



TRANSREPORT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ILLINOIS RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SPRING 2012

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Upcoming Events:

September 5-7, 2012
IPTA Fall Conference, Champaign

On-Site Driver Training and
Classroom Driver Training
(Call RTAC: 800.526.9943)



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Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
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RTAC Notes

Back in college, I wore socks only when necessary, listened to Dylan, believed in peace and love, and thought my generation could help make the world a better place to live. Today, I listen to Dylan, wear socks only when necessary, believe in peace and love, and think my generation can help make the world a better place to live. The reality that surfaced in the intervening years has only strengthened my resolve.



The reality for me is that what some people say and do are two different things. Years of hearing the right words but seeing conflicting actions have taught me far more than any of the classes I took. For example, my long ago business classes touted the importance of mission statements. All successful endeavors, whether private or public, needed a good mission statement, according to my instructors. Years later I took a job at a sizable non-profit organization with a nicely stated and admirable mission, but which operationally functioned like a monarchy. The king fared quite well while the subjects struggled. That was an eye opener as well as the best thing that ever happened to me.

From that point on, I still am happy when a supervisor or a customer says or professes to do good things, but I reserve judgment until I see good outcomes. Some would call this stance cynical or jaded. I call it realistic. I've noticed something else--the tough times our nation has faced over the past decade have resulted in many more opportunities for all of us to discover reality. It is much like transportation coordination--for years the money was flowing to all of the 62 human service funding streams, and the resulting dysfunction and duplication of effort wasn't obvious. But once the dollar flow slowed, the inefficiencies and absurdity of giving every human service funding stream their own stuff was quite evident. The tough times resulted in more coordination simply out of need.

And the tough times are still here. Therefore, the next wave of reality involves performance outcomes. Public endeavors are being pushed to run more like private businesses. Without tough times, this push would not have occurred. The silver lining of performance accountability is increased operating efficiencies, which makes Illinois rural public transit stronger, which positions us to strengthen our stance to legislators that we can be an essential component to a recovering Illinois.

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IPTA Notes

It may be a little late in the year for New Year's Resolutions, but since the start of the new state fiscal year is just around the corner, why not try tackling a "New Fiscal Year Resolution". You might be thinking of resolving to exercise more or quit smoking or maybe to lose weight. I had something a little different in mind. How about trying to get more involved in your state association? The key to any successful association is an active and engaged membership, and there is no time like the present to get more involved with the Illinois Public Transportation Association. We need you, and there is no doubt that you need us too.



IPTA is currently in the process of updating its strategic plan. The strategic plan has not been revisited for ten years, and has most certainly fallen by the wayside. Refocusing our vision and updating our strategic plan will undoubtedly be just the shot in the arm our organization needs at a time that is so critical for public transportation. Now is just the time to start thinking about what you want out of your association, what direction you think it should move, and what the best way is to achieve those outcomes. IPTA will be hosting a retreat for members in late July that will focus on developing an action plan and measurable outcomes for the association. Watch your inbox for an email containing more information on the date, time and location of the retreat. On the same day, we will have our quarterly board meeting. Board meetings are an excellent opportunity to participate and have input on current issues IPTA is facing. While only the Board members can vote, IPTA has always been and continues to be open to hearing the input of all members.

Beyond the strategic plan, ask yourself what you can do to help the association. Whether it be participating on one of the committees, helping to plan the fall conference or contacting your legislator or Congressman when issues arise, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved. In fact, the more our members get involved, the more productive our association can be, which will only create more opportunities to participate. Maybe there are specialized transportation providers in your area that you coordinate with that are not members of IPTA. How about reaching out to them and encouraging them to join our association. Set up a meeting and take them the information; feel free to ask me to come along. There is strength in numbers. The more members we have, particularly active members, the more viable this organization will be moving into the future.

Maybe the easiest way to be involved is attending IPTA's annual Fall Conference and Annual Meeting. The 2012 Fall Conference is September 5-7 at the iHotel in Champaign, IL, hosted by Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District. We will kick the conference off with our annual golf outing at Stone Creek Golf Club in Urbana, followed by a Tailgate Party/Welcome Dinner directly across the street from the conference hotel. We have a full conference agenda planned for Thursday, September 6, including our annual Vendor Showcase. More entertainment is planned for Thursday evening at the Illinois Terminal, and Friday you will have the opportunity to tour the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District. Look for registration information in the mail and in your inbox.

Perhaps you've been telling yourself that you need to get more involved with IPTA. Don't wait any longer. Make this the year that you get active and help your association succeed.

