



# **TRANSREPORT**

The Newsletter of the Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Program  
August 2002

---

## Some Conclusions About Coordination

We are finishing our transportation coordination discussion with a summary of the findings and conclusions of the audience breakout groups at the most recent RTAC conference. We are also offering our opinion on where to go from here.

### **What actions can local agencies take without state legislation?**

- Look at the issue from a *systems* standpoint rather than an *agency* standpoint
- Examine existing funding streams
- Educate the players (form groups such as local inter-agency transportation councils)
- Evaluate existing resources and identify boundary issues
- Do a little extra; don't use boundaries as an excuse; communicate services on a continual basis
- Support bills for a statewide coordinating committee
- Advocate on all levels, from the bottom up; speak to any group that will listen; find and support a single transit advocate
- Find the needs of the community in which you operate
- Be as innovative as possible
- Share the same dispatch system
- Contact insurance consultant or join insurance risk pool
- Communicate with other agencies

### **What federal/state intervention is needed?**

- Change relationships with local officials
- Change rules and regulations (allow vehicles to be shared, address insurance restrictions, etc.)
- Change ways of funding
- Work with agencies to clearly define boundary restrictions; clearly define coordination
- Provide cabinet level direction
- Support bills for a statewide coordination committee
- Educate citizens about rural transit
- Encourage and stimulate multi-county coordination groups
- Fund multi-use providers first
- Use a regional committee to allocate vehicles
- Ask \_\_\_\_\_ how they did it (find a state that has been successful and solicit their advice)

## RTAP Advisory Council

Tom Zucker, Chair  
vacdk@aol.com  
Voluntary Action Center  
1606 Bethany Road  
Sycamore, IL 60178  
(815) 758-3932

Rich Machala, Vice Chair  
richmachala@hotmail.com  
JoDaviss County Transit  
P.O. Box 6087  
Galena, IL 61036  
(815) 777-2211

Connie Darnell  
DHSVR011@dhs.state.il.us  
Office of Rehabilitation Services  
601 South High Steet  
Belleville, IL 62220  
(618) 235-1148

Betty Green  
ceo@ridesmtd.com  
Rides Mass Transit District  
Box 190  
Rosiclare, IL 62982  
(618) 285-3342

Linda Mitchell  
lmitchell@effingham.net  
CEFS Economic Opportunity Corporation  
Box 928  
Effingham, IL 62401  
(217) 342-2193

Anna Oestreich  
bondcosc@papadocs.com  
Bond County Senior Center  
305 South Third  
Greenville, IL 62246  
(618) 664-1465

Ileta Smith-Knight  
ismith@cityofdanville.org  
Danville Mass Transit  
101 North Jackson Street  
Danville, IL 61832  
(217) 431-0653

Ron Weishaar  
ciscosconron@hotmail.com  
Piattran  
1925 North Market  
Monticello, IL 61856  
(217) 762-7521

### Non-Voting Member

Edwin Burke, Section Chief Non-Metro Programs,  
burkeea@nt.dot.state.il.us  
IDOT, Division of Public Transportation  
310 South Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 793-3660

2002



This past year contained some firsts- the first annual rodeo and the first annual co-sponsored (with Indiana) management conference- and though the final numbers are not in yet, our driver training program experienced its most successful year ever, as we expect to better last year's record number (423) by almost 300 attendees!

As we enter September and begin the new fiscal year's work plan, we are attempting a bold venture, the restructuring of our driver training program. After I explain, you'll hopefully understand why we decided to change an already successful program.

- As we increased the number of trainings, our training costs also rose. With each training costing an average of \$697 to sponsor, the resulting increase in training costs meant a decrease in funds for other work plan items.
- As training demand grew, it became more difficult to satisfy requests for on-site trainings (trainings held for agencies that had been unable to attend regional trainings or Department on Aging (DoA)-funded trainings).
- Whenever the classroom portion of each four to six hour training ran long, the hands-on portion had to be abbreviated.
- The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) is funded primarily to assist Section 5311 grantees/operators. Though the RTAC regional training program added sites in FY 02, it was still difficult for some 5311-funded agencies to access trainings.

