

Newsbreak

July 2017 Publication of the Minnesota Professional Towing Association



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“John “Butch” Thompson Jr. Will be Missed”



On May 22nd of this year, we lost a great ambassador for the MPTA and more importantly, our industry. John “Butch” Thompson Jr. at the age of 72 years.

When I first started working with the MPTA just over nine years ago, Butch was the glue holding the MPTA together. Butch was the Secretary/

Treasurer of the MPTA. Back then, MPTA didn’t have an accounting software program such as QuickBooks or Peachtree. Butch worked with a local accountant at the Bank in Barnum. Most guys joke about a little black book containing phone numbers of girls. Butch’s black book contained information about MPTA members. Phone numbers, addresses, names and other contact information. There was no database, the database was Butch.

Butch loved the MPTA and the MPTA loved him back. Serving several terms as a board director and always finding time working and visiting MPTA tow schools. Of Course, Butch always offered his opinion whether you wanted to hear it or not. Just as Butch was a legend, so was his main ride... his Heavy- Duty golf cart with the pink frisbees. Butch had personality.

Becoming a fall tradition, Butch hosted board meetings at his home in Barnum. Where he would serve the best steak (Grilled by grandson Alex), the greasiest cheesy hash browns. Large salad and a very heavy calorie desert. Whatever Butch did, it was always over the top! The guy would give you the shirt of his back and never talked bad about anyone.

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**If you would like to make a one time
contribution to help with the legislative
efforts, please send your donations to:**

MPTA
2886 Middle Street
Little Canada, MN 55117

Presidents Letter

Written by President, Brett Letourneau

Well, summer is in full swing now. I hope that everyone is enjoying the warmer weather and outdoor activities. In our business, it seems to always be difficult to get time to do the things that the average person is able to do every weekend. A little bit of balance is key to being able to maintain a long career in the towing business.

On May 27th, many of us gathered in Barnum, MN to say good bye to our friend and fellow towman, John "Butch" Thompson of Thompson Motor Service who passed away earlier in May. Butch served on the board of the MPTA for nearly two decades and was very active with whatever the association was trying to accomplish. We presented Butch's family with a plaque of the Towman's Prayer and brought our tow trucks in his honor. We will all miss Butch very much, gone but not forgotten!

It was nice to see many of our members at the Wisconsin Towing Association's 50 year anniversary of their annual towing convention in Wisconsin Dells. Many of us had time to kick tires and talk shop while still enjoying some family time. Don't forget to come out and support the Minnesota Professional Towing Association's annual event at Elko Speedway on July 29th. The event has grown every year and this year will prove to be even more fun then usual!

Our spring tow school was very well attended and a huge success. Thank you to all that participated as students and their employers for sending them to better our industry. Also, a big thank you to the MPTA staff and volunteer board of directors for making everything run so smooth. We are planning more schools this year....stay tuned!

We were also able to have a sit down meeting with Director Olson from the Department of Vehicle Services in early June to express the frustration we experience with inaccurate information about registered owners and lien holders. They were sensitive to our frustration and are receptive to idea's of how things can be more stream lined for impound lot operators in the future. We have established a committee to brainstorm some idea's and plan to have another meeting with the director and her staff later this summer.

I hope everyone enjoys the rest of their summer and as always, be safe out there.

Brett

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Butch was born on August 28, 1944 in Duluth to Edna and John Thompson, Sr. He grew up in Lawler and Duluth and later moved to Barnum where he attended Barnum High School graduating in 1962. Butch attended Dunwoody for a short time and later enlisted in the United States Army until receiving a medical discharge. Soon after, Butch was employed working on the Railroad, plowing snow for the State of MN, and as a mechanic for Odberg & Ryan in Duluth and Moses Chevrolet in Carlton. In 1967, Butch began working for his father, John Sr. at Thompson Motor Service in Barnum and in 1981 went on his own with Thompson Motor Service while operating "Big T" Truck Center in Carlton for about 5 years. In 1992, Butch purchased Lake City Towing in 1992 which is owned and operated today by son's Chad and Jay.

