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Upcoming Events:

April 1-2, 2015
RTAC Spring Conference, Springfield

April 25, 2015
RTAC Roadeo, New Berlin

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RTAC Notes
It’s been another long, cold, and snowy Illinois winter. Our annual bout with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) has reached new heights with recent news of Governor Rauner’s proposed decreases to state funding for public transit services. Is your rural transit system ready to explain why your service is crucial, why your funding should not be cut?

There are several stages in the process of validating your worth. The first stage is performance—being the best you can be and providing safest and highest level of service possible with existing resources. The second stage is continuous improvement—never being satisfied with the status quo. The third stage is telling your story—having a straightforward and simple message which explains your service and how it benefits your community.

Nearly every type of human service in Illinois faces the same scenario as transit. Along with them, we need to be able to tell a compelling story of why our funding should not be diminished. Rural public transit systems have been fortunate to be part of the Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP), a very generous funding stream. While the proposed DOAP cuts can hopefully be negotiated up to a better level than proposed, first and foremost we must remember the intent of that funding—service expansion. DOAP funding is to be used to support administrative and operating costs of expanding public transportation services.

Can you document the expansion of your system as a result of that funding? If ridership is negligibly rising while your DOAP appropriation has risen 10% annually, it might be hard to show that expansion has occurred. Are your service hours conducive to allowing customers to get to work in the morning and get home at night? Many people have to go to work before 8:00 a.m. or don’t get off work until after 4:30 p.m. It might be hard to show expansion if your service hours remain limited while state funding has risen 10 percent annually. I am throwing out these scenarios because you might be hearing these types of questions from legislators. Now is the time to formulate your answer.

If your rural public transit grant has essentially been using DOAP funding to match Section 5311 funding, the governor’s proposed budget might serve as a wake-up call. In addition to having to justify your funding level, your future might include the need to develop local match via service contracts as a result of less DOAP funding. The entire rural transit environment (IDOT DPIT, IPTA, RTAC, HSTP, Section 5311 grantees and operators, Section 5311 PCOMs) should be part of the effort toward one common goal—achieving an environment which validates the state’s investment in rural public transportation.

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IPTA Notes

Stand Up for Transportation Day – April 9

Investment in infrastructure is vital to our everyday lives. It is widely known that investment in transportation infrastructure is a boom for the economy, creating jobs and providing a means for people to get to and from jobs. In fact it has been shown that for every $1 invested in infrastructure, there is $4 in economic benefits. Studies show that investment in transit infrastructure is a particularly great source of sustainable job creation.

Federal grant funds for public transit and highways are not available without a transportation authorization bill. The current authorization, MAP-21, runs out on May 31. Congress must pass a new surface transportation authorization prior to that expiration. It is our job in the transit industry to show our elected officials why continued federal investment in public transportation is critical in our communities.

Unfortunately, as a country we tend to only talk about our infrastructure when it fails, or when it is absent. In the case of public transit, we pay attention or take action when buses get too crowded; when rides are denied because of a lack of capacity; when we have to cancel trips because an aging bus is broken down. But what needs to happen is we need to be proactive, we need to call attention to our infrastructure and the importance of maintaining it in a state of good repair. We need to call of our elected officials to create sustained public investment in our infrastructure, especially at the federal level.

On April 9, transportation stakeholders from across the country are being called on to take a stand for transportation infrastructure investment. The goal is for all stakeholders to come together across the country to advocate for the need for a long-term, robustly funded transportation reauthorization bill. Organizers are calling on all of us to hold events in as many American cities, suburbs and rural communities as possible to call attention to the need for investment.

How can you help? You can help by telling your story. IPTA will be compiling information from all of its members outlining how your community will be at risk if there is no federal funding. We will be asking each of you to tell us about the potential service cuts, layoffs, and the potential for projects to not move forward. Tell us about the riders that won’t be able to get to their jobs, their medical appointments, and other vital services. IPTA will work with the Getting America to Work Coalition to compile that information for its distribution to members of Congress.

You can also help by holding local media events or press conferences. Toolkits including talking points and an action plan can be found at www.apta.com. There is also a logo you can use for your website or for social media. You can offer tours of your local transit facilities and highlight pending projects or projects needed to keep your service going. You are encouraged to work with other stakeholders in your community: local chambers of commerce, social service agencies, community colleges and universities, and local elected officials. Each of them has a story to tell as to why long-term infrastructure investment is fundamental to a robust sustainable community.

