



# MTEA NEWS

## MTEA President's Message

Greetings Traffic Educators!



**W**elcome to the Holiday Season! I can't decide if it is the over-protective parent, the over-zealous traffic educator or the over-paranoid husband in me, but I always feel a little bit worried when my loved ones and my students leave their houses at 4 a.m. on Black Friday, drive to the city, and stand in line at the doors of

Walmart to wait for the Great American Race to the flat screens.

Holiday season is traveling season and some have predicted that this year will see more holiday travelers than most. The roads in Montana can get pretty nasty during the winter. I am always hopeful that the lessons I've tried to teach over the past years, to my students and my family, have been properly absorbed.

Your MTEA executive board tried to set a positive example on Nov. 5, by holding a teleconference when we set up our fall meeting. Jim Carroll and I had an earnest conversation about the wisdom of asking a bunch of your board members to drive all around the state during a fairly potent winter storm. We were able to hold the meeting on a conference call, and hopefully that is the decision that many of our novice drivers will make instead of getting up at 4 a.m. on Black Friday to drive to the city for the Great American Flat Screen Race. This was an important lesson for us all and I am thankful that Jim made the suggestion.



Sometimes, even something as important as traffic education (or even a new flat screen) isn't worth the risk of a road trip on potentially dangerous roads.

Your executive board did get the ball rolling on some very exciting prospects and plans for the 2018 MTEA conference. We plan to build on the success of last year's conference by honing and improving some of the most popular workshops.

Our next meeting has been scheduled for Jan. 28, when planning continues for the 2018 conference, scheduled for April 22-24 in Bozeman. Your input is always welcome.



For those of you who, like me, teach a summer session, there is a good chance that many of your summer students are in the process of acquiring their GDL restricted license right now. The first wave of my 2017 class has rolled into the Bozeman Driver License Station and floated out with that elusive rite of passage.

I feel a strong sense of pride when they bring in their paper licenses to show me the physical manifestation of this milestone, but that pride is garnished with a dose of fear that I hope I did not let them down. We all care deeply for our students and we all take pride in our work.

Hopefully when care and work intersect we will have produced a driver who is conscientious, defensive, and disciplined.

I challenge all of you to reconnect with those students who brazenly brandish their newly acquired license. Become their driver's ed teacher again, for just a minute, and tell them how much you care about their safety. Remind them about the lessons you taught them. In doing this, in the worst-case scenario, you had the opportunity to chat with a student who you trusted with your life for at least six hours; at best, you might be the splinter in the back of their mind reminding them to buckle up, slow down, ignore that text, or put down that coffee cup in order to keep both hands on the wheel. Sometimes, an earnest conversation is enough.

*We all care deeply for our students and we all take pride in our work. Hopefully when care and work intersect we will have produced a driver who is conscientious, defensive, and disciplined.*

*Merry Christmas my fellow educators and be safe out there!*

*Kurtis Koenig, MTEA President (2017-18)*

## MTEA Executive Board

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## MTEA News

This newsletter is published by the Montana Traffic Education Association in the fall, winter, and spring. MTEA, PO Box 637, Conrad, MT 59425. Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, (406) 278-7856. Web: [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org).

MTEA News is mailed to members and active contributor/sustainers. The spring issue is mailed to all traffic educators in Montana as an invitation to the annual traffic education conference.

To submit an article, photo, or letter to the editor, contact newsletter editor Steffani Grogan at [sgrogan@forsyth.k12.mt.us](mailto:sgrogan@forsyth.k12.mt.us).

Newsletter deadline for articles:

**Fall issue—October 1**

**Winter issue—December 1**

**Spring issue—March 1**

## Help MTEA Recruit New Members

**Encourage a colleague to join MTEA!** Besides friendly colleagues and helpful mentors, there are many benefits of membership:

- Annual Traffic Education conference (conference fees extra) that brings 160 teachers together with experts in the field, college credit or renewal units for professional development, and the latest research and resources for traffic educators.
- Three newsletters per year (Fall, Winter, Spring).
- \$5,000 AD&D/life insurance policy.
- Voting on and eligibility for board elections and annual recognition awards.
- A voice in the ongoing improvement of driver education in Montana through policy and legislative actions.