Thus, in FY 03 we are making drastic changes. In September, October, and early November we will film and edit the classroom portion of our three core courses of defensive driving, emergency procedures, and passenger assistance. Gerry Stodgel, Bob Fuhr, and Lisa Beith will be the instructors.

We will make enough copies of the classroom portion to begin distributing them by mid-December to Section 5311-funded, rural Section 5310-funded and rural transit providers funded by other sources.

Continued on Page 7

( )

Ed Heflin, Manager, EL-Heflin@wiu.edu  
Jacqueline Waters, Transit Specialist, JS-Waters@wiu.edu  
JoAnn Kennedy, Secretary, J-Kennedy1@wiu.edu  
Telephone: (800) 526-9943 Fax: (309) 298-2162

RTAC Web Site:  
<http://www.iira.org/directory/rtac.asp>

RTAC E-mail:  
rtac@wiu.edu

## IPTA Notes

Leadership, whether on the local, state, or federal levels or in the private sector, is a current hot topic. What does it take to be a great leader? What does it take to lead? Many of us joined the transportation industry not by precise planning but by chance, and when networking with different folks throughout the country many have told me, "I didn't know anything about transportation, but before I knew it I was the program director or general manager."

When I became director of the Dial-A-Ride Program, I had no idea where a carburetor was located, what a power train was, or how much air to put in the tires. I had to use the expertise of those with tons more experience than myself. I am so grateful I had a team that was willing to help the new kid on the block, and to know I am not alone in having no previous transportation experience. Many people I have come to know and deeply respect in this field were trained as accountants, planners, social workers, homemakers and even engineers. Yet, somehow, their commitment and energy led them to positions that touched the lives of people in their respective communities each and every day. In other words, they lead.

During these past six months, I have personally been very much focused on the desired qualities that make a good leader. What type of leader will move our association forward? Will I have the strength and fortitude to make it all it needs to be for everyone involved? One of the most important lessons I have learned is that it takes more than just one person to make a good leader. One's colleagues, peers, staff, board members and the membership are all a part of the journey which brings us to our objective.

My journey began with the 2002 Strategic Focus to outline the positive and necessary steps to make the Illinois Public Transportation Association a stronger voice in the Illinois transportation industry, and I am happy to say we are making great strides. The Requests for Proposals for the Capital Needs Assessment have arrived, with three companies providing very detailed and succinct plans of action to bring this long awaited project to fruition. We are taking sufficient time to review before the interviews begin, but we should be able to kick off the project at the Fall Conference in September. The membership committee is geared up and will submit a proposal to the IPTA Board of Directors at the July 25, 2002 board meeting. The final proposal will also be announced at the Fall Conference. Finally, the

Board will review the web site quotes and make a selection at this same board meeting.

Coinciding with my quest for sound leadership, Illinois and Indiana RTAP sponsored a "Focus on Excellence" leadership module. I attended this seminar along with approximately 50 other managers from Illinois and Indiana. We learned about value-based leadership and what it can do for oneself as



well as staff and customers. The most important lesson learned is to ensure a lasting executive commitment to the strategic process. Our presenter, Mike Noel, stated that an organization is better off not attempting culture change at all, than it is to start it and then abandon it. Rest assured that IPTA is deeply committed to improving our Association, but doing so as a team - not a one-man show. IPTA has accomplished something very important in 2002. The Board and Executive Director now focus on the strategic plan - our outline for the future.

A few weeks ago I attended my first State Public Transit Partnerships Conference in Portland, Oregon. From what I understand, this is the first time the sponsors of this conference actually provided a training opportunity for state association executives. Association management training is not new, but it is new to many state association leaders, so this very detailed training program came at a perfect time for IPTA. The program addressed organizational structure and governance, budgeting and legal issues, and association programs and services. Networking with association leaders from other states benefited all attendees. Because most of us are one-man operations, our moderator, Lynn Melby, stressed that each of us needed to learn to live with the undone and be comfortable with it. We also learned that we are pretty equal in how our

Continued on Page 4

associations operate and in board involvement and direction. We unanimously agreed that as association executives we get to work with the best in the business, which makes our jobs easier, more pleasurable and provides better motivation to fulfill the focus of our strategic plans. During the APTA Legislative Conference in March, we will conclude the leadership training and make plans for future workshops at subsequent conferences.

