

Ads coming to FISD buses

By IVEE SAULS | Posted: Wednesday, February 17, 2010 12:00 am

Advertising on school buses has become a means of generating additional revenues for school districts. Friendswood Independent School District approved the placement of advertisements on its buses at the board meeting last week. Clear Creek ISD is currently considering utilizing the school bus advertising program.

"The advertising on school buses is a win-win situation because it gives the district additional revenue and allows local business to show their message in areas they might not usually be able to," said George Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services.

Numerous districts throughout the Houston Area are advertising on school buses, including Pearland ISD, which began utilizing advertising on its buses over a year ago. Steep Creek Media began placing advertisements on school buses in 2007, with Humble ISD as the first participant in the program.

"We hope to have the signs running in six weeks," said Cynthia Calvert, owner of Steep Creek Media. "The buses are seen predominately within the district, but have the potential to travel far beyond that with sports events, competitions and field trips. This is a great way for local businesses to publicly state their support of the school district," she said.

The State of Texas allows such advertising providing specific guidelines are followed and the district has final authorization as to what advertising is placed on the buses. Advertisements of tobacco and alcohol products are prohibited, as well as any political campaign advertising.

Each bus has a space for one large ad and two small ads, with an earning potential of \$700 per bus. FISD will receive sixty percent of the revenues generated from the fleet of 50 buses traveling along 36 routes, giving FISD potential revenue of \$14,700 a month. The two year agreement makes the District responsible for making the buses available for the installation of the signs and the company does everything else.

The advertising program will enhance revenue without resorting to raised taxes and additional cut-backs. An \$800,000 deficit is projected for the 2010 - 2011 school year, due to slower than anticipated enrollment growth and low interest income. The Board approved postponing the opening of an Early Childhood Campus until revenue can support its operation. The board also discussed cuts in personnel and programs to balance the budget.