If you know someone who teaches traffic education and is not a current member of MTEA, encourage them to join. Contact Jim Carroll at the MTEA address and he will send an application form and letter to anyone you identify as a potential member.

Annual membership dues are \$45, payable to MTEA. Your membership in MTEA is automatically renewed when you attend the annual spring conference.

Learn more about MTEA membership at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org).



## Retiring from Teaching? We want to honor you!



If you retired this year or have plans to retire from education soon and have been an active MTEA member, please send Jim Carroll a note at the MTEA address. We would like to honor you at the next spring conference. Download the Service Recognition/Retirement Award form at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org) and send to Jim Carroll by March 1.

## You can still teach driver education!

If your retirement is based on a termination date of January 1, 2014 or later, ***you must wait 150 calendar days before you can return to work as a working retiree*** in a TRS reportable position. The 150 calendar day break begins on the first day following your termination.

To comply with IRS public pension qualification standards, an unmistakable interval of time between a member's retirement and their return to work as a retired member is necessary. The break-in-service requirement applies to all TRS members, including members employed by the University System.

**For more information, visit the Teacher's Retirement System website:** <http://trs.mt.gov/>.



Search for:

**Montana Traffic Education Association**

## Summary of MTEA's Last Executive Board Meeting

Here's an overview of the last Executive Board meeting held November 5<sup>th</sup> in Helena:

- Minutes, correspondence, and financial reports were reviewed.
- Miscellaneous reports from the Great Falls conference regarding speakers, meals, awards, door prizes, accommodations, and related costs were heard.
- A final review of the 2017 Great Falls conference took place using information from the post-conference evaluations and classification meetings.
- Newsletter and web page reports were heard.
- Conference dates for the Pacific Northwest, MTEA, and ADTSEA conferences were discussed.
- President-Elect and Board assignments were discussed.
- The purchase of door prizes and awards for the conference was approved.
- Teacher and Contributor of the Year Awards and retirements were discussed.
- An OPI report was heard.
- Planning for the 2018 MTEA conference took place, with various speakers and break-out sessions being organized.

The next meeting was set for January 28, 2018, in Helena. Anyone having items for discussion should contact Kurtis Koenig, President, or Jim Carroll, Executive Secretary, as soon as possible to be included on the agenda.

## MTEA Contributor of the Year Award

MTEA recognizes companies, organizations, and individuals who make generous contributions of time, energy, equipment and/or expertise to support and sustain the mission of the Montana Traffic Education Association. To nominate a person or business for this honor, download the COY nomination form at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org). Email or mail the form by March 1. The Outstanding Contributor/Sustainer of the Year will be recognized at MTEA's spring conference in April. (See more information about the conference on the back page.)



**CONTACT US!** Send a note via the Contact page at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org) or contact MTEA Executive Secretary Jim Carroll at (406) 278-7856. Write to MTEA at PO Box 637, Conrad, MT 59425.

## DOJ-MVD Update

### Driver License Appointments

In school year 2016-2017, more than 5,100 students were waived on the CDTP Road Test. When these students schedule their driver license appointment, they should select **Driver Ed Waived** as the type of appointment they want to make.

Driver License examiners will adjust the appointment time for the 10% of students who are chosen to retest. Road Test appointments take 30 minutes. The **Driver Ed Waived** option leaves more time open for other appointments. Even students who are waived need to be ready to take the road test if they are chosen.

CDTP is highly successful as indicated by the 94% of Montana students who obtain their Learner License in their Driver Education class.

For more information and to make an appointment, visit: <https://dojmt.gov/driving/driver-licensing/#DLID6>.



## Nominations Sought for the 2018 Traffic Education Teacher of the Year

Do you know a traffic education teacher who has taught driver education in Montana for many years, has volunteered for MTEA in one or more capacities, and possibly has shared their knowledge, time and ideas to increase traffic safety in their community? You might know (or be) the ideal candidate for MTEA's annual Outstanding Traffic Education Teacher of the Year or TOY award.

Since 1988, the Montana Traffic Education Association has honored an Outstanding Traffic Education teacher with an annual teacher of the year (TOY) award presented at MTEA's spring conference. Any active teacher who has devoted a good part of their teaching career to traffic education is eligible to apply. Teachers can self-nominate or be nominated by someone who is familiar with their traffic education work.