Leadership is what we make of it ourselves, but it cannot be done alone. "None of us is as smart as all of us" and "ten idiots do not make a genius" (Melby's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Laws). Simply doing nothing or continuing to do things the same way are not viable choices for associations today. Thoughtful consideration of changes facing the associations and creative leadership in responding are needed. IPTA is accomplishing this by taking one step at a time and

by involving the board as well as the members in many critical decisions.

During the Fall Conference, take time to meet with the IPTA Board of Directors. Listen to their enthusiasm in our goals and objectives. Become involved by joining a committee. Volunteer to help with the Capital Needs Assessment. This is your organization. We can only go as far as the membership wants to take us. Registration materials will be out to you soon. See you in September,

*Linda P*

**Important Date:            September 11 – 13, 2002**  
**IPTA Fall Conference**  
**Schaumburg Marriott**  
**Schaumburg, Illinois**

**Scholarships for Fall Conference**

RTAC will sponsor ten scholarships in the amount of \$50 each to partially defray the fee for attending the 2002 IPTA Fall Conference. Please call for details.

**Baby it's Cold Outside...Year Round Air Conditioning Maintenance**

Okay, it is the end of August and you most likely won't be using the air conditioning too much longer. You're also probably thinking that since the air conditioning was checked on all of your agency's vehicles at the beginning of spring, that the maintenance is good to go until next spring. Right? Wrong!

To avoid problems, air conditioning units should be checked every three months and completely serviced once a year. That means even in cold weather the air conditioning systems should still be inspected and maintained. The simple 10 – 15 minute inspection should include the drive belts, air conditioning clutch, the mounting bracket bolts and all fittings, the evaporator area inside the coach, the blower, air inlet grill, drain pan, condenser area, fans, and electrical wire.

A trained air conditioning specialist should perform the yearly service inspection. The technician should perform a complete work-up including recharging the refrigerant if necessary, checking the fittings, cleaning the coils, replacing the filter dryers, and running a test that checks the capability of the unit to decrease the temperature inside of the bus by 15 – 20 degrees within 15 minutes. These procedures will help ensure that the air conditioning unit is operating efficiently and they will also extend the life of the unit.

Two common air conditioning problems involve the unit's compressor and leaks at fittings that are crimped onto hoses. An undersized compressor is the most common problem. Standard on many buses are small, undersized compressors which are required to cool too large of an area for their capacity, are overused and consequently have more breakdowns. The other common air conditioning problem is leaks at fittings and hoses, which can cause serious loss of freon.

When it's time for routine maintenance on your vehicles, ask your mechanic to look at the air conditioning. Preventive maintenance is just as important for air conditioning components as it is for the rest of the vehicle!

## Meet the RTAP Advisory Council Members!

**Dave Diamond**, an original member of the Rural Transit Assistance Program Advisory Council, resigned from the Advisory Council on April 30, 2002 and will retire at the end of November of this year. Dave's experience, perspective of disability matters, and background in transportation proved invaluable to the advisory council during his long tenure as a member.

Dave reentered state employment in January 1979 with the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs as a grants manager. In December of 1979 he became employed with the Department of Rehabilitation Services working with CETA agencies (now Employment and Training) to encourage the training and employment assistance to people with disabilities. This is where Dave became involved with transportation agencies, as transportation is extremely important to working people with disabilities. When Centers for Independent Living came into existence, Dave worked with them to identify issues surrounding people with disabilities and their independence.

A strong advocate in disability issues, Dave was very involved with mainline buses with lifts. When a pilot program was introduced in Waukegan, Dave worked locally to get people to "try" and then ride the buses. Dave was appointed as a Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) representative on the Governor's Transportation Coordinating Council and has presented at several conferences on the Americans with Disabilities Act. We thank Dave for his many years of service to rural transit and wish him well in his retirement.



