

“Stop Means Stop”

By David Jacobson, Director of Transportation

When I came to Wickenburg I was hoping I would not see the issue of vehicles passing stopped buses with their “STOP” arms out because Wickenburg is a smaller community. I was so wrong; it is just as bad here as it is in the big city.

I’m not sure why people continue to run the stop signs. Distractions such as “phone use”, “in a hurry” and “didn’t know the stop sign was coming out: are just some of the excuses I’ve heard over the years. Often times it’s “we feel it will slow us down or make us late”. Many times I end up sitting at the same stop light as a person who has failed to stop for the bus.

As I was preparing to write this article, the news reported that in a 24 hour period, two students in Texas were hit while crossing the street after getting off the bus. A survey done by NASDPTS (National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services) reports that an estimated 13 million violations occur nationwide in a 180 day school year. One violation is too many because that is one chance of a student getting hit. I hope that during my career, neither I nor my staff will ever have to witness a student getting hit by a vehicle.

When a bus is preparing to stop to pick up students, the bus driver turns on amber warning lights prior to the red lights and stop sign. So if you see the amber warning lights the stop arm is going to follow so be aware. The ONLY exception would be if the road has a median which physically divides the lanes; then ONLY ONCOMING traffic is not required to stop.

So drivers, please be alert and aware when traveling around buses so we can all get to our destinations safely. I will end with this final thought:

“It’s not just a stop sign it could be a child’s life”.