Butch was a member of Barnum Community United Methodist Church, Barnum Community Club, Barnum Fire Department, Barnum Lions Club, and the Moosehorn Rod & Gun Club. As most of us know, Butch had a great love for classic cars and organized several car shows in the area and was a member of both the National and Minnesota Impala Clubs. Butch truly loved his Barnum community, supporting and promoting events that were happening. Butch loved to visit and was often found in area restaurants soaking in the latest news or enjoying a game of cribbage with his friends.

Butch is preceded in death by his parents. Butch is survived by his wife, Sharon Thompson of Superior, WI; two sons: Chad (Erica) of Esko and Jay (Shanna) of Duluth ; 5 grandchildren whom he thought the world of: Alex, Zach, Nicholas, Grant, and Clarissa; two sisters: Valerie (Terry) O'Rourke and Judy (Ronald) Welhaven; several nieces, nephews, in-laws and many friends.

Butch was Buried at Riverside Cemetery in Barnum, just a few blocks from where he lived and attended church services every Sunday. Butch was more than an ambassador to the MPTA and to the towing industry, he was a wealth of knowledge. What I loved about Butch the most, he was a great friend, and the glue that continues to hold us all together.... We will miss you "Big T"!





U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
www.transportation.gov/briefingroom

NEWS

FMCSA 06-17
Monday, June 26, 2017
Contact: Sharon Worthy
Tel.: (202) 366-9999

FMCSA Urges Everyone to “*Share the Road Safely*” In National Safety Campaign

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) continues its efforts to raise public awareness so that all drivers know how to operate safely around large trucks and buses through a newly formed partnership under the [Our Roads, Our Safety](#) campaign.

“FMCSA is pleased to work with a group of partners that are dedicated to safety and share our agency’s goal of reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and buses on the road,” said FMCSA Deputy Administrator Daphne Jefferson. “This important partnership amplifies the message that all drivers on the roadway must work together to ensure that everyone arrives safely at their destinations.”

The [American Bus Association](#), [AAA](#) and the [American Trucking Associations](#) have joined with FMCSA to amplify the *Our Roads, Our Safety* effort to educate all pedestrians, bicyclists, passenger vehicle drivers and commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers on how to better share our roadways and improve safety for all.

There are several simple actions passenger vehicle drivers should take while sharing the road with large trucks and buses:

- Stay out of the “No Zones” or blind spots at the front, back and sides of the vehicle
- Make sure they can see the driver in the mirror before safely passing
- Don’t cut in close while merging in front of a CMV
- Stay back a safe distance to avoid being in the blind spot
- Anticipate wide turns and consider larger vehicles may require extra turning room
- Stay focused on the road and avoid distractions
- Lastly, be patient driving around large trucks and buses

In addition to these tips, parents and teachers can involve children aged 5-12 in highlighting the importance of road safety by participating in the [Road Safety Art Contest](#). The contest allows children in kindergarten through sixth grade to use their creativity and talent to help raise awareness of how to stay safe on the roads.

Visit www.sharetheroadsafely.gov to get involved. Learn more and share information about how passenger vehicle drivers, CMV drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians share a responsibility for making our roads a safer place for everyone.

Stay connected with FMCSA via:
FMCSA.dot.gov | [FMCSA on Facebook](#) | [FMCSA on Twitter](#)



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MPTA Hosts Light Duty Tow School

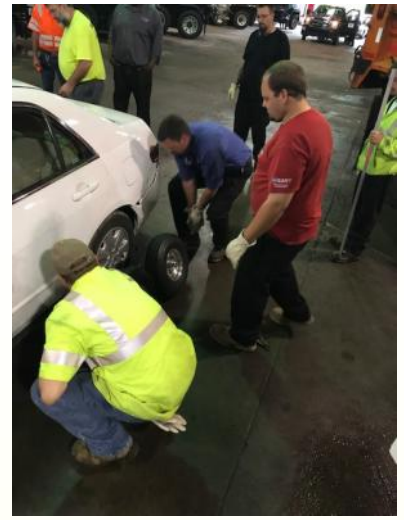
This past spring the MPTA supported our towing operators in a light duty tow school for beginners before the summer heats up on Wednesday, May 17th. MPTA board directors taught the early classroom portion of the school with new information and safety statistics as well as the everyday basics of getting ready for each towers shift. With new towing employees, it all starts with the basic -essentials. Students were taught everything from size of chains, straps, pressure points, and even how to better prepare yourself mentally and professionally.