Laura Calderon

Tenth Annual Illinois Paratransit Roadeo



Courageous participants, and winners all!

On Saturday, April 28, 2012, the Rural Transit Assistance Center hosted the Tenth Annual Illinois Paratransit Roadeo at the Sangamon Fairgrounds in New Berlin, Illinois.

Of the 29 contestants and twelve transportation agencies represented, 14 (denoted by *) were first time participants:

Access Springfield: Frank Harris*, Calvin Shannon

Cass County Council on Aging: Roy Knouse

Central Illinois Public Transportation: Tari Howard

Futures Unlimited: Dan Faust, Delbert French, Bill Gates, Nancy Lefler, Robin Meckley, Tom Lenzie*, Ellen Spencer, Jerry Woodcock*

Go West Transit: Pat White

Macoupin County Public Transportation: Dan Gaefcke*, Timothy Williams*

MV Transportation: Ron Flynn, Brian Hiatt*, Lisa Tabor*

Shawnee Mass Transit District: Raven Cooksey, Carl Horn, Denise Dunkin

South Central Mass Transit District: Anthony Gilio*, Mark Liening*, Albert Overbey, Charles Pollmann*, Ed Rule*

Voluntary Action Center: Dawn Jensen*, Lowell Lumpkin

West Central Mass Transit District: Gary King*



The Tenth Annual RTAC Roadeo award winners: Delbert French, Pat White, Lowell Lumpkin, Charles Pollmann, and Albert Overbey. Awards presented by Linda Tisdale.

Overall (scores from all categories combined) Winners:

First Place: Lowell Lumpkin

Second Place: Charles Pollmann

Third Place: Pat White

Novice Award: Charles Pollmann

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Category Winners:

Driving: Albert Overbey

Pre-Trip Inspection: Delbert French

Wheelchair Securement: Lowell Lumpkin

Written Test: Lowell Lumpkin

Looking back through ten years' worth of participant lists, the name Delbert French stands out. Delbert, who drives for Futures Unlimited, has attended every Roadeo except one. You can read about why he missed the 2004 Roadeo in the summer 2004, Transreport, Spotlight article (page 6) <http://www.iira.org/pubs/publications/RTAC_NLTrans_623.pdf>. Congratulations Delbert on your Pre-Trip Inspection Category win, and thank you for supporting and attending nine Roadeos!



Linda Tisdale, Springfield Mass Transit District, and First Place Winner, Lowell Lumpkin, Voluntary Action Center.

We genuinely hope that everyone has fun and learns something new each year. And we congratulate each participant on their individual performance and their esprit de corps!

National Roadeo

A big Roadeo "Yee-Haw!" to Lowell Lumpkin, Voluntary Action Center, for his outstanding performance in placing 13th out of 47 participants at the May 20 National Community Transit Roadeo Body-on-Chassis competition that was held in Baltimore, Maryland. Hurray Lowell!



A Huge THANK YOU to all of the Volunteers that support the Roadeo! Especially those volunteers who are spouses, children, and significant others of the transit folks that volunteer! (Brian Kreps gave up a golf game to collect score sheets.) Thank you ALL!

"One hand cannot clap on its own, but it needs the other hand to make a clap." "Many hands make light work." Maasai tribal sayings.

Many thanks, and an enthusiastic, loud and long applause to our volunteers:

Friday set-up: Keith and Linda Shaw, Edward Heflin, and Jacqueline Waters

Roadeo Marshall: Edward Heflin

Saturday set-up and event judges: Randy Barrow, Steve Bernal, Bob Bugger, Nancy Bugger, Peggy Dunn, Chris Garner, Brad Gibbs, Brian Kreps, Mable Kreps, Nicole Loucks, Maureen Mann, Angel Marinich, Alex Matlock, Carol Montague, Leroy Niederhofer, Sheila Niederhofer, Kathy Peterson, Dawn Piper, Whitney Piper, Michelle Rhodes, Deb Salisbury, Jim Salisbury, Mark Schlensker, Keith Shaw, Linda Shaw, Linda Tisdale, Al Waters, Jacqueline Waters, Ben Youter

Score keepers extraordinaire: Bert Weber and Nancy Bugger

Award Presenter: Linda Tisdale

Sponsors: Tom Baldwin, Midwest Transit (prize money) and IDOT (trip for first place overall winner to participate in the CTAA National Roadeo)

Orange barrels: Geno Koehler, IDOT, Troy Gundy, Day Labor, IDOT.



