

TRANSPORT

**The Newsletter of the Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Program
February 2002**

April Conference Tackles Tough Topic

RTAC's 13th Annual Spring Conference, scheduled for April 2-4 in Springfield, will feature a panel discussion on transportation coordination, an important subject affecting all transit systems in the State of Illinois.

A *Transport* article "Coordination: How to Start Today" (February 2001, page 11) discussed transportation coordination and the ways each transit provider can begin contributing to the effort. The article suggested that any operator can contribute to the beginning steps of coordination, things like joint training or maintenance efforts or simply sharing information. Yet, overall state coordination is a much more complex issue. *Coordinated rural transit will not occur unless each state agency with a transportation delivery component is willing to give up transit autonomy, autonomy in the areas of funding, vehicles and service provision.*

A series of meetings held in Summer 2001 indicate that rural transit providers believe the preceding statement to be true. In response to the perceived increased need for higher funding and better coordination of the delivery of rural public transportation services, the Division of Public Transportation, IDOT, working through the Illinois Public Transportation Association, hosted three public meetings of grantees and providers to determine the extent to which additional funding is needed and the essential elements it should contain. A fourth meeting of state officials and agencies that provide transportation to specific groups was also held, with a large group of attendees that included representatives from the Department of Human Services, the Department on Aging, and the Lt. Governor's Office. The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs facilitated these meetings.

Though the State of Illinois' fiscal situation eventually prevented additional funding, IDOT should be commended for addressing the issue and providing the opportunity for the frank examination of rural transit in Illinois. The meetings provided an opportunity for transportation partners to discuss present coordination efforts and future coordination needs.

Each meeting included comments about the need for coordination of service delivery in order to minimize duplication of trips and under-utilized vehicles. Coordination was a major concern at each meeting, and achieving it may involve obtaining waivers from Federal programs. Achieving coordination may also require more cooperation within state agencies that provide for special client groups, and policy changes within the Division of Public Transportation, IDOT. *The coordination issue has been discussed for many years and meeting participants felt that the time has come to seriously consider this issue.*

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RTAC Notes



In November 2001 the Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging sponsored a transportation forum at the Kendall Senior Center in Yorkville, where I felt so very comfortable in the pleasant facility available to the Kendall County

seniors. In January 2002 I visited another impressive facility that serves the elderly, the CRIS Senior Center in Danville, which offers services to Vermilion County residents. Later this year I hope to see the beautiful, state-of-the-art Keen Age Center, in Boone County.

The visits I mentioned occurred on the heels of RTAC partnering successfully with the Illinois Department on Aging (DoA) to provide driver training. DoA also touched my personal life in the past year when my wife changed jobs in order to become an elder abuse investigator for an agency in the Quad Cities area, and my mother turned 80 years old. It's safe to say that my last year has been heavily linked to the senior population of Illinois.

I spent much of my professional time in the 1990s linked to persons with disabilities working at a human service agency that was mainly funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (along with transportation funding by IDOT). Again there is a personal link, my older brother who was born with cerebral palsy.

Those three worlds (aging, disability, transportation) fused for me recently; I began talking with my mother about the day in the future when it may be best for her to discontinue driving her automobile, and my brother began using public transportation.

The State of Illinois is home to many aging Baby Boomers; plus human service programs resulting in increased independence and mobility for persons with disabilities. Those are two more reasons for all of us to try to find ways for DoA, DHS, and IDOT to coordinate their transportation efforts. All three agencies fund high-quality programs that greatly benefit residents of the State of Illinois; coordination can be part of the continuous improvement of those programs.

Regardless of how coordination eventually occurs, whether through brokerage systems (Kentucky, Florida, and Oregon) or other means, the focus would shift to transportation services available in the region, rather than on specific groups of clients.