With nearly 35 students in attendance, MPTA board directors hosted several training sessions featuring basic hook ups, use of dollies, and experiencing use of chains and straps getting a feel for what our industry has to offer. Although the school gives you a great “Hands on” experience, it can only prepare you for the “real thing!” Teaching student’s the basics and advanced lessons of hooking up from the streets /parking lots while learning the “Do’s and Do not’s” of our industry.

MPTA Board Directors sponsored the event providing many vehicles and the use of their equipment. The students did not disappoint. They were promised to get hands on training while getting dirty- just like every MPTA sponsored tow school. Every school the MPTA conducts, all of us learn more from the instructors as well as from our students. Special thanks to the MPTA Board Directors for their time and knowledge and the MNDOT for allowing us to use their facility. Together we continue to support our industry but more importantly, our professionalism. I would say when one looks at the time, money and personal commitment, at the end of the day, it’s all well worth it!

Hope to see you or your employees at the next MPTA endorsed tow school!







MNLARS Launch Date

July 7, 2017

After July 24, 2017, you will not be able to access motor vehicle records using the current records system.

On July 24, Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) replaces ESupport with the Minnesota Licensing and Registration System (MNLARS). By now, you should have received emails on what you need to do to prepare for the transition to MNLARS and ensure you do not lose access to motor vehicle records.

Actions Required:

If you have **not submitted** an updated Records Access Agreement and/or a copy of your driver license, please do it now. When we receive that, we'll send you further information regarding self-registration to MNLARS.

If you have **submitted** the updated Records Access Agreement **and** a copy of your driver license, you should have received an email with a link to self-register and an invite token. If you have not already done the self-registration and been approved by DVS, please do it now. Then make sure all your users of motor vehicle records have reviewed the training material, have self-registered, and you have approved their registration.

Reminders:

- DURs are responsible for reviewing and approving employee's self-registration.
- DURs need to check the system to see if they have pending approvals. They will not receive email notification of a self-registration waiting for approval.

The self-registration process is complete when, after approval by the DUR, the employee receives two emails; one with a username and another with a temporary password. Employees are encouraged to log in and create a new password as soon as they receive the emails.

Questions? Email DVS.DataServices@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

Data Practices Unit

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Driver and Vehicle Services

445 Minnesota Street, Suite 191

St. Paul, MN 55101



In case you missed it! - State Patrol seeks leads on a driver who fired shots at a tow truck on I-35E

The Minnesota State Patrol is looking for tips to find a driver who fired five to seven shots at a tow truck on Interstate 35E in St. Paul early Tuesday. At least one bullet hit the rear driver's door, but no injuries were reported.

The motive is under investigation, though the State Patrol does not believe it to be road rage. The 23-year-old tow truck driver from Richfield reported that he did not know the suspect and had no interaction with him before the run-in, said Lt. Tiffani Nielson, State Patrol spokeswoman.

The incident began as the tow truck driver was stopped at a stoplight on Wheelock Parkway heading onto southbound I-35E in St. Paul. The other man got out of his minivan, approached the tow truck and started yelling at the driver, Nielson said.

The suspect "tried to argue with him, but the tow driver, based on his statement, ignored that and got on the free-way," she said.

"In between Wheelock and University Avenue, he felt his vehicle get shot five to seven times," Nielson said. The tow truck driver left the highway, stopped by Regions Hospital and called police.