Let’s join together, and Stand Up for Transportation on April 9! Together we can have an impact.

Laura Calderon
David Spacek from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is the 2014 recipient of the 2014 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) President’s Transportation Award for Public Transportation.

Spacek’s 20-plus year career in public transportation has paralleled a time of exponential growth in Illinois public transit services through the expansion of rural transit in counties statewide, and the provision of transportation dedicated to physically challenged and elderly individuals. Virtually every county in the state of Illinois now has service in some form of public transportation, and the grants for those county transit services in operations and capital systems are supervised by Spacek and his staff. This growth in transit service availability, and the excellence of the statewide transit system that provides the services, are among the many reasons Spacek is this year’s winner.

During the past year, he supervised the disbursement of federal and state funds to more than 60 counties and transit districts statewide. In addition, he and his staff organized a $100 million capital project initiative, including the review and scoring of all applications for capital projects, and determination of how to pay for the projects from available funding sources.

Spacek’s expertise is recognized nationally, and he has served on a number of transit-related research panels. Through the Transportation Research Board and AASHTO’s Standing Committee on Public Transportation, he has developed a number of important research proposals that have subsequently been funded by the National Cooperative Highway Research 20-65 program.

His passion for, and commitment to, public transportation are apparent every day to his colleagues and peers at IDOT. He is an outstanding public servant and steward of public dollars.
Do you ask customers that board your vehicle riding a 3-wheeled scooter if they would like to transfer to a seat? If so, you are following a recommended best practice, because 3-wheeled scooters are difficult to secure. However, if your customer does not want to move to a seat, you can’t require it per the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). To address such situations, Q’Straint, a manufacturer of securement straps and devices, has updated its securement recommendations for 3-wheeled scooters. This article outlines Q’Straint’s new recommendations.

**New best practice**
The National Transit Institute’s (NTI) goal for securing wheelchairs is to be able to limit the movement of the device during an incident and to protect the occupant. To meet NTI’s goal, Q’Straint recommends that 3-wheeled scooters be secured differently than the way 4-wheeled mobility devices are secured. Q’Straint’s Q5-1160 SC Scooter Securement Instructions were presented at the Q’Straint and SURE-LOK National Training Seminar in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on October 1-2, 2014.

For a 4-wheeled mobility device, NTI best practices state that the tie-downs be attached to the same frame component of the chair (base frame member or seat frame member of the chair). Ideally, both the front and rear tie-downs should be at a 30-45 degree angle. The front tie-downs should be anchored to the floor wider than the chair to stabilize the side-to-side tilting movement of the chair. The rear tie-downs should be anchored directly behind the mobility device to help contain the chair in the securement area and limit forward and back movement.

For a 3-wheeled mobility device, Q’Straint recommends that the front and rear securement anchor configurations be reversed in terms of how wide they are set (see photo above). The securement anchor points on a 3-wheeled scooter need to flare in the rear and be narrowly set on the front of the scooter.

Q’Straint instructor John Gross demonstrated why they were recommending this change by showing that following NTI’s best practice for securement of a 4-wheeled device does not prevent a 3-wheeled scooter from moving beyond what is considered safe. He secured a 3-wheeled scooter with an additional strap looped around the front column of the scooter with the two front tie-downs secured by attaching to either side of the additional strap. The front tie-down anchor points were fiared. Gross was easily able to pull the scooter back and forth using that method of securement, with much more than the ADA-recommended two inches of movement.

Switching the anchor point configuration for a 3-wheeled scooter so the straps flare more widely at the rear and narrowly at the front lessons the scooter’s movement to the two inches of movement under normal vehicle operations.

**Summary**
Securement of 3-wheeled scooters is difficult because of the lack of solid frame securement points. Q’Straint and National Transit Institute highly recommend that scooter occupants transfer to a bus seat if they can and will transfer. Explain to your customer why transferring to a seat makes good safety sense. Plus, it will be a more comfortable ride.

Used with permission from the Kansas *TransReporter*, January 2015, page 8.
This is the sixth in a series of maintenance/safety tips culled from presentations by the Springfield Regional Maintenance Center (RMC) at the annual maintenance workshops sponsored by RTAC. The Springfield RMC operates out of Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD) Maintenance Facility.