*Recently we had the opportunity to take a group picture of the advisory council. L to R: Ron Weishaar, Rich Machala, Tom Zucker, Linda Mitchell, Anna Oestreich, Ed Heflin, Rudy Muzzarelli, Ileta Smith-Knight, Linda Podeschi, Ed Burke, and Dave Diamond. Not pictured: Betty Green*

**Rudy Muzzarelli**, a member of the Rural Transit Assistance Program Advisory Council since 1994, was featured in this column in February 2002. Due to increased job responsibilities, Rudy tendered his resignation at the April 30, 2002 RTAP Advisory Council meeting. Rudy represented the 5310 grantee segment and was a positive guiding force during his eight-year tenure with the RTAP Advisory Council. Thank you Rudy and good luck with your future endeavors.

**Connie Darnell** has been selected to fill the vacancy created by Dave Diamond's retirement. A counselor for the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) in Belleville since 1985, Connie has worked in the field of human services since graduating from Southern Illinois University in 1976. Connie has worked with rural communities as well as metro areas and understands the importance of transportation to independent living. Without transportation, individuals cannot participate fully in their communities and often cannot improve their quality of life (education and enrichment activities), not to mention meeting such basic needs as grocery shopping and medical attention. It is through this realization that Connie has become interested in transportation issues.



Connie is presently working on her Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling at SIU-C. She and her husband Don, who is vice-president of Operations for YMCA of Southwestern Illinois, have one daughter, Erin, who is a junior at University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana. In their spare time they love to travel.

## Behind the Wheel

*Behind the Wheel*, a new *Transreport* section dedicated to drivers, addresses common driving concerns and issues. In his RTAC Notes of November 2001, Ed Heflin mentioned picking up a free Shell Driving Booklet. Currently Shell offers nine information booklets that provide driving safety tips that are helpful in many emergencies.

In this issue we offer tips from *Driving Dangers*, a booklet offering advice on how to cope with sudden driving dangers. The following sample of questions and answers are taken from the booklet verbatim.

### **Q. Blowouts are scary. Should I just slam on the brakes?**

**A.** No. If you slam on the brakes you could lose control completely. If a front tire blows, the car will pull hard to the side of the blowout. The steering wheel vibrates like crazy. Hang on tight with your hands at the 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock positions on the steering wheel. Take your foot off of the gas and concentrate on staying in your lane. Then slow down gradually and pull off the road to a safe location. If a rear tire blows, the back of the car will weave back and forth and vibrate. But you should handle it the same way.

### **Q. How do I get out of a skid?**

**A.** A lot of people hit the brakes hard when their car starts to skid. That generally makes things worse. Just take your foot off the gas and turn your steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the car to go. This helps straighten out the car and often regains traction. Frequently it takes more than one turn of the steering wheel to correct a skid.

### **Q. If my car goes into deep water, what's the best way out?**

**A.** Some safety officials suggest the acronym POGO for this kind of situation. **P**op your safety belt. **O**pen the window. **G**et **O**ut. While this doesn't happen often, it happens enough that you should know what to do. If you do go in the water, release your safety belt immediately. (But don't release it before you go in. The safety belt will protect you during impact with the water.) Then the best thing to do is to try to get out quickly through the window, because power windows can short-circuit in the water. If you can't get out through the window, try the door. At first, the water pressure will probably hold it closed, but don't panic. As the water rises, it will equalize the pressure and the door should open.

### **Q. What if my brakes just go out. What then?**

**A.** You must think and act quickly. Remember this word sequence: pump pedal, parking brake, shift down, safe place.

1. Pump the brake pedal (unless you have an ABS brake system. Never pump the brake pedal on ABS brakes.) Sometimes the pressure comes back.
2. Slowly try the parking brake. But don't jam it on hard if you're in a curve. That could cause a spin.
3. Shift into a lower gear (or lower range on automatic transmissions). The drag on the engine will help slow you down.

Do all three of these as quickly and steadily as you can. And keep your eyes on the road.