In order to gain funding support, Illinois' rural transit community, including IDOT, must build a higher profile for itself with the general public and with the General Assembly. The General Assembly must recognize the importance of rural public transportation to the quality of life, especially for elderly residents. This will require a major educational program for state and local elected officials. *On the other hand, our rural transit community and DPT, IDOT have to prove themselves worthy of the extra funding by more efficiently delivering public and specialized transportation. Plainly speaking, we need to share resources and/or optimally utilize existing resources.*

It is hoped that through the panel discussion at RTAC's April 2002 conference, coordination issues brought to the fore at last summer's meetings can be expanded. Though the format is not finalized, using the same facilitator from those meetings should assure some continuity to the discussion. Norm Walzer, founder and director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, brings years of facilitation experience to the proceedings.

Panel membership is a key to fruitful discussion. Fortunately, a distinguished group of panelists has agreed to participate:

- ◆ Tom Fawell, Deputy Director, DPT, IDOT
- ◆ Barbara Payne, Chief, Bureau of Employability Development Services, DHS
- ◆ Nancy Nelson, Deputy Director, DoA
- ◆ Jeff Fulgenzi, Executive Director, Governor's Rural Affairs Council
- ◆ Betty Green, Chief Executive Officer, Rides Mass Transit District
- ◆ Tom Zucker, Executive Director, Voluntary Action Center of De Kalb County
- ◆ Ron Weishaar, Operations Manager, Piatt County Transportation

Audience participation is welcome in the form of questions to the panelists. This will be a good opportunity to share in the process of shaping the future of rural transit in Illinois.

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Relevant New Material Added to the RTAC Library

Video

Anthrax Awareness: What Your Employees Need to Know

Designed to educate and protect your employees against the threat of anthrax. This informative program will help answer basic questions about anthrax while dispelling excess fears. 2001. (13 minutes)

Bus Fire, June 20, 2001

Demonstrates the importance of emergency procedures training for rural transit drivers. Television coverage (two stations) of 2001 vehicle fire and actions by driver to evacuate and save passenger lives. 2001. (3:50 minutes)

CD ROMs

Have a Nice Day

This is extremely relevant! Please see article on next page.

The Professional

Designed to persuade as well as instruct operators to make informed choices when operating the bus, dealing with customers and making decisions about their lifestyle. 1997.

Smart Driving +: An Accident Prevention Training Program for Bus Operators

This training program is effective and versatile for both new and experienced operators. This program delivers a focused accident prevention message with a "customer service" twist. 1999.

Floppy Disk

Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 61; Analyzing the Cost of Operating Small Transit Vehicles; STVe (Small Transit Vehicle economics)

Small Transit Vehicle economics (STVe) is an economic model designed for transit planners and others making decisions about the purchase of small transit vehicles. The STVe software program uses Microsoft® EXCEL, which operates in a Windows 95 (or higher version) environment. 2000.

Procedure for Borrowing Materials From RTAC Library

1. Call the WIU Library's Audio Visual Department at (309) 298-2417.
2. Indicate by name and number the videotape, CD ROM, slides or floppy disk that is being requested.
3. Please give staff your name, address, and telephone number and length of time you anticipate keeping the material. Normal time is two to three weeks; if you need the material for a longer time period, ask the library staff.
4. The material will be mailed to you at RTAC's expense.
5. Borrower agrees to return the material by due date and to pay the return postage to the WIU Library.
6. The updated library materials list was mailed out in January. If you have not received your copy or would like to be put on our mailing list, please call Jacqueline Waters at (800) 526-9943, or view the list online at: <www.iira/directory/rtac.asp>.
7. If you have further questions, please call RTAC staff.

Regional Training Schedule FY02

- Galena
April 6, 2002 Emergency Procedures
- Region 1: Sycamore
June 1, 2002 Passenger Assistance
- Region 2: Monmouth
March 2, 2002 Defensive Driving
- Region 3: Danville
July 13, 2002 Passenger Assistance
- Region 4: Morton
March 30, 2002 Defensive Driving
- Region 6: Centralia
March 2, 2002 Passenger Assistance
April 6, 2002 Defensive Driving
- Region 7: Harrisburg
May 4, 2002 Emergency Procedures
- Region 8: Carterville
March 16, 2002 Passenger Assistance

Drivers: Heighten Your Sense of Safety on the Job

Have a Nice Day is an interactive CD ROM program that teaches drivers prevention, awareness, verbal defusing techniques and self-defense. An article in *Bus Ride* magazine's December 2001 issue entitled "Drivers on Defense" describes *Have a Nice Day* as "the most popular program among transit lines."

