



TRANSREPORT

**The Newsletter of the Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Program
December 2003**

Getting To Know You

We traveled in October to southern Illinois to observe operations and provide technical assistance at Shawnee Mass Transit District (formerly Section 5311 grantee Massac County), located in Ullin and doing business as Southern Most Area Rural Transit (SMART). We found executive director Kim Guetersloh busy handling the myriad of activities associated with starting a new business while simultaneously ensuring continuation of operations. When we talked with Kim, she was surprised at the different services RTAC could provide; she knew about driver training as a result of us contacting her during her first days on the job, but she was unaware of some of our other resources.

We made a site visit in November to Galesburg Transit in west-central Illinois, meeting with Kraig McCluskie, who was appointed a year or so ago to the top position in the organization. Kraig has been an active participant at RTAC events for some time and we were excited about the chance to see him on his home turf. Kraig gave a tour of his facility and explained future plans for three new buses and a new bus maintenance/storage facility. Also he was rightfully proud about Galesburg Transit's use of environmentally friendly biodiesel fuel.

These two visits made us realize fully the importance of site visits in becoming familiar with the operations of our customers. For example, Galesburg Transit began using an 11% blend of biodiesel, but had to decrease the blend percentage due to water problems that surfaced in the six month test period. Knowing this type of information about our customers and the details of their operations allows us to better serve them.

On the other hand, we want our readers to understand why RTAC exists and to be aware of the types of services we provide. RTAC provides the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) for the State of Illinois. RTAP is administered by the FTA and the primary purpose of the program is to provide training, technical assistance, and research to improve rural transit services. RTAP's goals are to provide high quality technical assistance and training to rural transit operators receiving Section 5311 funding and to promote public and specialized transportation in rural areas.

RTAC was created in 1990 as a unit of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) at Western Illinois University (WIU), and operates under an inter-agency agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). RTAC's mission is to "Promote the safe and effective

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
jdctransit@jdwi.org
Jo Daviess County Transit
P.O. Box 6087
Galena, IL 61036
(815) 777-2211

Kevin Carr
carrk@kreiderservices.or
Kreider Services, Inc.
500 Anchor Road, POB 366
Dixon, IL 61021
(815) 288-6691

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

Gene Englehart
gwbart@hotmail.com
Gateway Services
406 South Gosse Boulevard
Princeton, IL 61356
(815) 875-4548

Bill Jung
ceo@ridesmtd.com
Rides Mass Transit District
1200 West Poplar
Harrisburg, IL 62946
(618) 253-8761

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

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

Non-Voting Member

Gary DeLeo, Acting Section Chief Non-Metro Programs,
DeLeoGA@nt.dot.state.il.us
IDOT, Division of Public Transportation
310 South Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 793-6043

RTAC Notes December 2003

This newsletter has featured many emergency- and disaster-related articles in the post-9/11/01 time period, so I feel it necessary to assure you that we have not been intentionally trying to annoy you with this topic. We instead wanted to demonstrate the need for every agency to plan for such events, and recently were happy to supply every one of our customers with a hard copy and compact disc containing a template of emergency preparedness policies.



We have also stressed that planning is only part of being prepared; regular drills are necessary in order to determine the effectiveness of the planning effort. We are considering holding a mock drill involving Access Springfield (complementary paratransit provider for Springfield Mass Transit District) during the spring conference. This will give you a close-up look at a drill and hopefully encourage you to do the same thing at your agency.

A few weeks ago I participated in McDonough District Hospital's (MDH) yearly disaster drill. County and city agencies assisted MDH in simulating the aftermath of a semi-truck accident that caused a chlorine spill.

Bob Fuhr, operations manager at Bridgeway (one of the City of Macomb's public transit operators) graciously agreed to drive a paratransit vehicle that happened to drive by the scene of the accident. Bob pulled the vehicle over and immediately called 9-1-1. The simulated situation was one in which it was not possible for Bob and his passengers to do anything other than pull to the side of the road in close proximity to the accident. As part of the emergency response, the Macomb Fire Department set up a portable decontamination shelter and treated Bob and his passengers at the scene.