4. Look for a safe place to guide your vehicle onto the shoulder of the road or some other safe location.

In an emergency, the quicker you think and act, the safer you will be.

### **Q. Cars seem to pull over in front of me for no reason. Can I do anything about that?**

**A.** Virtually all cars have "blind spots," spots where it's difficult to see cars close behind them to the left or right. To tell if you're driving in someone's blind spot, just glance at his rearview mirror. If you can't see his face, assume he can't see you. Move forward or fall back so he can see you. There are probably blind spots in your car too. That's why it's always safer to quickly turn to visually check for other vehicles traveling in lanes next to yours before you pull over. **The Vampire Rule:** Another place to check to see if you're in someone's blind spot is her *outside* mirror. If you can't see the driver's face, chances are she can't see you.

The *Driving Dangers* booklet was written in cooperation with the National Safety Council. For copies of the Shell Driving Booklets, logon to Shell's website at [www.countonshell.com](http://www.countonshell.com) or call 800/376-0200.

## Continued from Page 2

By mid-January all agencies should have their copies. In March we will begin delivering the hands-on portion of each of the three core courses to **every** Section 5311 grantee, meaning approximately **90** hands-on trainings will occur in FY 03, more than double the amount in FY02! The benefits of the new delivery system include:

1. This will increase the quality and standardization of the classroom portion of the training. By taping the presentations, we can do re-takes if we don't like how a certain segment turned out. In addition, now everyone watching the presentation will hear exactly the same information.
2. We'll keep the tape short, maybe in the 30 minutes to one hour range. Time is a valuable commodity at your agency, so we want the tape short enough that you can fit it into your busy schedules.
3. If you need to ask the instructor a question, you'll have that chance when the instructor comes on-site. The tapes are being distributed early with the expectation that we won't come to your site to present the hands-on portion of the training until **after** your drivers have viewed the tape (an introduction to the hands-on portion).
4. As with regional trainings, Section 5310-funded and other rural transit providers can "piggyback" onto these trainings. That is why we're sending the classroom tape to everyone.
5. This new system "expands" the regional training concept; instead of last year's 8 sites, we now have nearly 30 sites in which to offer trainings.

We look forward to working in FY 03 with all our friends in the rural transit community.

---

## **Tips from Fleet Supervisor at Rockford Regional Maintenance Center**

Dan Engelkes, Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) Fleet Supervisor, conducted an inspection of a medium duty vehicle at the maintenance workshop attended by 41 people on May 8, 2002. Many participants took notes during Dan's thorough inspection, plus Dan provided handouts (common problems with Ford mid-size vans; lubrication diagram and chart for Braun lifts; sample agreement for registering with the regional maintenance center; maintenance tips for alternator, battery, and radiator; and a RMTD inspection sheet for Ford Aerotechs).

Dan's impressive presentation covered all aspects of the vehicle, but due to space considerations we'll list just a sampling of his advice:

- **Lift** "You cannot over-inspect the lift. RMTD lubes every 5,000 miles because it is too difficult to track lift cycles. Also, don't let anybody disconnect interlocks as a way to fix a problem; you could end up going down the road at 50 miles per hour and the lift opens. Don't adjust the pressure on the regulator pump as a way to solve a lift problem or lift a heavy load."
- **Universal Belt** "You will probably get 60,000 miles, maybe 100,000, but when you're working on the engine compartment and notice the belt hasn't been changed in a while, it's cheap insurance to the spend the \$40 or so to change the belt."
- **Brakes** Newer vans use 4-wheel disc brakes. RMTD uses Ford brake shoes rather than aftermarket ones. Dan learned at a Springfield maintenance workshop to use Volvo grease as a way to get 10,000 more miles on service intervals for grease.
- **Seat Belt Cutter** A seat belt cutter is attached with Velcro directly above the driver's sun visor for easy access. RMTD uses old belts to train drivers on cutter use.



*Dan Engelkes, explaining lift maintenance*

To receive copies of Dan's handouts, please contact RTAC. And please remember to attend the next regional maintenance workshop in order to learn more about proper maintenance for your agency's vehicles. Proper maintenance extends vehicle life and maximizes the safety of your passengers.

