

OTE CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

Please join us April 19-21 for the annual Ontario Transportation Expo (OTE) to be held at our new venue, the Sheraton Airport Hotel and Conference Centre. Once again, we are partnering with the Ontario School Bus Association (OSBA) and the Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) to stage this event. OPTA is hosting a number of interesting conference sessions dealing with a wide variety of topics with lots of time set aside for discussion and interaction with your colleagues. For a quick look at the variety of session topics you will have to choose from, please visit www.ote.ca/pdf/OTE-Conference-Info-Registration-Pkg.pdf.

OPTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OPTA Members, please join us at this year's AGM to be held on Wed, April 21st at the Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel at 12:30 p.m., right after the conclusion of the OTE conference, and just prior to the start of the CUTA Statistics Workshop. As always, the AGM will start with a buffet lunch compliments of OPTA. Key agenda items will include the election of Directors for the coming year, and we will also be looking for approval of revised by-laws for the association. For more information, please contact Norm Cheesman, cheesman@ontariopublictransit.ca.

CABINET SHUFFLE - NEW MINISTER AT MTO

As you may be aware, last January's cabinet shuffle by the Premier resulted in the appointment of the Honourable Kathleen Wynne as the new Minister of Transportation, replacing Jim Bradley who has moved to Municipal Affairs and Housing. Ms. Wynne is the

MPP for Don Valley West and was previously Minister of Education. OPTA met with the new Minister in mid March to introduce our Association and to talk about some of the issues facing the transit industry, and we are looking forward to a good working relationship in the months ahead.

BILL 118 – TRANSIT EXEMPTIONS FOR HAND HELD DEVICES

Last fall, MTO announced the regulatory amendments to the Highway Traffic Act, which provided for the enactment of Bill 118 – Countering Distracted Driving. Public Transit systems were provided with a 3-year exemption relating to the restricted use of hand-held devices such as mikes and radio phones, after which time they will be required to utilize a wireless solution. OPTA asked MTO to reconsider this decision, but in a meeting with then-Minister Bradley in early January, the original decision to phase out hand held devices over a three-year period was confirmed. However, the Minister indicated that the MTO will review the situation as the 3-year deadline approaches to ensure that effective and affordable wireless alternatives are market ready and available. OPTA members should proceed on the assumption that the 3-year deadline is a fixed date and wireless alternatives will need to be in place by October 2012.

BILL 118 – OTHER ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Two other related issues have surfaced in relation to what MTO policy will be once the three-year exemption period has expired. With respect to the prohibition of hand-held radios, the question has been raised as to whether a driver can use the hand-held device in

bus bays, noting under the Highway Traffic Act, a bus bay is not considered to be “off roadway”. The MTO has not made a decision on this yet, so stay tuned. A second question that has come up is the impact on a system’s CVOR in the event of a driver infraction. We are advised that there will be no impact on CVOR for infractions by drivers noting there are no license demerit points applied to the penalty for an infraction.

HOURS OF SERVICE REVIEW

OPTA members will be glad to learn that the MTO has decided that there will be no changes to the ‘hours of service’ regulations which govern the number of hours that drivers can safely drive within a one week period. Last year Transport Canada amended the hours of service regulations for federally-regulated transit systems, leading to speculation that Ontario, and possibly other provinces, might follow suit. Following strong representations by OPTA to “leave things as they are”, and after a review by the Carrier Safety branch, the MTO has decided that it will maintain the current exemption (under Highway Traffic Act Regulation 555/06) for Ontario transit systems.

VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE – BECOMES LAW ON JUNE 15TH

Employers in Ontario will have to comply with new legislation under Bill 168 – Violence and Harassment in the Workplace -- effective June 15th. The legislation was formally passed by the legislature in December 2009 as an amendment to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Since then, the Ministry of Labor has been in discussions with various groups, including OPTA, with respect to the regulations that will be used to administer the new Act. OPTA has met twice with the Ministry of Labor in an effort to ensure that the regulations provide adequate clarity to both employers and inspectors, particularly as they pertain to work refusal situations.

The Ministry will be tabling Compliance Guidelines to assist employers in the administration of the new rules by mid to late March. Compliance requirements associated with the amended OHSA relating to Violence and Harassment in the Workplace will be the topic of a session at the upcoming OTE – **you won’t want to miss it.**

AODA

Consultations between transit industry representatives and the Ministry of Community and Social Services with respect to the various AODA standards have been ongoing, noting OPTA has continued to work closely with AMO on the issue of harmonization of the AODA standards. The standards currently under consideration (Transportation, Information & Communication, Employment) -- after being forwarded from the various Standard Development Committees to the Minister -- are still considered a work in progress and it is not yet known when the new regulations will take effect.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

ADG Forward Canada Inc.

BEA Transit Solutions

Carpentier Consulting

Clever Devices

GIRO Inc

INIT

Langille’s Scrap, Core & Truck Parts

Macnab Transit Sales Corp

PWTransit

Season Coach Corporation

Town of Collingwood

Vehicle Inspection Systems Inc.



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