I coerced my brother Mark into joining me in driving by the scene, stopping to gawk at the wreck, and becoming ill from chlorine

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Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC) Staff

Edward Heflin, Manager, EL-Heflin@wiu.edu
Jacqueline Waters, Transit Specialist, JS-Waters@wiu.edu
Mable Kreps, Technical Assistant, MR-Kreps@wiu.edu
Telephone: (800) 526-9943 Fax: (309) 298-2162

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

RTAC E-mail:
rtac@wiu.edu

IPTA Notes

As most of you are well aware, Congress has elected to pass a five-month short-term extension of our current transportation legislation (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, i.e. TEA-21), as opposed to enacting a new long-term comprehensive reauthorization plan. As we rapidly approach the reauthorization of TEA-21, it is essential that all of you understand the impact this has on your current transportation programs.

I know that many of you are not members of transportation-oriented associations such as the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) or the Illinois Public Transportation Association (IPTA). These associations provide a wealth of information regarding the importance of reauthorization legislation, and as the Executive Director of IPTA I try to keep all of our members constantly informed of what we need to be doing and where we are heading with this legislation.

When we first began talking about reauthorization of a six-year package, the economy was stronger, plus we were not concerned about terrorist attacks or war. A weaker economy and being at war both affect the process, especially since we are searching for more revenue. We must continually communicate our message to Congress, asking it to reauthorize a long-term bill with increased funding for public transportation, to maintain funding guarantees and to expedite the implementation process. Now is the time for every transportation entity to reach out to local communities and government officials to ask for their support of this legislation.

Each month I pass along to the IPTA membership a TEA 21 Reauthorization Checklist, distributed by APTA, which contains some very significant and inexpensive things you can do to demonstrate the need for public transportation in your communities:

1. Host site tours of your facilities for your local media.
2. If you conduct a customer satisfaction survey, release the positive results to local media.
3. Plan a meeting with a news reporter and riders to discuss the benefits of public transportation.
4. Slate an event at a current or future transit-oriented development site.
5. Share specific stories of how transportation has enhanced lives of riders.

6. Compile and distribute a fact sheet on how transit benefits your community.
7. Partner with a museum, theater, senior center, etc. to demonstrate that public transportation gets people to places other than just to and from work.
8. WRITE to your Congressmen.



The outcome of this ongoing legislative battle will significantly affect your local economy and the ability of your transportation service to move people effectively and economically. Public transportation plays an essential role in enabling your residents to get where they need to go, whether it is work, school or recreation. Without a reliable transportation network, your community's economic health and ability to support a vibrant business community would be at risk. Congress must make funding decisions in the next five months that will determine how well transit systems continue contributing to the local community and economy through the next six years – through job creation, congestion relief and revitalization of downtown and neighborhood businesses.

The IPTA Board of Directors and its membership urge all of you to continue your excellent work in providing public transportation to your communities. Everyday that you maintain your record of excellence that is at the heart of your work, our work advocacy advances. Everyday that you remain responsive to those who receive your services, that is part of our progression. Supporters of transportation who speak of you favorably are crucial voices that echo throughout your community as well as our nation. Please initiate your own campaign to be a part of this reauthorization process. February is just around the corner and your voices must be heard! Keep up the good work!

Linda P

Apply NOW! Operators are standing by!

Seriously, now is the time to fill out the application for the upcoming Certified Community Transit Manager (CCTM) exam. RTAC is once again offering the examination in conjunction with the RTAC Spring Conference.

For those of you interested in taking the CCTM certification:

- A morning study session and afternoon test will be held on April 12, 2004
- The site is Springfield Mass Transit District, 928 South Ninth Street, Springfield
- The Internet address for Certified Community Transit Manager (CCTM) information and application package is <http://www.ctaa.org/training/cctm/>
- The exam process (the study in the weeks prior to the exam, the morning study session, and the test itself) provides a complete understanding of all facets of rural public transportation

The website listed above will answer questions that you have regarding the test. **If you want to take this test at the spring conference please contact Edward Heflin at 800/526-9943.** RTAC offers group and individual assistance to those preparing for the CCTM test.

Training Video Testimonial

RTAC recently received the following letter regarding the training video we produced and sent to rural transit providers earlier this year. The letter not only validates the importance of the driver training video, but also demonstrates that the medium in which we conveyed the message has generated training ideas within other organizations.

