John Benish, Jr., of Cook-Illinois, named president of the National School Transportation Association

Austin, Texas – John Benish, Jr. was elected President of the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) on July 24, 2019 at the NSTA Annual Meeting and Convention in Austin.

Benish, who is president and chief operating officer of Cook-Illinois Corporation, is a 25-year veteran of the school transportation industry. He began working for the family business as a teenager and has operated in all facets of the operation. Benish is a graduate of Purdue University and holds a Master’s Degree in Management from St. Xavier University. Today, he maintains his Illinois school bus drivers’ license and occasionally operates a school bus as a way of keeping in close contact with drivers and students.

In addition to being a NSTA board member, John is the past treasurer for the Illinois Student Transportation Association (ISTA), an active member of the National Association of Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the Illinois Association of Pupil Transportation (IAPPT), and the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO). Previously, he has been honored with the NSTA Distinguished Service Award, as well as a Golden Merit Award, for his continued efforts in support of the school bus industry.

Benish led the Cook-Illinois Corporation’s efforts toward a greener school transportation system for which the company received NSTA’s “Go Yellow, Go Green” Award. Under his leadership at Cook-Illinois, the company was the first in Illinois to voluntarily switch an entire bus fleet to bio diesel fuel. Next year will mark the 14th school year running on this green alternative fuel.

In addition, Cook-Illinois was one of the first companies operating on Propane and Compressed Natural Gas in the 1970’s and 1980’s, and they continue to use propane today. And this summer, the company will be receiving the first all-electric school buses in the State of Illinois this summer.

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Always encouraging the company to be environmentally conscious, John also made sure Cook-Illinois was first in line to purchase the first hybrid school bus in the State of Illinois as soon as they became available.

“I am deeply honored to be elected president of the National School Transportation Association and look forward to representing the membership,” said Mr. Benish. “NSTA has been a leader in representing the interests of private school bus contractors, as well as the districts we work with, and I look forward to continuing to highlight the incredible safety record of the industry.”

The fact remains school buses are the safest vehicles on the road to transport children, even safer than a child riding in a car with their parents. Less than one percent of all traffic fatalities nationwide occur on a school bus.

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