Prepare, Identify, De-escalate and *Defend* are the four modules that teach operators how to reduce the risk of being attacked, keep problem situations from escalating, defend against an attack, understand the legal definition of an assault, and accurately report an incident to the police.

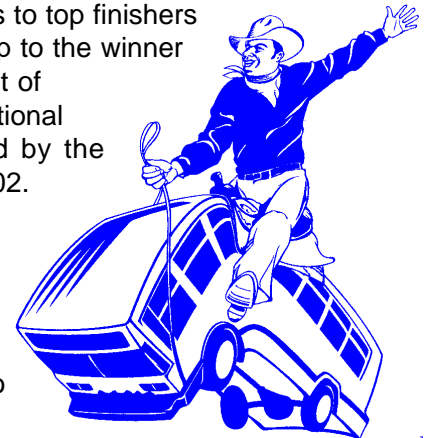
This program may be used in a variety of settings in its entirety or in sections. One suggestion is to incorporate the *Being Prepared* module into a new operator's training to highlight the importance of looking professional and thinking about what clothing and accessories are appropriate for work. Another idea is to use the exercises provided in the *Instructor's Guide* to develop an eight-hour retraining course. *Have a Nice Day* can also be used to train operators involved in assaults to help them avoid becoming victims in the future.

Two hours fifteen minutes is the estimated running time for each of the modules. System requirements are a 200 Mhz Pentium based PC, Windows 95, 98, 2000 or Windows NT, 16 megabytes of RAM, 40 MB hard drive space, a 24-bit display adapter, sound card, and 16X CD ROM.

Drivers Needed for 1st Annual Rodeo Saddle Up and Head On Out to Springfield

No, you really don't need to saddle up. A rodeo is an opportunity for drivers to gain recognition for their driving skills. Though there are awards for the top finishers, winning isn't the primary reason for this competition. Instead, this is a great opportunity for drivers to test their individual limits, meet other drivers, and have a good time!

The March 23, 2002, competition is open to all Section 5310- and Section 5311-funded transit providers and all IPTA members. Modeled after the yearly Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) event, drivers earn points in the four categories of written test, driving, wheelchair securement, and pre-trip inspection. All participants will receive certificates and other tokens of appreciation, with cash awards to top finishers and a scholarship to the winner to defray the cost of attending the national event sponsored by the CTAA in May 2002.



A committee is working on details and will mail out a brochure soon to all possible entrants. Committee

members include Bill Jung and Keith Shaw of Rides Mass Transit District, Richard Fix of Springfield Mass Transit District, Ed Burke of IDOT, and Jackie Waters and Ed Heflin of RTAC.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 23, 2002
1st Annual Paratransit Rodeo, Springfield

April 2-4, 2002
13th Annual RTAC Spring Conference, Springfield

Coming in Summer 2002

Rockford Regional Maintenance Center hosts a maintenance workshop Management Conference co-sponsored by Illinois and Indiana RTAP, Champaign

RTAP Advisory Council Serves Vital Mission: Meet the Members

Illinois RTAP Advisory Council Mission: To advise and support the Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Program in the promotion and facilitation of safe and effective delivery of public transportation in non-urbanized (rural and small urban) areas and to more effectively use public and private resources.

Specifically, advisory council members meet three times a year to identify RTAP priorities; recommend programs, seminars, and conferences; review and comment on the Program's development, delivery and progress; evaluate and comment on specific components of the Program; provide input on the allocation of RTAP resources; and provide input and suggestions on additional funding sources.

The nine voting members include three Section 5311 representatives, two Section 5310 representatives, one representative from a rural mass transit district, one Section 5310 or Section 5311 representative from the Illinois Public Transportation Association, one representative from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services, and one At Large representative.

