

Taller buses require new bus maintenance garage

You may have noticed the new construction taking place next to Mad River Middle School on Harshman Road where our District maintenance facilities are located. The District is building a new bus maintenance garage on our existing property on Harshman Road.

In 2013 bus manufacturers began building school buses with 78" interior headroom instead of 74" as the old buses were made. The increased bus height can be blamed on the fact that students are taller than they used to be. Bus manufacturers had to adjust to the times by raising the interior ceiling height to accommodate our taller students.

This increase in the height of school buses created a problem for our bus mechanics in the fact that they could no longer raise up the new taller style buses inside our old bus garage due to the limited ceiling height. Our current bus maintenance garage was built sometime in the 1950's and has a ceiling height just barely tall enough to get the old style buses inside and lifted up high enough to get the wheels off for repairs. When a new taller style bus was pulled into our current garage, it could not be lifted off the ground without hitting the ceiling inside the garage.

The District runs about 21 different bus routes and has a fleet of 29 school buses including spares and buses for field trips. We normally purchase two new buses per year to replace worn out buses in the fleet. Last school year we were unable to replace any buses because we did not have a facility where we could work on the newer style buses. This started the process of the Board and Administration seriously considering the need to replace the current bus garage with a new facility with taller ceiling height.

The District put the new bus garage project out for bid this past spring and WENCO Construction Company won the bid. Construction started in June and is scheduled to be completed in September. The District will keep the old bus garage building and use it for storage of other District trucks and vans that are not as tall as school buses.

Mad River Transportation runs a joint operation with Montgomery County Education Service Center for transportation of students to county schools and the transportation fund that handles that cost sharing arrangement will pay for the new bus garage.

Hope you are enjoying your summer and as always, if you have any questions, please call me at 937-259-6610 or email me at jerry.ellender@madriverschools.org

Jerry Ellender, CPA

Treasurer/CFO