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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

It's the end of another busy week in our world, and as ever, I've been on the road again. In fact, this WUD comes to you from Salt Lake City, where some of us are attending the ACA Summer Conference.

We concluded our P&P Appreciation programs with the events in Natchitoches and Shreveport. Asst. Secretary Sean Hamilton and I thoroughly enjoyed seeing everyone in the field of offices and the partners who came out to join in the programs. Both events were very nice, as we expected, and it's uplifting to see how well everyone is doing as you go about the daily business of meeting our mission.

It's the middle of August and the yellow school buses are rolling once again. I still have a hard time getting used to the fact that for students, summer is over and the school year has begun. Maybe someone proclaimed August is now part of the fall season, but when it's in the high 90s it still feels like summer to me. I think the kids are behind their desks in every school district in the state, so I'd better get with the program. In fact, I think August is now the starting time for schools all over the country. I bet a lot of you wish you had paid more attention in school, so you could help out more with homework. Some parents tell me that what the kids are learning in first grade now is stuff they didn't learn until much later. Forget shapes and colors, pre-schoolers are learning to read!

So, let's watch for those buses and let's be careful in school zones. In fact, a new law went into effect Aug. 1, restricting cell phone use in active school zones. LA RS 32:300.8 prohibits drivers from using cell phones in school zones during school zone hours for calls, sending and receiving text messages and emails, and posting to or looking at social networking sites. It's a moving violation if you're caught, with a maximum fine of \$175 for the first violation and up to \$500 for additional violations, double if a traffic accident is involved. The law allows hands-free use of cell phones in school zones and there are certain exceptions, including reporting a traffic accident, medical emergency, serious road hazard, a situation where you believe your safety is in jeopardy, and reporting or stopping a crime against the driver or another person. But, you can use your phone while the vehicle is parked, or if you are in an official capacity while driving an authorized emergency vehicle. I'm thinking we should just put the cell phones down while driving in active school zones, period. This sounds like it means business.

Well, on to more interesting things. This week we conducted a two-day training at central office for central office and Central/Southwest Region staff who will be involved with processing contracts and purchasing. There have been recent statewide changes in the way those procedures are handled and some staff are being trained on the new practices. We will soon be bringing the training to the other regions to bring everyone up to speed. Thanks to everyone who attended, I know a two-day training is a lot of time. I really appreciate the fact that OJJ folks are always ready to pitch in and do whatever it takes to keep OJJ running smoothly. Whatever gets thrown at us, we roll with it, learn the new skill set and keep on meeting the mission.

I'll close with my wish for you all to have a great weekend, and my sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, wherever you serve and whatever new tasks you are taking on, for all you do every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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