Download the two-page nomination form from the website at <http://MTEAOnline.org> (which includes a section that is completed by the candidate). A TOY committee member will review the application to ensure that all required information and documentation is complete. If the nomination is eligible for consideration, the candidate will receive a letter notifying them of the nomination. Submit form to MTEA by March 1.

If you have any questions, contact MTEA TOY Committee Chair, Mick Davis at (406) 761-0400.

## Teaching Driver Education to Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Students

*Visual aids that help deaf/hard-of-hearing are valuable for all novice drivers*

*By Jennifer Wasson, 2017 Teacher of the Year*



**A**s a teacher of the deaf, who is also a traffic education teacher, I am always mindful of how to make all of my lessons and materials accessible to my deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students. I also want my students to be as independent as possible and driving is definitely a part of their independence,

just as it is for our students without a hearing loss. If you currently have D/HH students in your class, or maybe you will in the future, there are certain things you can do to make your lessons accessible. In my case I am able to provide direct instruction using sign language.

Remember, not all D/HH students require the use of an interpreter, nor are they all skilled lip readers. If this is the case in your situation, be aware of things you can do to enhance the learning environment for your students. Have lots of visual aids. Use your technology—slideshow presentations, video clips, drawings on the board—anything to make your lesson come to life for the students. You can also make your lessons and notes available to the students. Use closed captioning when showing videos. If that's not available, perhaps there is a transcript of the video you are showing that you can provide to the students.

Be sure not to speak with your back towards the D/HH students, even if an interpreter is present. This one could be a bit tricky when you are trying to write on the board. Make sure you have the attention of the students and rephrase or repeat information when necessary. Check for understanding by asking questions that are not yes/no questions. Make sure to double check that new vocabulary is understood and retained. They may need to have pre-teaching, teaching, and re-teaching to be able to understand and use this new vocabulary. Writing is a good way to check for understanding.

Make sure your face and lips are visible to the students because this will give them extra input. Speak clearly and do not shout. If the student uses an FM system in the



classroom, be sure to bring it during your BTW lessons. Remember, kids with a unilateral (one ear) hearing loss can't localize where a sound is coming from, even if their good ear is normal. They may not hear a siren, know where it's coming from, or if cars are passing them, especially if the hearing loss is in their left ear. Have them double check those mirrors and blind spots all the time. If the hearing loss is on the right side, they may have difficulty hearing your instructions in the car because you are sitting in the passenger seat. Be sure to pre-teach your driving lessons in case there is an issue with clear communication or a noisy listening environment. The use of an eye-check mirror in the traffic education car is very beneficial for instructors. If you notice the student isn't scanning, a simple tap of the rear-view mirror will quickly bring their attention there and they will know to keep their eyes moving.

Use whatever tools necessary to provide the best education to all students. Have a great year!

*Jennifer Wasson is MTEA's 2017 Outstanding Traffic Education Teacher of the Year. She teaches at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind in Great Falls and can be reached at [jwasson@msdb.mt.gov](mailto:jwasson@msdb.mt.gov).*

**CLASSROOM RESOURCES:** The Described and Captioned Media Program provides premium media designed for students with disabilities and leads as a resource for families and teachers, supported by the Department of Education. Sign up for a free account to access educational videos for your classroom: <https://dcmp.org/>

*The Informational Guide for Driver Education Instructors who work with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Students* is also an excellent resource on our OPI website: <http://opi.mt.gov/Traffic-Education-Programs>.

## Drowsy Driving Lessons & Resources

*Adapted from a lesson plan developed by Joshua Seader, Traffic Education Teacher, Billings.*

### Materials Required:

- Paper and pencil
- Technology (iPad, computer, and/or phone)

**Interactive Classroom Activity:** Have all students stand, then have them sit as their number of hours of sleep is called out: *Last night who slept 5 hrs? 6 hrs? 7 hrs? Etc.*

- How many hours should teens be sleeping?
- Why is sleep important?
- Teens should have 8 to 10 hrs and adults age 25-65 should have 7 to 9 hrs.