Nancy Bugger and Bert Weber hard at work tallying scores.

Spotlight

By Gary Ziegler, MCPT Transit Director

McDonough County Public Transportation (MCPT) provides demand response and fixed route public transportation services for McDonough and Hancock counties in west-central Illinois. MCPT is owned and operated by the City of Macomb and has been operating as a public transportation grantee since the early 1980's. MCPT is unique in that it does not employ any public transportation employees of its own, but rather subcontracts with five operators to provide over 1.6 million rides per year in the two-county area. The five operators are the Lamoine Valley Red Cross, Bridgeway, Go West Transit, Beck Bus Company and the Western Illinois Regional Council. The Red Cross and Bridgeway are demand response providers, Go West operates the fixed route system, Beck Bus operates the central dispatching center and the Western Illinois Regional



Exterior view of west side of the building.

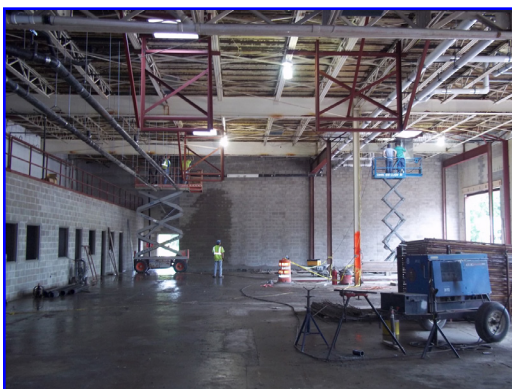
Council serves as the administrative entity.



Interior view of dispatching area.

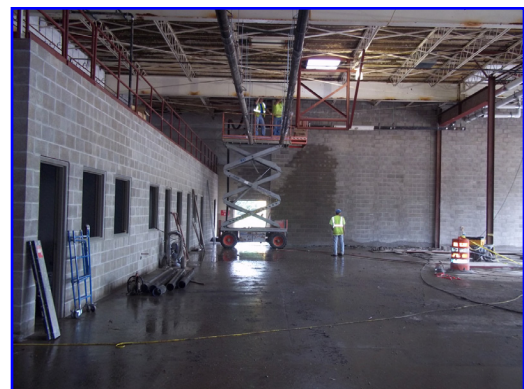
The mission of the MCPT is to provide safe, reliable, clean and courteous public transportation services to all residents of the two-county area that are in need of such services. This is done by operating 45 public transportation vehicles, ranging in size from mini-vans to 40 foot large transit buses. MCPT's fleet is owned by the City of Macomb and leased to the provider agencies, which are responsible for maintaining and insuring the vehicles. Those vehicles are now stored and serviced at three different locations in Macomb. That arrangement is about to end because the City of Macomb/MCPT is currently constructing a \$10.5 million transit facility to serve as the operations, dispatching, storage, and vehicle maintenance center for all public transportation services in McDonough

and Hancock county. The new facility, which also includes a bus wash building and fueling station, is scheduled to be open by April of 2013. The building will house all five public transportation operators under one roof.



Interior view of vehicle maintenance area.

The new transit facility construction project involves the renovation of a former manufacturing building. The City decided to take an existing building that had limited future use potential, demolish the dilapidated sections, and renovate the remaining portions of the building, as opposed to constructing a new building on a green site. A study performed



Interior view of vehicle maintenance area offices.



New bus wash building.

by an outside consulting firm found that renovating this existing building would be less costly than constructing new on vacant ground. It would also serve to help stabilize an older industrial neighborhood in Macomb. Funding for the project was obtained over several years from eight different federal and state grant programs, all administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Several green technology initiatives are being incorporated into the transit facility project, including the installation of large solar tracking skylights to allow for the use of natural lighting throughout the building, high efficiency heating and cooling

systems, super insulation throughout the building, highly reflective exterior wall and roofing materials, and low flow bathroom fixtures. Several other 'green building' technologies are also planned, which may lead to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification should the city seek such designation.

The MCPT and City also recently completed another building project that had a multi-modal function. By using State of Illinois Capital Program funding through IDOT, the city constructed a bus transfer facility and Amtrak parking lot near the Macomb depot. The bus transfer facility will serve the Go West compass, business and Amtrak station routes. The project was constructed at the site of an abandoned grain elevator that was purchased and demolished by the city as part of a downtown improvement project. Previously, bus transfers were done in a parking lot, which provided no shelter from the elements for passengers.