Transreport wants to introduce you to the members of the council: this issue profiles two members, Linda Mitchell and Rudy Muzzarelli.

Linda Mitchell has been employed at C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation since October 1977. Her first position was in the Golden Circle Nutrition Program; this program provides congregate and home delivered meals to persons 60 and older. A move to the planning department within the agency followed the nutrition program experience. Linda next accepted the administrative position of programs manager.

Linda has been involved in transportation activities since her employment with C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation. C.E.F.S. started its transportation journey in 1965 working with senior organizations in various counties arranging trips and trying to expand transit opportunities. C.E.F.S.'s 5311 history began in 1985 when the first application from Shelby County was submitted to IDOT. Agency personnel provided C.E.F.S.'s Transportation management until 1991



when Linda was named temporary transportation director. April 2002 marks Linda's 11th anniversary as transportation director.

Linda's position as transportation director includes the research and development of new funding sources for the agency. She coordinates, monitors and evaluates the agency-sponsored programs. Linda also gives support to agency staff and the Board of Directors.

Active on the RTAP Advisory Council since January 1990, Linda has been part of a team that has worked to upgrade and strengthen the Illinois RTAP scope of work.

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Transit Agencies Must Attract and Retain a Quality Workforce

At the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Annual Meeting held on October 3, 2001, keynote speaker Alexis M. Herman, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, stressed the importance of attracting and retaining a quality workforce, especially since the large baby-boom generation is close to retirement. To help you find the right person to hire we are reprinting with permission an article that appeared in the New Jersey RTAP RAP, Fall 2001 Rural Assistance Publication, Jamie Hashagen author.

With the average new hire remaining with an agency for seven years, every prospective employer should make sure that he/she hires a new employee based more on his/her personality and attitude than on skills that can be easily taught.

A prospective employer should focus on a potential new employee's attitude during the recruitment process because the way that an employee treats the customers takes precedence over everything else. In the long run, whether someone can drive large equipment does not make him/her any more qualified to transport passengers to and from locations in the county or medical appointments than another qualified candidate. If a rude driver repeatedly upsets the passengers, then the agency essentially fails to operate its service successfully. Therefore, knowing how to identify a person's personality type can be a valuable asset in the hiring process.

Being prepared and focused before an interview begins makes a supervisor's job easier. If a supervisor knows exactly what skills he/she wants in his/her new employee, then he/she can identify the appropriate candidate quicker and with more ease. According to the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), before any employer can begin the recruitment process he/she should address several key issues. The important issues to determine in advance include the position being offered, the job description, the qualifications, and the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities. Once a prospective employer determines exactly what the position entails and what type of candidate would fulfill those requirements, then the personnel process can begin.

The personnel process consists of five distinct phases. These phases include recruitment, selection, training, retention, and re-training.

The recruitment phase can sometimes be the most frustrating part of the entire hiring process.

Once an employer knows who and what he/she wants, simply finding anyone who vaguely meets those criteria can be challenging. To find prospective candidates, an employer should try placing advertisements in newspapers and on the radio, using employment services, encouraging employee referrals, using Internet resources, and make self-referrals. Some less common recruitment resources include local church groups, fire departments, police/sheriff departments, school bus drivers, and retired military personnel.

After securing an eligible candidate base to choose from, the selection process can begin. Each prospective employee must fill out an application, undergo an interview, and take a test. All interview questions should be the same and the test can even be incorporated. Remember that the test does not need to be formal or lengthy; it should be based on key job skills or attributes.

If an employer follows every phase of the recruitment process and finds the perfect employee, then retaining that employee becomes crucial. After investing time and money to hire and train someone, an employer needs to make it beneficial for an employee to stay with his/her agency. Therefore, remember that factors such as compensation, benefits, working conditions, loyalty, and potential for self-esteem determine employee retention.

Most importantly, remember that while new and part-time employees play an essential role in an agency's success, most of those employees work two or more jobs. Therefore, the various needs of all employees need to be monitored and addressed. Many times a supervisor's attitude and tactics determines whether an employee will remain with an agency. Remember it should not always be about how an employee can help his/her supervisor, but about how a supervisor can help his/her employee.