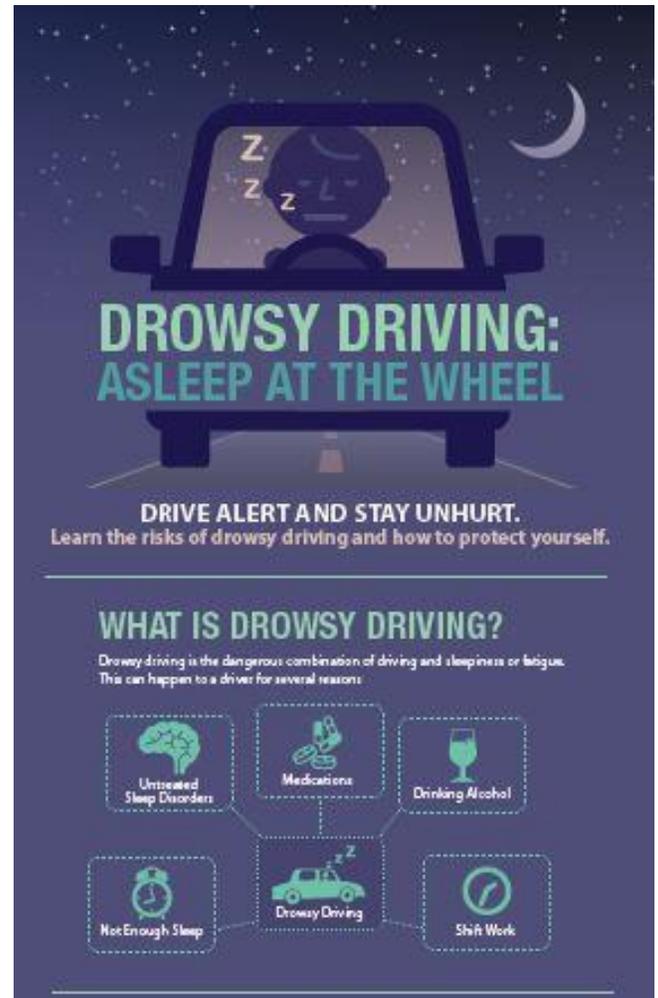
**Research Activity:** <http://drowsydriving.org/> and <http://answers.sleepfoundation.org/> (and the information included in the sidebar on this page).

**Activity:** Working in pairs or groups of three, students create a worksheet containing drowsy driving questions that they need to answer (see below). Once all questions have been answered, students should continue to look for interesting resources (news articles, websites) that relate to the topic. All answers should include the source—website, publication, etc. with author, date and location).

**Final Product:** Students share their findings with each other in the classroom, in a video or a presentation they put together that can be posted on social media or shown in other classes.

### DROWSY DRIVING QUESTIONS

1. What is driver fatigue?
2. What is "sleep deficit"?
3. Who is at risk?
4. Being awake how many hours is equivalent to driving with a BAC of 0.08% which is legally drunk?
5. List three or more factors that prevent teens from getting enough sleep.
6. Provide at least five warning signs that a driver should stop and rest.
7. What early warning sign is on our Montana Highways? Where are they located?
8. Discuss with your group what strategies drivers can use to stay awake at the wheel. Of these, which of the strategies actually work to stay awake?
9. How many hours of sleep does a high school student need in order to prevent sleep deficit?
10. When do drivers most typically get sleepy?



Travelers are making plans to gather with family and friends and drowsy teens may be behind the wheel. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Montana teens reported that 36.9 percent sleep less than seven hours on an average school night. Visit: <http://opi.mt.gov/YRBS>.

The Montana Highway Patrol reported in 2016 that 393 people were in crashes attributed to the driver falling asleep and 11 of those were fatalities.

The PBS News Hour reported in October that "smart phones are linked to unprecedented sleep deprivation in teens. Analysis of two large national surveys finds the number of U.S. teens who reported sleeping less than seven hours a night jumped 22 percent between 2012 and 2015, by which time 43 percent of teens reported sleeping less than seven hours most nights, though sleep experts agree adolescents need at least nine hours."

The [CDC](http://www.cdc.gov) has an infographic (part of which is shown above) and excellent information on how to prevent falling asleep at the wheel. Visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/dsdrowsydriving/index.html>.

