

DANNY REED PLACES 3RD AT AMERICA'S BEST



Danny Reed (middle) receives the 3rd place plaque

Danny Reed from Beaufort County, winner of the 2010 NC Bus Inspection competition placed THIRD at the 7th annual AMERICA'S BEST TECHNICIAN AND INSPECTOR COMPETITION held in Jasper Indiana on September 28th thru October 1st. Danny has previously won this competition in 2007. At this years competition 30 contestants from 20 states were represented. Marshall Casey, the event coordinator notes "This is our best turn out to date. Even with a stale economy, transportation officials from across the USA see the value of sending their state's best and brightest to this prestigious event. Next year we will offer travel scholarships to allow more school bus personal to join in on this fun and educational experience."

At the end of the competition Danny was tied for 2nd but was beaten by a timed tie-breaker. He finished three points below 1st place. Danny says "the level of the competition is tough, everyone takes this contest SERIOUS. After I completed my event, I had to run to the hotel and change shirts due to all the sweating from the concentration".



Danny is shown during different sections of his event.

Tim Speer from Yadkin County runner up from the 2010 NC Bus Inspection competition participated in the AMERICIA'S BEST Technician competition. Tim did not place in the top three but gave it his best effort. Tim says "The technician side of this competition is rough. The problems they set up for us to diagnose are tough and add the fact each one is timed adds to the pressure." He goes on to comment, "NC needs to set up a diagnostic competition at our NCPTA conference in order to better prepare the person heading to the nationals". Tim has previously finished 2nd in the technician event during the 2005 America's Best competition.

To qualify as America's Best technician and inspector, competitors were scored on both written examinations and multiple hands-on components. The exams covered technical aspects of various school bus components, including electrical systems, brakes, engines, suspensions, drive trains and body systems.

The written exam was prepared and administered by The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)



Tim Speer receives a participation certificate from Bill Tousley, an NAPT official



Tim Speer diagnoses a brake problem at one the 8 diagnostic stations



A contestant from Iowa works thru a challenge of identifying tools and components needed to repair buses.



Alaska was represented by one of their three state inspectors shown here inspecting the chassis. Alaska inspectors are independent contractors who must bid each 5 years for the position of state bus inspector.



Danny Reed (4th from left) is shown with fellow inspector competitors many of whom are state troopers assigned to inspect school buses as part of their duties.



Two technicians work to complete a station involving a broken head bolt R&R



The Electrical diagnosing stations always prove to be the toughest for most in the event. "These are the stations that separate the winners from the losers" says John, a bus technician from Arkansas.

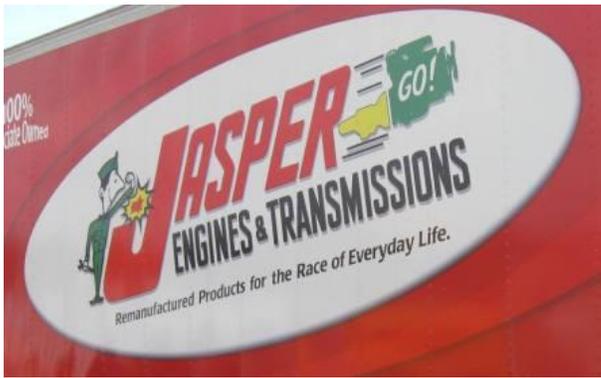
The Top three from each event

INSPECTORS
 1st - Tim Knoll, OH
 2nd - Steve Cox, SC
 3rd - Danny Reed, NC

TECHNICIANS
 1st - Shaun Dennis, MI
 2nd - Chuck Schniedt, IN
 3rd - Denver Foster, GA



Tim and Danny have both been National inspection champions and are very respected at the America's Best event.



This year's event was hosted and sponsored by Jasper Engines. They graciously opened up their very impressive facility to the participants, offered tours and provided entertainment. Randy Henson, who went along with the two NC contestants, pauses for a photo during a three hour plant tour.



Jasper also builds transmissions for NASCAR as well as other racing applications. Pictured is a \$15,000 transmission for Penske Racing on the Dyno.



A rear-end being built for an unknown NASCAR driver was on display for all to see, The employees do not know which driver will received the different components they build for the various teams.





A fifty mile train ride to French Lick, Indiana on a restored antique passenger train was one of the extra curricular activities the participants enjoyed during the America's Best event.



The event always offers numerous instructional classes pertaining to the school bus industry including NC's Randy Henson who presented a class about the use of an access database to record bus defects found during inspections.



Go Cart racing is a tradition each year at America's Best. This year proved to be the best yet as Jasper Engines opened up their company owned employee get-away facility to the contestants for some evening entertainment. The carts were fast and crashes were frequent due to the newly resurfaced track.

North Carolina looks forward to sending contestants to the 2011 America's Best competition to hosted by The Texas Pupil Transportation Association in San Antonio, Texas.

In order to join the fun, bus inspectors and technicians must participate locally at the NCPTA/NCDPI sponsored contest to be held at the state transportation conference next summer.

For more details about America's Best go to <http://www.americasbesttech.org/>