

Limited oil restricts use of district's school buses

By Gary Benson
Of The Courier

Champaign schools superintendent Marshall Berner Thursday ordered cutbacks in the use of district buses for "non-essential" uses such as field trips, fan buses and some competitive activities.

The order came after Stewart Oil Co., which supplies the gasoline for Champaign schools, used up its quota of gasoline for the month of November by Tuesday. At that time the Champaign district had a supply of gas on hand which will last until the beginning of next week.

Berner said the district should be receiving its December shipment of gasoline in time to avoid any transportation problems.

"This situation is enough of a clue that we have to cut back," Berner said.

In a statement sent to school district administrators, Berner said field trips and fan buses will cease Monday. He cautioned administrators to be prepared to cut back the transportation of small groups over long distances for competitive purposes.

Berner said, in reference to his statement, "small groups" would include some speech groups, music groups and some minor sports teams such as swimming, fencing, golf and tennis.

He said he did not see any effect, "for now," on secondary school basketball teams.

"I'm not against the competition," Berner said today, "but

some of these teams have gotten into the habit of traveling to the Chicago suburbs to compete.

"We just can't afford to continue to do that."

In his statement to administrators, Berner also banned use of other means of transportation.

"Our conservation of gasoline is related both to an internal need for conservation and to the external, nationwide need for conservation," he told school principals. "In that light, it does not seem appropriate that buildings arrange for outside transportation as a substitute."

Berner said he expects supplies from Stewart Oil to continue at a sufficient rate, but cautioned "even our supplier doesn't know if his quota will be reduced further."

"If we ever get to the situation where only enough gasoline is available to get students to school, that would be a major problem."

"But there is no question about what our priority must be," he said in reference to transporting students to and from school.

Berner said he was certain "some people will feel they weren't given enough warning cutbacks were coming."

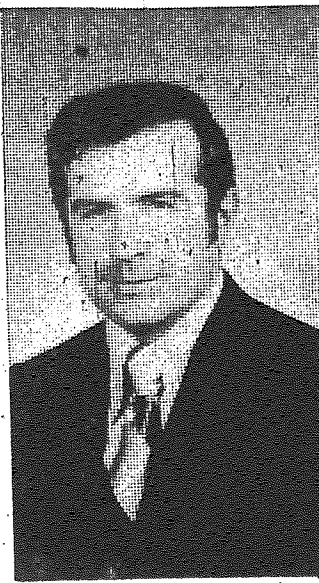
"But," he said, "they must realize that this situation called for immediate action."

The school district uses approximately 550 gallons of gasoline a day, according to Donald Overton, Champaign's administrative assistant for business.

The district has the capacity to store up to 11,500 gallons of gas, enough to last for about 20 to 22 days. There are usually no more school days than that in a month.

Overton said the district's strategy now will be to have gas delivered by Stewart during the first half of the month, before the month's quota is depleted.

"The problem is, everyone else will have that idea, too," he says, "and Stewart will use up its quota at an earlier and earlier date each month."



Emmett Slingsby

Slingsby to file for House seat

Ottawa

Emmett J. Slingsby of LaSalle County has announced that he will file for a spot on the Democratic primary ballot for Representative from the 1st District.

He is seeking the spot vacated by Rep. Les Armstrong-Melvin, who is retiring after 40 years in the House. The district includes Ford and Livingston counties.

As assistant state superintendent of public instruction, Slingsby is in charge of educational relations with Congress and the United States Office of Education.

Slingsby was elected delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1968 and 1972.

He received his education from the Illinois State University, the University of Iowa and Harvard University. He taught at Lake Park High School, Aurora College and Northern Illinois University.

License plates on sale

Banks will begin selling auto license plates today.

Preprinted renewal plates which were mailed to registered car owners by the state's office, must be turned in at the time of license plate sale.

Briefs on Lake Springer delayed

Monticello

Briefs which were to have been filed Thursday with the Illinois Court of Appeals in a suit seeking to halt the Lake Springer project probably will not be heard until next year.

Plaintiffs in the suit, which was dismissed June 20 in Piatt County Circuit Court, have been granted a continuance until Jan. 11 to file.

The plaintiffs, six Piatt County residents, are appealing dismissal of the suit by Piatt County Circuit Court Judge John P. Shonkwiler.

Steven Klein, director of the Chicago-based Environmental Lawyers Clinic, said Thursday continuance was sought because one cocounsel was on vacation and another was trying another case.

Klein said, however, the briefs are nearly ready for filing and only need "polishing up." He said he anticipates no further

delays.

The original suit, filed Dec. 26, 1972, sought to halt state cooperation with the federal government on Lake Springer. This appeal, however, asks the appeals court only to order a hearing by Shonkwiler on the merits of the case.

Once the briefs are filed, attorneys for the defendants — Gov. Daniel Walker, his cabinet and the University of Illinois Board of Trustees — have 35 days to respond.

Klein will then have 14 days to reply to the defendant's briefs.

Jeffrey C. Taylor of Decatur, special assistant attorney general representing the state, said Thursday the appeals court will set a hearing date after all the briefs are filed. He said he has no idea how long it will be after the filing before the case will come up for arguments.

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