We thank Mr. Hill for his compliments, and we are gratified that his agency is adapting the idea of producing an in-house training video as a way to more efficiently utilize resources.

Dear Mr. Heflin:

I wanted to say thank you for the driver training video you sent us. It has proved to be very informative and a helpful addition to our driver training. We are also looking forward to attending the driving portion later this year.

After speaking with our Chief Operating Officer, we have decided to provide the same type of training you gave us. We are all too busy and taking the time to do a video seems like an excellent way to better use our time.

Again, thank you for the tape and the information provided. Best of luck in the coming year.

Respectfully,
Paul Hill, DT Program Director
Clay County Rehabilitation Center, Inc.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE!

Sign-up today to receive February's *Transreport* via e-mail. All you have to do is send an e-mail to JS-Waters@wiu.edu and we'll put you on the distribution list. It's that easy! You might ask, "Why would I rather have the *Transreport* transmitted via e-mail?" Just think: The pictures are in color! No printing delays! Conservation of trees!

So, why wait? Send that e-mail today!



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** at 800/526-9943, e-mail rtac@wiu.edu or fax (309) 298-2162. Please include pictures!

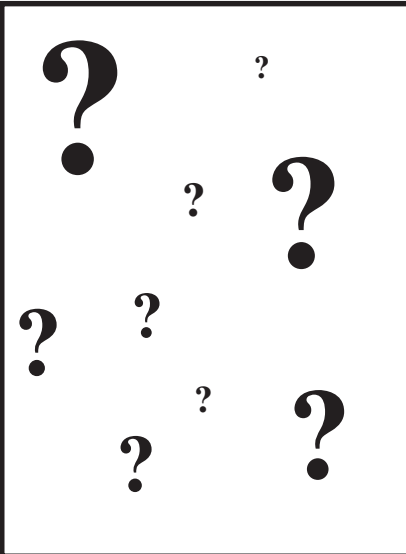


Mable Kreps is the new technical assistant for the Rural Transit Assistance Center. She has a Bachelor of Business degree in Management (2001) and an MBA (2002) from Western Illinois University.

Mable has been the office manager for Hartmann Photography, located in Macomb, for the past three years. She also has experience working in recreation, retail, and food services.

Mable has been married for the past two and a half years to her husband Brian Kreps. They have a son Payton who just turned 1 in October. They live in Macomb.

Mable will provide technical assistance, conduct research, maintain databases, maintain financial records, and be the first point of contact for the office. We welcome Mable and are excited about her strong management and customer service skills.



Oops!
How did this picture get here?
Can anyone guess who this cutie is?
Answer is at the bottom of page 6.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| March 10-11, 2004 | 15th Annual IIRA Rural Community Economic Development Conference, Peoria |
| April 3, 2004 | 3rd Annual RTAC Paratransit Rodeo, Springfield |
| April 12, 2004 | CCTM Exam, Springfield |
| April 13-14, 2004 | 15th Annual RTAC Spring Conference, Springfield |
| May 19, 2004 | Rockford Mass Transit Maintenance Workshop, Rockford |

Spotlight

We decided to try something a bit different from the previous Spotlight articles and display two photographs of transit vans. You will notice that there are commonalities with both of the vans. Look carefully at each picture and at the bottom of this page you'll find the answers. Have fun!



Answer: The vans have the name and telephone number of their agency and the words "Public Transportation" prominently displayed: (o) Rich Machala from JoDavless County Transit is the mystery baseball catcher from page 5. Sorry, there's no prize for the correct answer, just the warm fuzzy feeling of "I knew that!"

Secretary of State Third Party CDL Certification

By Deb Salisbury, director of training and development at Voluntary Action Center (VAC) in Sycamore

The third party CDL safety officer examination, which I needed to pass in order to offer third party services, consists of questions from the third party certification program study guide and the field operations manual, which includes all phases from the pre-trip inspection, skills test and the actual road test.

I was also required to create a route for the road test. It consists of 4 stop signs, 20 traffic control devices, 2 uncontrolled intersections, 3 railroad crossings, 1 underpass, 1 overpass, 4 left turns and 10 right turns and is a total of 11 miles. I was shown a video and tested on the actual road testing skills and grading procedures of the examiner.