Interior view of vehicle storage area.



Transfer Station ribbon cutting, December 2 2011

MCPT and the City of Macomb are both committed to providing quality public transportation for all residents of the two-county area. The recent construction projects, along with the acquisition of many new transit vehicles over the past several years, will help to ensure that riders are provided safe and reliable public transportation services for many years to come.

TRANSIT MOVERS

Transit Movers recognizes people in Illinois transit who have been promoted, changed responsibilities, moved to a different transit agency, etc. If there are people within your agency who fall into these categories, contact the RTAC staff at 800.526.9943, e-mail rtac@wiu.edu or fax 309.298.2162. Please include pictures!



Linda Tisdale, managing director of the Springfield Mass Transit District, is retiring on June 29, 2012. Ms. Tisdale has been with the District for 29 years, serving as assistant managing director for nearly 18 years prior to being promoted to the top position in June 2007. During her term as director, the District completely revamped its service routes, implemented a restructuring of its administrative staff functions and built a \$7 million maintenance facility. Although she is looking forward to traveling and playing golf in her retirement, leaving the staff at SMTD will be the most difficult thing she has done there. SMTD employees admire her professionalism, honesty, and fairness. The entire Illinois public transit community feels the same way. Linda, have fun in your retirement!

Sean DeDecker has been the director of operations for CRIS Rural Mass Transit District for Champaign and Vermilion counties since March 2012. Prior to joining CRIS, he was a branch rental manager for Enterprise Rent-a-Car for four years in Danville, Champaign, and Chicago Illinois. In 2007, Sean received his Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing and Sales from Illinois State University.

Sean is married to Laura who just graduated from Law School from the University of Illinois. They have a puppy named Cooper. Sean enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He's an avid sports fan (die-hard Cubs fan) and enjoys outdoor activities, running, bike riding, and basketball.



—Transit Movers continued on next page



Congratulations, John Edmondson, Section Chief of Coordination Programs for the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation for your new appointment!

NATIONAL RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NATIONAL RTAP) ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF SEVEN NEW REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

Patti Monahan, Executive Director of National RTAP, says: “We are very pleased to announce the addition of these seven highly qualified individuals to the National RTAP Review Board. While we’ll miss the friendship and contributions of the eight colleagues who have worked with us over the past three years and are retiring from the Review Board, we’re looking forward to the different viewpoints and fresh insights that our new Review Board members have to offer”.

The National RTAP Review Board provides in-depth expertise and local perspectives to ensure that National RTAP products and services are of the highest quality, easily accessible, and useable by local transit operators and state RTAP managers. The seven new members will join six sitting members, both state DOT representatives and transit operators, from Arizona, Idaho, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania and New York.

National RTAP is a program of the Federal Transit Administration administered by the Neponset Valley Transportation Management Association and serves as the national arm for the Rural Transit Assistance Program. The mission of National RTAP is to improve mobility in all rural, small urban and tribal communities across the country through technical assistance. Since its inception in 1987 National RTAP has developed and distributed training materials, provided technical assistance, generated reports, published best practices, conducted research and offered Peer Assistance with the goal of improved mobility for the millions of Americans living in communities with populations under 50,000.

Downloaded, April 9, 2012, <http://nationalrtap.org/Home/tabid/2130/ctl/ViewFullNews/newsIndex/94/mid/16917/selectmid/16870/Default.aspx>

Connie Darnell, RTAP Advisory Council member since 2002, retired on May 31. Connie says, “I have very much enjoyed serving on RTAP. I have learned much and have much appreciation for all you do to bring transportation to rural Illinois! I still believe it is so key to work for people with disabilities.” Connie and her husband, Don, plan to travel and enjoy their two grandchildren.

Connie, on behalf of the RTAP Advisory Council, many thanks for your service. We especially appreciate recent constituent situations you brought to our attention, which helped the IDOT Division of Public and Intermodal (DPIT) address service gap issues. Warmest wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement.

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

Rail Safety Program

Illinois Rail Facts – 2008

- Illinois has more than 7,200 miles of railroad track, the second largest rail system of any state in the nation.
- About 500 million tons (one trillion pounds) of freight move on Illinois' rail systems each year which is the most of any state in the nation.
- Chicago's rail hub is the largest in the U.S. and third largest intermodal container/trailer port in the world, following only Singapore and Hong Kong.
- There are over 50 railroad companies that operate their trains in and through Illinois which is the 3rd highest in the nation.
- Approximately 20 million tons of chemicals, many of which are hazardous, are transported on Illinois' rail systems each year.
- 10,883 public highway-rail crossings are located within Illinois.