# Spotlight

## *“Taking YOU where YOU want to go!”* **SHOW BUS Lives Up To Its Motto**

In 1975 the Senior Citizen’s Advisory Council of McLean and Livingston Counties determined there was a need for rural transportation, especially for the elderly and those with disabilities. As the rural areas increasingly lost basic services, such as grocery stores and medical services, those populations were becoming more at risk. The proposed name for the transportation service, SHOW BUS, stood for Seniors and Handicapped On Wheels, Bus to Urban Services.

In 1976 Meadows Mennonite Retirement Community agreed to act as the sponsoring agency for SHOW BUS. With their sponsorship, the new program was promised two buses through the Urban Mass Transit Administration and IDOT, and funding through the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging. In 1979 SHOW BUS transported its first clients.

In 1988 SHOW BUS began receiving federal transit funds for rural public transportation within rural McLean County and Livingston County, with McLean County acting as the receiving agent for both counties. With that change, SHOW BUS began transporting everyone regardless of age or disability. In 1989, Ford County signed an intergovernmental agreement with McLean and Livingston Counties, and SHOW BUS expanded again. In 1992 Iroquois County also signed the agreement, and in 1999, by a separate arrangement, SHOW BUS began providing service in rural Kankakee County.



*Office Manager Reann Gibson, Director Laura Dick, Dispatcher Louise Welch*



*Driver unloading the bus*

Although SHOW BUS’s target population has expanded, the concern that launched SHOW BUS has remained the guiding force behind the program- to provide transportation to protect the quality of life for those who remain in rural areas in five counties. The goal of SHOW BUS is to provide safe, dependable general public transportation to persons of all ages and income levels. SHOW BUS is certainly achieving that goal, last year providing 43,275 trips and traveling 360,381 miles.

The large service area does not prevent their 6 full-time and 9 part-time drivers from preserving personal interaction with their riders. The caring and compassion that SHOW BUS drivers have for their passengers is exemplified by the story of an experienced driver, with SHOW BUS since 1986. He became concerned one morning when one of his

regular passengers was not waiting for the bus. He knew something was wrong; although the older lady was very frail, she was also very punctual, and she never missed the bus. The driver radioed the dispatcher to call the passenger’s home and an emergency number previously supplied by the passenger to SHOW BUS. The driver then talked to the passenger’s neighbor, who had a key and entered the house with the driver to find the lady collapsed on the floor. The dedication and consideration that SHOW BUS drivers routinely give to their passengers resulted in a happy ending to a potential tragedy.



*A few SHOW BUS buses*

SHOW BUS provides demand response service. The service is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Round-trip costs for individuals less than 60 years old are dependent upon whether travel is within the county or is outside of the individual counties. Individuals 60 years or older contribute a donation and children 12 years and younger pay a lesser fare.

Laura Dick, director of SHOW BUS Public Transportation since December 2001, is involved in all aspects of transportation, from grant writing to driving buses when needed. Laura started with the agency in May 2001 and feels she benefited from the tutelage of former director Mary Davis for seven months. "It was wonderful having the months with Mary 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!"

---

**Continued from Page 1**

Where do we go from here? At a coordination conference in Schaumburg in April, National Transit Institute (NTI) fellow Paul Hamilton spoke of his experiences as a planner for the Texas Department of Transportation. Hamilton warned that the Texas 5310 program initially tried to force coordination, and "it went over like a lead balloon." Perhaps the lesson learned is that all the players (riders, agencies, state program administrators, legislators, and the governor) need to drive coordination.

**In that vein, *Transreport* challenges all of its readers to attempt to further the cause of coordination in rural transit. Which of the above steps is something you, your agency or your program can work on?** RTAC is willing to do its part; in our FY 03 work plan we've added a component that calls for a coordination project to attempt to develop a coordination model that we can submit to IDOT for review. We're not sure what the model will look like (total coordination, brokerage, lead agency, regional oversight, central dispatching, etc.), or whether it will address a small area or the entire state, but we are making the attempt. Please join us.

