$500,000 for Route 2 improvements from Bethel to Gilead
- ◆ \$1.5 million for the southbound on-ramp to I-95 at exit 47 in Bangor
- ◆ \$300,000 for new buses to improve commuting to the Jackson Labs in Bangor

While Maine’s First District Congressman Thomas Allen does not sit on the T & I Committee, he was also able to secure over \$14 million in funding for his district, most notably:

- ◆ \$9.6 million for the Gorham Route 25 bypass
- ◆ \$3 million for reconstruction of the I-295 Franklin arterial interchange in Portland
- ◆ \$1 million for 55-mile Eastern Trail pedestrian-bicycle path
- ◆ \$400,000 for the Kennebec River Rail Trail

To thank Congressman Allen, use the following link: rep.tomallen@mail.house.gov. Email addresses are also provided for both Maine senators, Olympia S. Snowe (Olympia@snowe.senate.gov) and Susan M. Collins (William_clarkson@collins.senate.gov) who fought hard for transportation funding by supporting the higher Senate version of the bill.

SENATOR SNOWE ANNOUNCES CRITICAL TRUCK WEIGHT EXEMPTION FOR AUGUSTA

U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe today announced that the Federal Highway Administration has re-designated a three-mile section of I-95 near Augusta as an extension of the Maine Turnpike. This will allow trucks weighing between the federal limit of 80,000 pounds and the Maine limit of 100,000 pounds to travel another three miles north on I95 and then access the new bypass route north of Augusta, which should be open to traffic later this summer or fall.

"Oversized trucks that should be limited to our state's interstates are currently putting the safety of the community in Augusta and many other communities in Maine at risk. Under current law, heavy truck traffic is diverted through downtown Augusta. This innovative decision to re-designate this critical

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(Continued from page 6)

stretch of I-95 in Augusta as an extension of the Maine turnpike will alleviate the truck traffic problem in Augusta," said Snowe. "While this is indeed welcome news, I also will continue to fight to allow the state to set its own truck weight limits throughout the Interstate highway system in Maine."

Snowe has pledged her continued efforts for the inclusion of legislative language in Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-21), otherwise known as the Highway Reauthorization bill, that would allow the State of Maine to set its own truck weight limits on the state's Interstate highway system, which would keep trucks off smaller, secondary roads while improving overall road safety. The Senate approved SAFETEA-21 in early February, and the House of Representatives passed similar legislation on Friday, April 2 with the legislation requiring action by a Conference Committee before final passage by both Houses of Congress.

"While first-class roads are important for economic development, safe roads are just as essential to the quality of life of our citizens. That is why it is critical that we keep heavy trucks off of our local roads," said Snowe. "I have long been concerned that the existing interstate weight limits in Maine have effectively force trucks onto state and local secondary roads that were never designed to handle heavy commercial trucks safely."

Federal law attempts to provide uniform truck weight limits - 80,000 pounds - on the Federal Interstate Highway System. Today, trucks that are heavier than 80,000 pounds have been given an exemption to travel in Maine from the New Hampshire border to Augusta along Interstate 95. This has had the unintended consequence of forcing these trucks off the interstate highways that have safety features specifically designed for heavy truck traffic, onto State and local roads that do not have specific safety provisions for large trucks.

For several years, Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) has been studying the potential safety and economic impacts of waiving the federal weight limits throughout the state. The preliminary results of their study clearly show the wisdom of allowing heavy trucks to travel on the interstate system rather than local roads. Specifically, MDOT estimates that waiving federal weight limits would result in three fewer truck crashes in Maine every year. In addition to the safety benefits, waiving weight limits would save MDOT between \$1 million and \$1.65 million every year on pavement costs, and approximately \$300,000 per year on bridge rehabilitation costs. The overall economic benefit to Maine and its citizens would be between \$1.6 million and \$2.3 million annually.

Snowe has been working to address this issue for many years.

During the 105th Congress, she authored a provision providing a waiver from federal weight limits on the Maine Turnpike, the 100-mile section of Maine's interstate in the southern portion of the State, and it was signed into law as part of TEA-21.

To thank Senator Snowe for her efforts, contact her at Olympia@snowe.senate.gov.