Being able to offer third party services has been very beneficial to VAC; we no longer have to wait for appointments with the Secretary of State's Office to license operators. As *Transreport* readers are aware, the Secretary of State offices get very busy, and a lot of productive time can be lost in waiting for your turn to take the CDL examination.

RTAC note: If you have done something at your agency which you want to share with your peers from around the state, please call, fax or e-mail RTAC with your thoughts. Feel free to share whatever is important to you (something you feel is innovative, a rewarding or unique experience, etc.).

Emergency Procedures Hands-On Trainer Strives For Continuous Improvement

To make the emergency procedures hands-on training more meaningful, RTAC trainer Resha Oylear has purchased emergency triangles, a first-aid kit and accident packet. Oylear is also purchasing a seatbelt cutter and seatbelt material to let the drivers experience using the seatbelt cutter, as well as a drag cloth to show its use for evacuating injured passengers. Resha tries to use all of the above items in each of her trainings, but has found that some sites where she trains do not carry the above items in their vehicles. RTAC thanks Resha for her commitment toward continuous improvement of the emergency procedures hands-on trainings, and notes that she consistently receives high evaluation scores from our customers.

We feel that our FY04 training team is our strongest ever. Uptown Driver Training owner and lead instructor Gerry Stodgel conducts our defensive driving trainings, setting up cones and a driving course, then providing individual instruction to training participants. Gerry is our long time defensive driving trainer and also receives consistently high evaluation scores.

Our new passenger assistance instructor Rudy Muzzarelli had some big shoes to fill, following in the footsteps of our previous instructor, Lisa Beith. Rudy, retired from transit management duties at Alternative Transportation Systems in Belleville, has stepped right in and made an immediate positive impact. Rudy has trained for years, teaching CPR and first aid for the American Red Cross. His early evaluation scores mirror those of Resha and Gerry.

RTAC will consult with our advisory council and with IDOT in the coming months to plan for next year's (FY05) training program. We are interested in using newer technology for our classroom training, perhaps wanting to try something different from the present video, and will evaluate several methods to best deliver that component of our driver and support personnel training.

New Material Available From RTAC Library

Video

Easter Seals Project ACTION (ESPA)

This video demonstrates the myriad benefits of accessible transportation and presents the resources, training, and other support services ESPA offers the disability community, transportation providers and the general public. This engaging resource uses the personal testimonies of various people with disabilities who use all kinds of public transportation options in their daily lives, as well as interviews with ESPA staff members, transit professionals, human service providers, and disability advocates, to inform and educate. All types of transportation is addressed, including paratransit, fixed-route bus, motorcoach, taxicab, and subway. In 15 minutes, this dynamic video, organized in segments, gives trainers and speakers the option to show shorter, self-contained clips during their presentation in lieu of using the entire production. If you want your own copy, this open-captioned resource is available free of charge from Easter Seals Project ACTION at 800-659-6428 or project_action@opa.easter-seals.org. 2003 (15:01 minutes)

Being Prepared: Security Training and Communication

This video is a powerful component in a coordinated package of tools for training transit employees nationwide. It shows how transit organizations and their employees respond in different crisis situations, which includes floods, fires, natural disasters, armed robbery and terrorist attacks. The central theme is emergency preparedness, response training and communication. **As an added bonus, the segment on fires tells the story of how training paid off for Bond County Transit of Greenville, IL, an Illinois rural transit provider.** 2003 (15:45 minutes)

Roadeo 2003

This short video was filmed during the 2nd Annual Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Center Roadeo held in Springfield, Illinois on April 12, 2003. This video shows the various exercises that each driver performs. The written test, passenger assistance, pre-trip inspection, and driving course are explained to dispel any anxiety that drivers who have never entered a roadeo may experience. 2003 (7:00)

CD-ROM

People on the Move: Using All Transportation Options (ADA and Beyond...) Easter Seals Project ACTION

This is one of the materials distributed at the Train-the-Trainer Workshop held September 2003 in St. Louis, Missouri. This CD includes instruction in conducting community assessments, analyzing and overcoming barriers, developing feedback for transit providers, delivering sensitivity training for bus drivers, and knowing rights and responsibilities related to the American With Disabilities Act. 2003.