---

**“Otherwise We Would Have to Stay At Home”**

Sophie Nelson of Belvidere recently made that statement about the Boone County Council on Aging (BCCA) transportation program. For the past eight years, Sophie and her husband Ernie have used the BCCA bus daily for medical appointments, occasional lunches at the Steamplant restaurant, visits to the Boone County Keen Age Center, church activities, drugstore, and banking needs.

Residents of Belvidere for nearly 50 years, the Nelsons have four children, five grandsons and three great-granddaughters. Ernie stopped driving due to failing eyesight, and states he is "happy that someone capable is now doing the driving." Sophie said riding on the BCCA transportation system is convenient and is the only transportation available to them during the week.



*Ernie and Sophie Nelson*

On April 21, 2002, Ed Burke of IDOT made a site visit to Belvidere. Part of the site visit included a trip on the bus, where he met Sophie and Ernie, discovering that on that very day they were celebrating their 63<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary! Ernie and Sophie's presence and the wonderful occasion made it one of the most fulfilling site visits ever for Ed.



## 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](mailto:rtac@wiu.edu) or fax (309) 298-2162. Please include pictures of these people!

**Lisa Beith** became the new operations supervisor at Danville Mass Transit (DMT) on May 1, 2002. Prior to joining DMT, Lisa was the Transportation Supervisor at CRIS Senior Services for four years. Since July 2000, Lisa has also been a Passenger Assistance trainer for the Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC). Lisa's duties at DMT include supervising the 9 full-time and 3 part-time drivers, training new drivers, and overseeing schedules and routes.



For eleven years, Lisa worked for the Washoe County School District in Reno, Nevada, holding several positions including instructor/evaluator, third party CDL examiner, and dispatcher. Lisa taught bus safety in Nevada and was the first Student Management Instructor in the county teaching drivers how to deal with difficult situations.

Lisa has been married to her husband Dale for 20 years. They have two daughters, Jody 19 and Holly 16.

**Rebecca Shaw**, managing director of the Jackson County Mass Transit District, resigned her position on June 30, 2002 to relocate to Montana. Rebecca started working in rural transportation in 1998 as Joel McQueen's (retired manager of the Rural Transit Assistance Center) graduate assistant at Western Illinois University. Rebecca says, "Thank-you to all of the public transportation operators and the RTAC, IPTA, and IDOT staffs who have been encouraging and have answered my many questions. I value your support." Rebecca adds, "If you are ever in Kalispell, Montana, please look me up."



*Tony Ambrose, Dava Shorb & Rebecca Shaw*

**Dava Shorb** didn't take long to take over the reigns at JCMTD, beginning her duties as the new managing director on July 1, 2002. Dava's work history is in retail and office management, and in December 2002 she will complete her Master of Science degree in the Human Dimensions of Forest Management. According to Dava, "Like many of the people I have met in the transportation industry, my work history shows a lot of versatility." She adds, "I am very happy to be at JCMTD. I'm excited at the prospect of working to continue and to improve the delivery of transit services to the people of Jackson County."

### More New Materials Available From RTAC Library

Video: *Problem Passengers; Challenging Situations*

"Body language, tone of voice, diversion, showing sympathy, preserving dignity-all of these techniques and many more to effectively ward off or resolve difficult passenger situations are covered in this new National RTAP video and workbook training module.

The 25 minute video portrays the difficult situations in segments that coincide with fuller discussion and suggested training exercises in the workbook. Problems featured in the video include verbal abuse, sexual advances, dementia, incontinence, fare refusal, offensive odors, weapons and seizures. Driver responses to the situations are demonstrated and discussed. Additionally, the (51 page) workbook includes a segment on stress management for the driver personally and an appendix of sample policies and other information resources.

Developed by the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), a program of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the training module will enable rural transit drivers and other personnel who deal directly with the public to make professional choices based on self understanding of their personality and other conditions and to recognize incipient problem passengers and deal with them proactively." 2002. (25 minutes)

Remember; please call 309/298-2417 to borrow any of our library items!