MAINE LEGISLATURE ENDORSES GARVEE BILL

The Maine Legislature last week endorsed LD 1922, An Act to Preserve Transportation Projects Statewide by Using Federal

GARVEE Financing for the Waldo-Hancock Bridge Replacement. LD 1922, which received nearly unanimous votes in the House and the Senate, would help finance the Waldo-Hancock Bridge replacement by borrowing from anticipated federal transportation funds. A final vote is expected any day.

Testifying in support of LD 1922 were two of the bill's co-sponsors, Senator Christine Savage from Union and Representative Richard Rosen from Bucksport; MDOT Commissioner David Cole; and Jonathan McDade, Division Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration. Other organizations providing testimony in support were MBTA, the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, the Maine Chapter - American Public Works Association, the Bucksport Economic Development Association, and Associated Constructors of Maine. Testifying in opposition was Joseph Grenier, a private citizen.

The bill would authorize Maine Municipal Bond Bank to issue up to \$50 million of GARVEE bonds to facilitate replacement of the bridge. A GARVEE bond is a bond that is repaid with future federal highway funds. Since the bonds are repaid with federal funds, not state funds, they are not state tax-supported debt and, therefore, do not require voter approval. GARVEE bonds have been authorized for us by 19 other states, including Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Rhode Island recently announced \$270 million in GARVEE and revenue bonds to complete five large transportation infrastructure improvement projects. The state revenue bonds will fund 20% of the program, while GARVEE bonds will provide 80%. According to the newsletter of the Newport County Business News: "Because the projects will be completed earlier, the state will pay less from them than they would have otherwise. It's like using a 15-year mortgage to finance your home instead of a 30-year mortgage [since] the cost is much less." Projects include three of the largest bridges in Rhode Island: the new Washington Bridge project, the new Sakonnet River Bridge connecting Tiverton and Portsmouth, and the Providence River Bridge. Additionally, 16 smaller bridges considered to be structurally deficient, will soon be replaced as part of an I-95 relocation project. In Rhode Island, similar bond sales are expected to take place in 2006 and 2008. (Note: *Special thanks to Ed Lenahan of Maguire Group, Inc. for providing information on Rhode Island's use of GARVEE financing.*)

BOND ISSUES STILL NOT DECIDED

The Maine Legislature has not yet decided the fate of the Governor's proposed \$119.85 million bond package, which includes \$18.25 million for transportation projects. It is expected that the bonds will be dealt with following votes on a Supplemental Budget. The Legislature must fill a gap of over \$160 million in that budget.

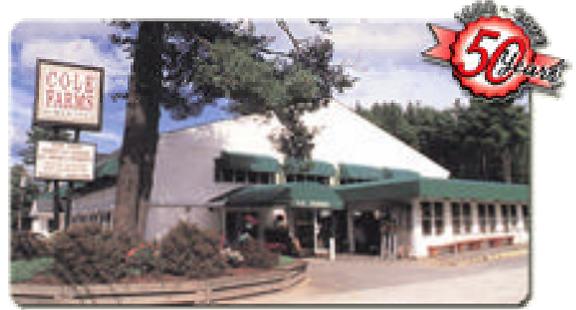
Other bonds proposed by the Governor include \$20 million being touted as an "economic stimulus" package which includes funds for applied research, weatherization for housing, school renovation and various other programs; a \$16.6 million environmental package; and \$65 million for state parks and for the Land for Maine's Future program.

If all four bonds are approved at their current funding level, the bond package generates \$115.5 million in federal matching funds.

For more information, contact the MBTA at 207.622.0526.

From MBTA email updates & Maria Fuentes

NEXT MPDA OFFICERS' & GENERAL MEETING



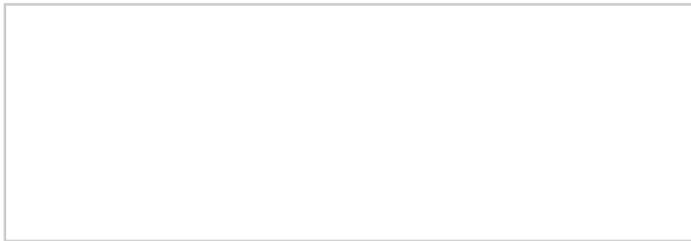
Our next MPDA General Meeting will be April 17 at Cole Farms
Restaurant

8:00 - 9:00 AM, Breakfast Hour/Officer's Meeting

9:00 - Noon, General Meeting

For more information - contact Ron Hutchins at 207-623-4128 or
<ronh@mmta.com>

SEE YOU THERE



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MAINE PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS ASSOCIATION

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