DVD and Video

Warning Signs National Transit Institute System Security Awareness for Transit Employees

A fifteen-minute fast-paced video presentation on the key aspects of system security for transit employees, it will increase the viewer's awareness of what to look for and what to do regarding suspicious activity, packages, devices and substances. The practices put forth will not only help a transit system "harden the target" relative to terrorism, but will also improve overall security – helping to reduce all levels of crime. 2003. (15 minutes)

Previously listed CD-ROMs

Due to recent technical requests regarding driver training, ADA policy, and safety/security/emergency preparedness, we want to remind you of some of the available CD-ROMs that are in the lending library:

- Smart Driving +: An Accident Prevention Training Program for Bus Operators
- Have a Nice Day
- The Professional
- ADA Technical Assistance, Paratransit Accessible Transportation

Braille Literature

Does your agency provide Braille literature to your visually impaired passengers?

Brochures and schedules in Braille are available from a variety of sources and below we listed two organizations that we know of:

Soyland Access to Independent Living (SAIL)
Contact: Marla
2449 Federal Drive
Decatur, IL 62526
T: 800/358-8080
F: 866/415-0058

Camille Caffarelli
Horizons for the Blind
2 North Williams Street
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
T: 815/444-8800
Camille@horizons-blind.org

RTAC talked with one rural transit agency that said the set-up fee to recreate their brochure in Braille was \$25, and each brochure cost \$2. To keep costs down, another agency plans to borrow an embossing machine and create a Braille brochure in-house.

Regional Maintenance Center Updates

The Springfield Regional Maintenance Center workshop, held in September at Springfield Mass Transit District, attracted an overflow crowd. Over seventy-five maintenance workers, managers, drivers, and support personnel attended a presentation by Doug Hoover of the Braun Product Support Department, in which he explained the maintenance and repair of Braun wheelchair lifts. Doug stayed later than scheduled, answering questions right up to his departure.

Due to the overwhelming response and participation by attendees at the Springfield workshop, Doug will return to Illinois in May 2004 and present a similar session in Rockford, for those that missed the Springfield event or want to ask Doug further questions about all aspects of Braun lifts.

Centralia is scheduled to become the third Regional Maintenance Center in Illinois. Located in the south central section of Illinois, Centralia will provide the same high quality of non-routine maintenance and repair as the Rockford and Springfield Regional Maintenance Centers. A complimentary loaner vehicle for agencies within a 60-mile radius is also available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Future editions of *Transreport* will feature reports from Centralia, Rockford and Springfield Regional Maintenance Centers, reports about the most common problems they encounter with vehicles that come into their centers. This will give grantees forewarnings about vehicle issues to be aware of at their own sites.

RTAC Thanks Pete Weber for Clarification on Post-Trip Inspections

The adage “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” doesn’t apply to RTAC. Our hats are off to Pete Weber, general manager of Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System. After Pete read the August 2003 *Transreport* article, “REQUIRED! Post-Trip Inspections” he sent RTAC an e-mail clarifying an important point. Pete pointed out “that the post-trip inspection requirements listed in the article only apply to operations governed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration – not the Federal Transit Administration,” **with the important implication being that vehicles with “M” (Municipal) plates are exempt from the post-trip inspection requirement.** For further information visit <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/fmcsr/regs/390.3.htm>, which is the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Regulations § 390.3 General applicability.

Lift Accidents May Require Test

The Summer 2003 *FTA Drug And Alcohol Regulation Updates* newsletter contained an article with important clarifying information about post-accident and drug and alcohol testing.

The accident definition and post-accident testing requirement defined in FTA's drug and alcohol testing regulation (49 CFR Part 655) has not changed, but an important clarification of the rule was provided by Mark Snyder of the FTA Office of Safety and Security at a recent Community Transportation Association of America conference.

