

## Buses ready to roll

By Julie Phaffler

The main questions on most parents' minds as their children start school may be about bus safety.

After the Carrollton church bus accident, many have a heightened awareness of bus safety.

Jess Bush, Nicholas County bus mechanic, was ready for those questions about bus safety.

He pointed out there are many changes being made in bus safety.

Buses that will be used for traveling will have push out windows.

The buses that carry 66 passengers will have four push out windows, two on each side of the bus. Buses carrying 33 passengers will have two, one on each side.

He said the windows will be equipped with handles, as well as buzzers to prevent mischievous behavior.

Windshields also pop out with a kick, as well as the windows opposite the emergency door. He said many drivers may not know these escape routes exist.

He showed a bus to a "Sherman tank" explaining the shell of the bus is made of tempered steel and is virtually indestructible.

As for the Carrollton accident, he stressed the fact that it was one in a million accident and that it's the other driver on the road that's usually the problem, not the bus.

He suggested the safety measure of a bar that closes across the seats, like amusement park rides. But he believes strongly in the safety of buses.

"It's as safe as sitting at home."

This year Bush is very pleased to have the addition of two diesel buses to the Nicholas County fleet. He drove one back to Nicholas County from Indiana, his first time driving a diesel bus. He was very enthusiastic about them. They are virtually trouble free, their engines run at 1200 rpm, which reduces wear greatly. (A gasoline engine bus can run up to 4000 or 5000 rpm, which is very wearing on the engine.)

"It's so far ahead of gas, it's unbelievable," he said.

The diesel buses can run 10 to 12 years, where a gasoline engine bus can only run eight years according to state laws. The diesels cost \$2000 to \$3000 more than the others, but with their trouble-free engines, they are worth it, he said.



The Nicholas County fleet of buses stands idle a few days before the beginning of school, but the yellow transporters are ready for the 1988-89 school year beginning August 22. - Staff Photo

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