Danville Mass Transit is Passenger Friendly

Customer satisfaction is fundamental to Danville Mass Transit (DMT) Director, Ileta Smith. Smith focuses on passenger comfort, convenience, and following through on passenger suggestions.

A Quad Cities native with a background in human resources and accounting, Ileta took advantage of a dispatching opportunity at DMT in 1993, quickly became the office manager, and was promoted to the directorship in 1994.

“We love passenger suggestions,” says Ileta. “Customer satisfaction is key.” She proved her commitment to the DMT customer service mission with new service routes that were created in 1999 based on passenger suggestions. New bus stop signs have also been placed at customer suggested locations, another example of Ileta Smith’s dedication to her customers.



Ileta Smith, DMT Director and Jodi Meker, Dispatcher seated.

Every evening DMT staff thoroughly clean each bus inside and out. The DMT building has an attached commercial style drive through bus wash. The insides of the buses are washed by the janitors on staff (one full-time and one part-time) who wash the windows, seats and floors. This attention to their customers’ personal comfort makes the 900 – 1,000 rides provided each day a pleasant experience for all.

The holiday season offers an opportunity for senior citizens to take a Christmas lights sight-seeing tour courtesy of the Danville Police Department and DMT. Each year the Danville Police Department and DMT cosponsor and coordinate, with CRIS Senior Services of Danville, a free tour of the Danville area holiday lights. The police department provides a map with routes of the areas that offer the best display of lights.

Danville Mass Transit celebrated its 24 anniversary this year. Every year on DMT’s anniversary date

customers are given a token of appreciation. This year everyone rode the buses free of charge for the day and 3x4 inch self-adhesive calendars were given to each customer.

Maintenance supervisor, James McGuire and in-house mechanic, Pat Brothers keep the DMT’s nine buses in



In-House Mechanic Pat Brothers.



Entrance to Danville Mass Transit.



Passenger Boarding DMT Bus.

operating order. Five buses are used on twelve fixed routes in the city of Danville from 6:15 a.m. – 6:15 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:45 a.m. – 5:45 p.m. on Saturday. Over 280,000 miles are traveled each year, with over 335,000 trips provided annually by the nine full-time and three part-time drivers.

The cost of riding a DMT bus at full fare is just 75¢. Reduced fare, which includes senior citizens, the disabled, children age 5 – 17 (free for children 4 and under when accompanied by a fare paying passenger), and Danville Area Community College students, is 35¢. Also, buses that are equipped with wheelchair lifts service all DMT routes. A maximum of two wheelchairs can be accommodated on each bus.

In keeping with her strong customer service commitment, Ileta Smith would like to acquire newer buses for her passengers. Currently, Danville Mass Transit has seven 1992 buses, one 1982 bus, and one 1980 bus.

RTAP Advisory Council Serves Vital Mission:
Continued from Page 6

Rudy Muzzarelli, director of East St. Louis Operations and Quality Control for Alternative Transportation System (A.T.S.), has served on the advisory council since 1994.

Muzzarelli began his career as an ordained minister in 1963 and is currently the associate pastor of Trinity Pentecostal Church of God in Fairview Heights, Illinois. Rudy is also serving as the secretary/treasurer of the Pentecostal Church of God Illinois District.

In addition to the ministry, he has been involved in many other public services with various social service programs. An American Red Cross instructor since 1979, Rudy teaches cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), oxygen administration, first aid, ergonomics, back safety, baby-sitting, and sport safety.



In 1974 Rudy began working part-time as a field supervisor and in 1976 became the assistant director with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) at Belleville Area College (BAC), now Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC). In 1978, SWIC agreed to sponsor a locally funded, limited transportation service for older persons as part of its Programs and Services for Older Persons (PSOP). This was the beginning of Rudy's career in transportation, as he resigned

as part-time assistant director of RSVP to begin working with PSOP as the director of its transportation program known as Demand And Response Transportation System (DARTS). During 2000 Rudy relocated to the East St. Louis office as director of East St. Louis Operations and Quality Control. In 2001 DARTS changed its name to Alternative Transportation System (A.T.S.) to better describe the scope of the services provided.