## **State Farm™ Deer Claim Study: MT is #2**

**Montana drivers have 1 in 57 chance of a wildlife collision.**

**D**rivers in West Virginia, Montana or Pennsylvania are all too familiar with deer crossing signs. They know too the deer danger that lurks beside or on roads and highways.

The 15th annual State Farm deer claim study helps define that danger for drivers. It ranks states by the potential likelihood a driver has of hitting a large animal, like deer, elk, moose or caribou.

This year's study has some good news for West Virginia drivers. West Virginia continues to lead the nation in the likelihood of having an insurance claim involving a deer. However, their one out of every 43 drivers stat represents a 4.7 percent decrease from 2016. Unfortunately, there were some increases in likelihood among the top 10 over last year's study.

**Montana drivers have a one in 57 chance of a collision. This is a 1.8 percent increase.**

Mating season more than doubles the likelihood of collision with a large animal. So be especially alert during the months of October, November and December - deer mating season. Whether you hit a large animal, or it jumps into the side of your vehicle, such collisions can cause significant injuries and property damage. No matter where you live, it's important to remain alert. Keep your eyes up and focused on the road. This helps you take action in the event a deer is suddenly in your path.

Some other tips to help keep drivers safe include:

- Slow down, particularly at dusk and dawn.
- If you see one deer, be prepared for more deer to cross the road.
- Pay attention to deer crossing signs.
- Always buckle up - every trip, every time.
- Use your high beams to see farther, except when there is oncoming traffic.
- Brake if you can, but avoid swerving. This can result in a more severe crash.
- Remain focused on the road. Scan for hazards, including animals.
- Avoid distractions. Devices or eating might cause you to miss seeing an animal.
- Do not rely on products such as deer whistles. They are not proven effective.
- If riding a motorcycle, always wear protective gear. Keep focus on the road ahead.

There is also an increased risk of collision with deer around dawn and dusk. Drivers should be engaged, alert and on the lookout at all times. You never know when you may need to react to a deer or other obstacle that may cross your travel path.

*Reprinted from the State Farm Insurance website.*

Read more at <https://newsroom.statefarm.com/deer-collision-damage-claim-costs-up/#7wEPtZAFwEJ7rFA1.99>.

## **Wildlife-Caused Crashes in Montana**



### **Elk causes multi-vehicle crash near Bozeman (11/24/17)**

By MTN News

BOZEMAN - A 3-car accident involving an elk sent five people to the hospital Friday night.

The accident occurred sometime before 9 p.m. on Norris Road near mile marker 16.

According to Montana Highway Patrol, one vehicle struck an elk, and two other vehicles crashed while trying to avoid the elk. Four people were transported by ambulance to Bozeman Deaconess Hospital, and one person was airlifted.

The status of their injuries is unknown.

MHP and the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office were both on the scene.

### **Airborne elk causes fatal crash near Potomac (10/31/17)**

By Augusta McDonnell, KPAX

POTOMAC - A 21-year-old man from Salmon, Idaho was killed on Monday after his vehicle was struck by an elk that was hit by another vehicle and sent flying into the air.

The Montana Highway Patrol reports the crash happened at around 7:15 p.m. on Highway 200 just west of Potomac when a Toyota Scion being driven by a 21-year-old woman from Great Falls struck an elk that entered the roadway and sent the animal airborne.

The elk then struck a Dodge Ram 3500 pickup truck being driven by the 21-year-old man from Idaho. MHP reports the pickup truck then went off the roadway and hit several embankments.

The driver was declared dead on the scene. The woman from Great Falls was taken to St. Patrick Hospital to be checked out, but was not hurt in the accident.

Both drivers involved were wearing seatbelts, and no alcohol or drugs are suspected.

## Fran's Findings



I'm checking over my shoulder at the year we will leave behind and searching the way forward knowing there is always uncertainty around the corner. It's part of the adventure of exploring this wonderful state with long roads, rocky trails, and good people.

Community connections through traffic education give us a web of support beyond just the Internet. We find each other at the sidelines of sports events and at the MTEA spring conference. The challenge can be to keep the conversations going.