3,018 highway-rail grade crossings with flashing lights & gates
1,993 highway-rail grade crossings with flashing lights
2,781 highway-rail grade crossings with reflectorized crossbuck signs
339 highway-rail grade crossings with no markings (flagging required)
8,131 public grade crossings

2,752 public grade separated (bridge) crossings
10,883 total public highway-rail crossings – 2nd in the nation

- Illinois has more interconnected¹ rail crossing warning systems than any other state in the nation.

¹rail and traffic signal systems engineered to work together.

ICC Rail Safety Responsibilities

- Investigate highway-rail grade crossing collisions and other rail related accidents & incidents that occur in Illinois; coordinate efforts with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).
- Management of Grade Crossing Protection Fund safety projects (\$27 million annually) and engineering oversight of all improvements & modifications to the State's 10,883 public highway-rail crossings.
- Engineering oversight of all highway traffic signal systems interconnected with railroad warning devices.
- Manage Illinois' Operation Lifesaver rail safety public education program that reaches communities and schools statewide.

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- Conduct inspections of railroad track in Illinois to identify defects that can cause derailments. Task assignments are coordinated with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).
- Conduct inspections of railroad hazardous material shipments throughout the state, including radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Task assignments are coordinated with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).
- Maintain a comprehensive and current highway-rail crossing database and train/vehicle collision tracking system.
- Conduct scheduled and prompted on-site inspections of crossing warning systems throughout Illinois to evaluate maintenance and repair efforts and operating conditions.
- Investigate complaints (citizen, highway agency, public official, etc.) concerning highway-rail grade crossings and other rail safety issues.

Downloaded May 29, 2012, <http://www.icc.illinois.gov/railroad/>

To Report Unsafe Railroad Crossings

Visit www.icc.illinois.gov, or call 800-524-0795, to reach the Illinois Commerce Commission.

Leveraging Social Media: Spreading the Word and Enhancing Community Participation



The development and proliferation of Web 2.0 technology has allowed businesses and service providers to reach their customers in new and engaging ways. Social media tools have become a venue for the exchange of information between providers and customers and can be used to foster community partnerships. Many transit providers throughout the country are adding social media tools to their list of communication methods. While these tools are not meant to replace traditional modes of communication, they can be used to supplement what your system is currently doing to create a more dynamic provider-customer relationship. This technical brief will provide specific examples of how transit systems can leverage the social media tools available to stay competitive, meet the service needs of their customer base, and open a dialogue with the community.

Download the complete technical brief at:
<http://www.nationalrtap.org/FeatureDetails.aspx?id=585&org>

Ask Project ACTION

"I am a motorcoach operator. I heard the Department of Justice (DOJ) has changed the definition of a service animal to include only dogs and in some cases, miniature horses. How does that change affect me?"

Answer: You are referring to a Final Rule issued by the DOJ that made a number of changes to their ADA regulations and became effective on March 15, 2011. For motorcoach operators there is no change in how you define service animals because you operate under regulations of the Department of Transportation (DOT). The definition of service animal found in 49 CFR 37.3 of the DOT ADA regulations has not changed and is not limited to a particular kind of animal.

Under 37.167(d) of the DOT ADA regulations, transit entities are required to permit service animals to accompany individuals with disabilities in vehicles and facilities. Service animals are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities, such as guiding people who are blind or who have low vision, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks. Service animals are working animals and not pets.

An operator may ask if an animal is a service animal or ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform, but cannot require special ID cards or harnesses for the animal or ask about a person's disability. Other passengers' allergies and fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to people with service animals.

Refer to the Federal Transit Administration "Technical Assistance Note (Word)," which aims to clarify that DOT regulations apply to the provision of transportation by public and private operators.

From: http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_ask_project_action_nov2011&autologin=true

— RTAC Notes continued from page 2

It has become obvious that there is a need for a tool to assist providers in measuring their performance. The Rural Mobility Index is that tool. As Joe Shacter mentioned at our conference, the Rural Mobility Index performance indicators are not going to be used in a punitive fashion, they are going to be used to help the funding body and the grantee identify the objective outcomes of our service delivery, as well as point the way for changes which make Illinois a better place to live.

Today I'm not wearing socks and I'm listening to Dylan's "Blonde on Blonde" album. As Ringo says, "Peace and love to everybody."



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UNIVERSITY**

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