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 TRANSREPORT, phone (800) 526-9943, e-mail rtac@wiu.edu or fax (309) 298-2162. Please include pictures of these people!**

Mary Jane Hollingsworth director of transportation at Community Resource Information and Services (CRIS) Senior Services began her transportation career in May 2001. Prior to this Mary Jane was an instructor at Danville Area Community College, teaching Early Childhood classes in the Child Development Center.



Mary Jane's daily responsibilities include maintenance of the buses, scheduling rides, creating the driver's schedules for the demand response routes, and invoicing the seven area agencies whose clients are transported by CRIS. Mary Jane tallies the daily donations collected from the seniors as well. Those seven area agencies include nursing homes, adult day care, and centers for the developmentally disabled.

Annually, CRIS participates in and Mary Jane organizes local Labor Day and Christmas parades. CRIS is also one of the eight sites for the Regional Training program provided by the Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Center.



Laura Dick, director of SHOW BUS Public Transportation since December 2001, says, "I feel like I've come full circle, blending elements of all my previous 'lives', and that adds an extra sense of appreciation for my current job." She is involved in all aspects of transportation, from grant writing to driving buses when needed.

During college, Laura volunteered at two natural foods cooperatives and eventually began working at a cooperative warehouse in Madison, Wisconsin. Laura became a broker for several Midwest wholesale food cooperative warehouses after graduation and also dispatched semis from coast to coast. For about ten years, she and her husband ran a combination brokering/dispatching operation out of Bloomington, Illinois and then out of Laramie, Wyoming. Their operation was also closely connected to a trucking operation with in-house maintenance. "And boy, do I remember the storms and sweating out driver safety and schedules in the days before cell phones. Actually, when we started we didn't even have CB radios in the semis." For more than fifteen years, Laura worked with at risk families in Florida and Illinois. During those years she "learned the ins and outs of grant writing and the challenging world of governmental oversight/reporting."

Laura started with SHOW BUS in May 2001; "it was wonderful having the months with Mary (Davis) before she retired December 2, 2001. SHOW BUS has a tremendous, very experienced office support staff, and some of our incredible drivers have been with the program for over fifteen years. Talk about walking into a perfect situation in terms of personnel!"



Kami Miller has been the executive director of the Edgar County Senior Citizens Programs since December 15, 1989. The executive director's position includes all aspects of the senior citizens programs including the Rural Public Community Transportation Program. Kami graduated from college in 1979 with a marketing/management degree. She began her career with the Edgar County Senior Citizens Programs in 1985.

With the approval of the 5311 application by the Edgar County Board, the Edgar County Senior Services Council expanded its service area from the city of Paris to the entire county. July 1, 2001 marked the long awaited expansion, which meant all citizens of Edgar County, not just seniors, could take advantage of the services. The Edgar County Senior Citizens Council is the operator of this county wide service and the Edgar County Board is the grantee.

Currently, the Rural Public Community Transportation Program operates a three van curb-to-curb service. The hours of the service are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. through 4 p.m.

**13th Annual Community Economic Development Conference
Crowne Plaza, Springfield, Illinois
March 5 & 6, 2002**

The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, in conjunction with Rural Partners, the Governor's Rural Affairs Council and the Illinois Development Council, is hosting the 13th Annual Community Economic Development Conference on March 5 & 6, 2002 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL. The conference will feature sessions and workshops on technology, health care, transportation, agriculture and entrepreneurship in rural Illinois. The conference brochure and registration information can be viewed on the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs web site <www.IIRA.org>. Conference materials can be requested by contacting Carol Harper, Western Illinois University, 523 Stipes Hall, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455 (1-800/526-9943 or 309/298-2637).

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Emergency Preparedness Course?
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Call RTAC at (800) 526-9943

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