## Transit Systems To The Rescue

An emergency preparedness session at April's RTAC conference mentioned the need for rural transit agencies to become involved in community emergency response drills. Two agencies that attended the conference became involved a few weeks later, not in drills but in actual emergencies. In both cases, the agencies provided invaluable assistance to other emergency responders and made a huge contribution to their community. In their own words, the agency managers explain the circumstances.

**Susan Starwalt, Program Director, Dial-A-Ride writes:**

Early in the morning on May 7, 2002 as fire department boats and end loaders lifted residents out of low-income housing on the east side of Mattoon, Dial-A-Ride Rural Public Transportation transported the evacuees to an American Red Cross evacuation site. Many streets and highways were closed throughout and between Mattoon and Charleston, caused by the overabundance of rain received in such a short time. A vast number of homes and businesses including two assisted living homes and one unassisted senior home were unreachable due to high water.

The Coles County Council on Aging, Inc., the operator of Dial-A-Ride, has had a Working Agreement in effect since October of 1999 with the City of Mattoon Police and Fire Departments. This agreement allows the City of Mattoon to maintain a set of keys to each vehicle and use them for emergency purposes such as the flooding that occurred in early May. A member of the police force has been through a "train-the-trainer" type of course on how to operate the vehicles and lifts as well as the wheelchair restraint systems.

This is Dial-A-Ride's second occasion in which the vehicles were used for emergency evacuation. In early 1999, Dial-A-Ride vehicles were used for the evacuation of a nursing home. The evacuation was caused by a carbon dioxide leak within the building. During the late evening hours, more than 80 residents were safely evacuated to a local church. This amazing feat was completed in just a few short hours with the assistance of the Dial-A-Ride drivers, executive director, program director, City of Mattoon Police and Fire Departments, and the nursing home staff.

**Anna Oestreich, Director, Bond County Senior Center writes:**

On May Day, 2002, at approximately 3:30 p.m., six tornados hit Greenville in rapid succession. The power went out at our office, and with it, the telephone system. The storm had hit the radio tower for our two-way radios, so until vehicles got within two miles of the office, we had no communication with our drivers. For a period of about one hour, not even cell phones worked for calls from Greenville westward. One of our staff members is a volunteer fire person and carries a pager, so we were able to hear some police transmissions which alerted us to the severity of local conditions. Much damage had been done to the town in a very short period of time. The worst report indicated that the roof of a nursing home had been peeled back, and the building had to be evacuated.

As soon as we regained use of our cell phones, we contacted the local police who were coordinating emergency procedures. Although the acute care residents were taken by ambulance to the local hospital and most of the ambulatory residents taken by school bus to a nursing home about fifteen miles away, some of the residents were confined to wheelchairs. Bond County Transit offered to transport the wheelchair bound residents. In the continuing storm, two of our vehicles were guided by emergency workers through a maze of downed wires, trees, building rubble, and roadblocks, to the nursing home. Residents were loaded and transported, with drivers communicating to each other and the police and fire departments via cell phones. No one likes this kind of excitement, but we were happy to be able to lend support during the emergency.

---

**“The beginning of a beautiful friendship...”**

Though the above line is stolen from Humphrey Bogart's final scene in *Casablanca*, it rings true for the relationship established between the Indiana and Illinois RTAP folks. Linda Podeschi, earlier in this newsletter, described the leadership seminar that recently took place in Champaign. Among the nearly 50 attendees was a Michigan rural transit manager, making the seminar truly a multi-state event. Participants gave unanimous high evaluation scores to the presentation, making us excited about next year's possibilities. Dave Spacek, Bureau Chief for Downstate Programs, IDOT DPT, already has suggested the possibility next year of a session on financial management offered by national RTAP or a session on transit basics. Here's looking at you, Indiana!

...

?

?

?

**(800) 526 9943**

.....	1
.....	2
.....	3
.....	4
.....	4
.....	5
.....	6
.....	7
.....	8
.....	9
.....	10
.....	10
.....	11
.....	11

