

A Message from Pat Irsfeld

President

Happy New Year from Miliona, MN. As you read this message it is my hope that everyone had a safe and joyous Holiday Season. I can't believe that 2013 has come to an end and a new year is here again. Many people make resolutions as the year begins. As an educator one of my resolutions for the New Year remains the same as in the prior years. Each year I resolve to provide each student I encounter with the best education possible. I further resolve to teach and mentor these students as if they were my own son or daughter. Please join me in this resolution because our Highway Transportation System remains a dangerous place for young novice drivers. The first six months of licensed driving for young drivers remains one of high crash involvement. Modern vehicles are more crash worthy and streets and highways are better engineered for both crash mitigation and avoidance than when we were growing up. What has not changed is the need to instilling in the minds of new drivers the importance of problem solving, patience in interaction with other drivers, and the importance of adjusting to new driving environments, circumstances, and vehicle characteristics by applying the knowledge and skills they learned in Driver Education. As driver educators we play a critical role in starting young novice drivers on a path leading to a lifetime of safe and enjoyable driving.

Thank you to those who attended the winter workshops held on January 15th, 2014, and a special thank you to Joe Christensen, and the regional facilitators for putting these valuable workshops together. It surely gives all members the chance to get together and discuss many aspects of their own program and gain insight from the speakers that enrich their program. Hopefully you had an enjoyable and safe evening of travel, conversation, good company, and good food.

As you look ahead to spring, please consider attending our State Conference on April 4th and 5th at the Kelly Inn in St. Cloud. This conference provides updated information on important topics, new materials, legislative reports, and a chance to stay connected with fellow teachers from across the state. Please mark your calendar now so you don't forget to include the conference in your celebration of the end of winter (I can hope), and plan on bringing a colleague with you this year. Also plan on attending this year's ADTSEA National Convention. The dates and place: have been set July 13th – 16th 2014 Wichita Kansas. This will be a mid-west setting, which offers Minnesotans a chance to have a short drive for a National Convention. Please check MDTSEA's Website and ADTSEA'S website for more details.

The state's task force on driver education standards has been busy with meetings since my last President's Letter. Meetings have occurred on August 22nd, October 10th and November 21st, with future meetings scheduled for January 9th and February 20th. **MDTSEA** representatives to the task force include Joe Christensen, Bea Kehr, Pat Irsfeld, Doug Riles and Pat Cochrane. The duties of the task force are to examine and compare Minnesota Law and rules concerning driver education with the Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards (<http://mdtsea.net/standards.html>), identify discrepancies, and determine to what extent, if any, state law should be modified to conform with federal standards. The task force consists of 21 members including one representative from Mothers Against Drunk Driving; one representative from and designated by Minnesotans for Safe

Driving; two representatives from and designated by the Minnesota Association of Student Councils; two representatives from law enforcement organizations, such as the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association and the Minnesota Sheriff's Association, appointed by the commissioner; one representative from and designated by the American Automobile Association; one representative from and designated by the Minnesota Safety Council; two representatives from and designated by the Minnesota PTA; five driver educators from **MDTSEA**, and five driver educators from commercial driving schools.

I can't stress enough how important it is for **all** driver educators to be active in their professional organization. Unity is strength. If you have not joined MDTSEA this year you can print a copy of the registration for at <http://mdtsea.net/milepost2013fall/wsregistration.pdf> and send in to Bea Kehr. I hope you will join us in our efforts to improve driver education for Minnesota's youth.

Lastly, if you know of a deserving colleague for **TOY (teacher of the year)**, please consider nominating this person for 2014 (Mark Lee must receive nomination form by January 31, 2014). Our MDTSEA contact person is Mark Lee, District # 7 board member from Plummer, Minnesota. The best way to reach Mark is via email at mlee@trf.k12.mn.us

I hope the year 2014 is off to a good start for everyone. I am looking forward to seeing you again in St.Cloud.

Please stay warm and drive safely.

Patrick M. Irsfeld
MDTSEA President