I found it helpful to use a smart phone to schedule some on-site reviews in Frenchtown, Arlee, Stevensville, Corvallis, Hamilton, Victor, and Florence this fall. It was a privilege to observe and visit with experienced teachers working to keep teens safe on the road. I traveled with Harold Lair and here are a few of the best practices we found:

- Gravel roads are part of scheduled drives where lessons on speed control reflect the judgment and focus necessary to prevent skids and to keep your teeth from rattling.
- After watching a video, students write three things or complete a worksheet on the information and lessons learned.

- On a drive in Missoula, we stopped briefly in a parking lot to observe traffic at a busy 4-way stop. Students predicted which vehicles should yield and which one should go next.
- Team teachers in Frenchtown offset schedules for morning classroom and after school drives so they don't work 13-hour days. The early morning teacher has some afternoons off for other activities, responsibilities, and family dinners.
- Stevensville requires students to document 10 hours of driving time with parents/guardians or other authorized adults before they can take the CDTP driving test.
- Clearly stated school policies for Traffic Education include equitable registration, responsibilities and refunds. Generally, students fail driver education due to missed days and hours.



Thank you for bringing your knowledge, patience and focus on safety to educating teen drivers. Your work has a positive impact on road safety for families across the state.

*Merry Christmas with best wishes for holidays filled with joy and safe travels.*



Contact Fran Penner-Ray ([fpenner-ray@mt.gov](mailto:fpenner-ray@mt.gov)) and Patti Borneman ([pborneman@mt.gov](mailto:pborneman@mt.gov)) by email or call the OPI Traffic Education Office at (406) 444-4432 with any questions about Teen Driver Education in Montana. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/DriverEd>.

## Could a Montana Rule Change keep Traffic Educators in the Profession?

The silver wave of retirements poses a challenge in many fields. We are encouraged that 117 new teachers in the past five years have completed the MSUN Traffic Safety Education (TSE) blended online courses which require only two weeks in Havre. However, 148 teachers chose not to renew their approval to teach traffic education and this causes some concern.

Montana requires traffic education teachers to begin with 8 credits of traffic safety education (TSE) at MSUN. Renewing teachers need an additional 4 TSE credits every five years until they have the 20 credits required for the Traffic Education endorsement. Montana has 311 Montana traffic education teachers and 194 have earned their TE endorsement.

Since 2015, the OPI will accept 60 renewal units for educator license renewal. We are exploring a possible change to keep the 20-credit TE endorsement and add TE certification with a new 12-credit benchmark option. Please contact Fran Penner-Ray to share your concerns and opinions on this possibility. Call (406) 444-4396 or email: [fpenner-ray@mt.gov](mailto:fpenner-ray@mt.gov).

### Other State Traffic Education Teacher Training Requirements:

- **Oregon**—Three required courses and 15 hours of Continuing Ed every 2 years
- **Minnesota**—St. Cloud University online, 4 months (13-credit Graduate Certificate)
- **North Dakota**—Minot State online program (10 TSE credits)
- **Nebraska**—University of Nebraska, Kearney (9 credits)
- **Virginia**—Comprehensive exam after earning six TSE credits





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## Traffic Safety and Driver Education Conferences in 2018

### March 2-4, 2018—Pacific Northwest Driver & Traffic Safety Conference



If you are looking for another great regional TE conference, the 2018 Pacific Northwest Driver & Traffic Safety Conference will be held March 2-4 in Portland, Oregon. Visit the conference website for details: <http://triwou.org/projects/tse>.

### April 22-24, 2018—Montana Traffic Education Conference



The 2018 spring conference will be held April 22-24 at the Best Western GranTree Inn in Bozeman. Remember, costs of attending the conference are considered to be an allowable expense for local program costs under OPI guidelines. In early March, registration details will be published in the Spring 2018 issue of *MTEA News* and at [MTEAOnline.org](http://MTEAOnline.org). Up to 16 OPI renewal units are available.

### July 22-25, 2018—American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association Conference



The 2018 ADTSEA conference will be held July 22-25 in Rosemont, Illinois. The conference will provide you with a wealth of information and an opportunity to network with other professionals from across the United States. Remember, MTEA has a scholarship program that will provide up to \$500 per person to offset conference costs. If you can't attend, at least consider joining your national organization. Check out the ADTSEA website at <http://www.adtsea.org> for more details.