The rule (§655.4) defines an accident as an occurrence associated with the operation of a vehicle in which:

- An individual dies; or
- An individual suffers bodily injury and immediately receives medical treatment away from the scene of the accident; or
- In the case of an occurrence in which the mass transit vehicle (including non-FTA funded vehicles) involved is a bus, electric bus, van, or automobile; one or more vehicles incurs disabling damage as a result of the occurrence and requires removal away from the scene by a tow truck or other means; or
- In the case of an occurrence in which the mass transit vehicle is a rail car, trolley car, trolley bus, or vessel, the mass transit vehicle is removed from operation.

Previously, FTA provided guidance that an "occurrence associated with the operation of a vehicle" meant that the accident had to be directly related to the manner in which the driver applied the brake, accelerated, or turned the steering wheel. Given this focus on the actual movement of the vehicle, incidents involving the operation of lifts were determined to be outside the accident definition and therefore would not require FTA post-accident drug and alcohol tests.

Upon further consideration, FTA has determined that since lifts constitute equipment used in revenue service and their operation is essential to the operation of the vehicle and protection of public safety, their operation should be included in the accident definition. Therefore, FTA clarified its' position expanding its interpretation of "operation of a vehicle" to include operation of its lift. Thus fatalities associated with the operation of a lift will require the conduct of FTA drug and alcohol post-accident tests for the driver and any other covered employee that could have contributed to the accident. Non-fatal accidents associated with the operation of the lift that resulted in bodily injury requiring immediate transportation to a medical facility will also require the conduct of FTA drug and alcohol post-accident tests unless the employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor consistent with §655.44.

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- APTA Resource Kit, Strategic Planning
- CTAA Medical Transportation Toolkit
- System Security Awareness for Transit Employees
- APTA Resource Kit: Severe Weather Operations
- APTA Resource Kit: Emergency Preparedness Plans

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

Continued from Page 1

delivery of public transportation in non-urbanized (rural and small urban) areas and more efficiently use public and private resources.”

RTAC conducts its mission and fulfills its responsibilities under the inter-agency agreement through an annual work plan. Work plan components include:

- Management Conferences (3)
- Maintenance Workshops (2, and soon to be 3)
- Toll-Free Telephone Line (average 760 calls per year)
- Statewide Roadeo (1)
- RTAP Lending Library (111 items)
- Newsletter (4 issues per year)
- Site Visits (16 minimum per year)
- Driver Trainings (66 classroom and 28 on-site, 840 attendees in FY03)
- Participation in Inter-Agency Transportation Coordination Committee, Illinois Terrorism Task Force Transportation Subcommittee, various Illinois Public Transportation Association (IPTA) committees
- Coordination Project (1)
- RTAP Advisory Council Meetings (3)
- Technical Assistance (operational issues, FTA regulations, etc.)

All three RTAC staff members (Ed Heflin, Jacqueline Waters, and Mable Kreps) are available for technical assistance requests.

Ed is the lead contact for scheduling training and Mable handles training databases, financials, certificate production, etc.

Jacqueline is the lead contact for the RTAP Library, the roadeo, and the newsletter.

Ed and Jacqueline perform site visits and Mable is the lead contact for the office (as well as handling department financial paperwork).

RTAC maintains a customer service focus. We strive to answer every question that comes into the office, though in some cases we may have to research the answer and get back to you later or lead you to the correct source for the answer.

When we make a site visit we are coming as an observer and/or to provide assistance, not as a compliance officer or auditor who is coming to find fault. If you are aware of compliance issues facing your agency, please ask us for help. We want everyone to have a safe, successful operation.

Continued from Page 2

exposure. We jumped back into my vehicle and sped away to the MDH emergency room. Our hair had turned green from the exposure, and when we walked into MDH we “contaminated” those around us and had to be re-directed to a portable decontamination shelter in the hospital’s garage area.

The scenario I just described could happen in any town around the state. Passersby could easily come upon the scene and inadvertently contaminate others in the process of seeking help for their symptoms. Are your employees trained to react correctly to such a scenario?

You might consider holding a drill that simulates a tornado passing through the area. Back when I was a transit manager we’d occasionally hold such drills. This paid off one day when a tornado passed overhead and one of our drivers correctly evacuated all of his passengers from the vehicle and secured them in the nearest ditch.

Addressing disaster response in your agency policy, then failing to follow up with drills, is not much different than having no policy at all. Think about it.

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Western Illinois University
Stipes Hall 318
1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455-1390

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