Troopers found evidence that his vehicle was hit by at least one bullet. The drivers were alone in their vehicles at the time the shots were fired, Nielson said.

The suspect was driving a white 2000s Dodge or Chrysler minivan. He is described as black, in his mid-20s, about 5 feet 8 inches tall, with shoulder-length dreadlocks. Anyone with information is asked to call the State Patrol at 651-582-1509.

The State Patrol continues to investigate an unrelated instance of a motorist shooting at another vehicle in White Bear Lake in March, Nielson said Tuesday. That case began on westbound Interstate 694 and East County Line Road/Geneva Avenue North as road rage between two drivers, the State Patrol has said. The vehicles continued west and as they exited at White Bear Avenue, one motorist fired a shot at the other's vehicle, shattering a back window. Later the same day, authorities found the vehicle and driver sought in connection with the incident but made no arrests.

Always remember to be safe and be alert!!

"Calling all Recoveries"

MPTA members: Speaking of recoveries, has your tow company worked a recovery job that you feel is worthy of a Donnie Award? Submit your entry to American Towman Magazine Editor Brendan Dooley at bdooley@towman.com.

It's OK to Decline Inebriated Transports

By Randall C. Resch

When the question comes up about transporting the drunken buddy, how are you prepared to answer the officer's request?

Often it's a situation after a DUI arrest that becomes a safety issue for towers when the arresting officer asks, "Will you take the passenger's buddy with you?" (Keep in mind the officer may not let you know that the buddy is a candidate for detox.) Because you wish to serve the police, you agree to transport Mr. Companion once you're loaded and ready to go.

All is well until the officer leaves. Then, the passenger starts to get a little froggy and attempts to liberate his friend's impounded vehicle.

Being placed directly in harm's way is typically not part of any law enforcement contract. Regarding the transport of injured, intoxicated or belligerent people, what's your company's policy and procedure?

While I realize that the police department has plenty to do, asking you to take control of an intoxicated or belligerent person is putting a tower directly in harm's way. Sure, the party may seem all friendly and nice; but once the cops depart, a drunk with a purpose comes alive and may come after you.

Police officers should be in charge of and responsible for transporting passengers off the highway for the safety of the tow operator. If it's an arrest in an area where public transportation is available, taxis or a rideshare program can transport them. If the passenger is intoxicated, a better decision would be to deliver that individual to detox and not release an intoxicated person into a public place.

In one incident, a tow operator agreed to transport a pair of intoxicated males off the highway after their buddy was arrested for DUI. With the impounded vehicle on his carrier, the tower drove the buzzed buddies to a residence; while he was letting them out, the two became aggressive, pulled the towman from the cab of his tow truck, and beat him severely. His injuries included a black eye, bloody nose and bruised ribs.

Although the tower did nothing wrong, the tower chose not to press charges as he did not want to cause problems for his tow company.

If your company tows for law enforcement, I recommend that management contact your law enforcement agencies to determine if (by contract) you're required to transport intoxicated or belligerent persons? My guess is ... that's police work.

Randall Resch is American Towman's and Tow Industry Week's Operations Editor, a former California police officer, tow business owner and retired civilian off-road instructor for Navy Special Warfare. Randall is an approved instructor for towers serving the California Highway Patrol's rotation contract. His course is approved by the California law enforcement community. He has written over 500 industry-related articles for print and on-line, and is a member of the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame

****Save the Date****

**The Minnesota Professional
Towing Association Presents
“The Eve of Destruction”
Saturday, July 29, 2017**



****Dont forget to contact the MPTA office for your (2) free tickets**
651-487-1983**

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Upcoming Events

MPTA Board Meeting

August 15, 2017

**6:00 Dinner
6:30 Meeting**

**MPTA Office
2886 Middle Street
Little Canada, MN 55117**

****Save the Date****

MPTA Annual Meeting

September 19, 2017

****more information to follow****

The Minnesota Professional Towing Association Presents

“The Eve of Destruction”

Saturday, July 29, 2017

**Elko Speedway
Elko New Market, MN**