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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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White Asks Drivers to Observe School Bus Safety Week by Using Extra Caution Around Buses and School Zones

SPRINGFIELD - Secretary of State Jesse White today reminded drivers to use extra caution around school buses and in school zones. He also asked parents, teachers and students to observe National School Bus Safety Week, which runs Oct. 15 - 21, by taking time to review the rules of the road and safety tips for riding school buses.

"Thousands of children are injured and dozens are killed each year in mishaps involving school buses," said White. "We all play a role in the safe transportation of students to and from school. In observance of National School Bus Safety Week, I'm asking drivers to use extra caution in school zones and around school buses."

In conjunction with the Illinois Association for Pupil Transportation, White sponsored a school bus safety poster contest for students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. A ceremony awarding the students with the winning poster designs is being held today at 1:30 p.m. in the Hall of Flags of the Michael J. Howlett Building in Springfield. Each student's winning poster is being reproduced on calendars that will be distributed to schools throughout the state.

White said the poster contest helps students learn safety measures for boarding, riding and exiting the school bus. In addition to the poster contest, White will also be traveling to schools with Toby Tire, an animated character that helps teach young students what they should do to get to school and back safely.

White said parents should remind their children of the following safety tips throughout the school year:

- Walk safely to the bus stop and stay two giant steps away from the

street.

- While waiting for the school bus, stay away from the street and private property.
- When your school bus arrives, never move toward the bus until the doors open.
- Stay in your seat until the bus stops and the driver opens the door.
- Be quiet, especially at railroad crossings, and follow the driver's directions.
- When you leave the school bus, walk away from the bus and don't go back.
- To cross the street, go 10 giant steps in front of the bus and wait until the driver motions for you to cross.

White also warned motorists that the Secretary of State Police will be monitoring traffic and enforcing violations in school zones throughout the state this week. The project is a joint effort between the Secretary of State Police and the Illinois Department of Transportation and is funded through a federal highway safety grant. The sites being monitored are areas with high traffic counts or that have been identified as safety risks. The Secretary of State Police and IDOT worked with school administrators throughout the state to identify the locations.

"We can't be too careful when it comes to the safety of our children," said White. "Drivers should review the rules of the road that pertain to school zones and school buses and always use extra caution when driving in areas where children might be present."

White said motorists should remember the rules of the road that pertain to school zones and school buses:

- When traveling in a school zone, drivers must obey the 20-mph reduced speed limit during school hours when children are present.
- On two-lane roads, drivers traveling in both directions must stop when the red lights on a school bus are flashing and the stop sign is extended.
- On one-way roads, all vehicles must stop when the red lights on a school bus are flashing and the stop sign is extended.
- On four-lane roads where traffic moves in both directions, drivers traveling in the same **direction** as the school bus must stop when the red lights on the bus are flashing and the stop sign is extended. School buses may only let students exit on the side of the road that bus is traveling. Students are not permitted to cross four-lane roads where traffic travels in both directions.
- Drivers should be aware that school buses make stops at all railroad crossings.