Maintenance superintendent Earl Amos leads the nineteen technicians at SMTD who have a combined 268 years of experience. All of the techs are trained on SMTD mainline buses as well as the para-transit buses. Anytime a vehicle is worked on, whether it is SMTD’s or not, SMTD is responsible for the safety of that vehicle. If a safety issue is found on an outside agency’s vehicle, SMTD either fixes it or the agency signs a waiver. The SMTD techs don’t know when they will see that vehicle next, so they want it to be 100 percent right when it leaves the shop.

Maintenance Safety Training Part Six covers wheelchair lifts and is written by technicians Tony Schultz and Brett Cole.

Keeping your wheelchair lift properly maintained is critical to passenger safety. Every single part on the lift is important to the overall safety of the lift. We have an extensive checklist of things we check on all lifts during a service. There are several things that you should be checking and looking for on a daily basis. First of all, when you walk up to open the bay doors, stand aside. It’s not a common occurrence, but there is always a chance that the lift has leaked down and is resting against the doors.

Always look for any hydraulic fluid leaks. These must be fixed immediately. Check all hoses and wiring for rubbing, pinching, or chafing. Check the base of the lift to see that it is secured to the floor tightly, and that there are no cracks. Check for any worn bushings.

There are also several safety features that need to be checked. The inner and outer roll stops, or barriers, should be tight and secure. All newer lifts have a bridge plate sensor. Some are a sensor under the plate; others are a light beam across the bridge. This is to alert the driver if someone tries to step off of the lift while it is in the down position. There is also a switch that keeps the lift from stowing if there is someone on it. We use a fifty pound test weight placed in the center of the platform. This can be easily tested by having someone stand on the lift and try to stow it. It should not stow.

—SMTD continued on page 7
Ricon lifts also have a safety belt that goes across between the handrails. This must be latched to operate the lift. We had a bus come in one time where the driver had taken a credit card and cut it out the exact shape of the male end of the buckle. He had inserted this into the female end and then just wrapped the belt around one of the handrails. DO NOT DO THIS! I know for a fact that this particular driver is no longer employed by that company. Safety features are there for a reason and should never be disconnected, bypassed, or left unrepaired.

All wheelchair lifts are equipped with quiet ride bumpers. These are rubber pads that various parts of the lift rest against to prevent vibration and rattling.

The photo on the right shows an assortment of some of the different quiet rides that are available. If these bumpers are not maintained and adjusted properly, it will result in annoying rattles and untimely failure of bushings in the lift.
David L. Penny Jr., became the managing director of Jackson County Mass Transit District (JCMTD) on December 1, 2014. David is a Chicago native and moved to Carbondale, Illinois in 1992 to pursue a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Communications from Southern Illinois University. Utilizing veterans funding, David met all the academic requirements of graduation and completed his studies at SIUC in 1998. During his time at SIUC, David served as the district grand lecturer, chief of staff for Undergraduate Student Government and was selected to serve on multiple honorary degree committees, which provided great training in the areas of leadership and networking. David is recognized (having received numerous leadership and service awards) as a highly effective and results driven leader. David’s record of achievements in revitalizing underperforming entities has resulted in multiple assignments requiring a remarkable knowledge of effective supervisory practices and techniques. Respected by his colleagues for his problem solving and leadership skills, David possesses the singular ability to create a collaborative and cooperative team. Continuously stressing the importance of accountability, training, and follow-up, David has paved the way for a new style of leadership that gets results, achieving what other executives and colleagues had previously thought impossible.

David’s transportation career began as a soldier in the United States Army. The first assignment David received after training was in the motor pool of the Pentagon, Washington D.C. David’s responsibilities included, but were not limited to, armed chauffeur for General ranked officers. Taking this opportunity to learn all he could about transportation logistics, David advanced rapidly and was soon promoted to a Non Commissioned Officer in Charge of fleet operations for the 825th Adjutant General Fleet Corp, Fort Myers, Virginia. Having served his country honorably for multiple years, David soon found himself exiting active duty and was assigned to the 1244th Transportation Battalion in Cairo, Illinois as a reservist. David continued to hone his fleet management skills until completion of his military term obligation in 1993.

Several years down the line, David would serve as training manager, sales team leader, human resources manager, and a call center assistant director. David has learned that success is not achieved alone; the team makes the dream. Everyone involved must commit to success and that starts with the director. David has applied the techniques of management for a long period and has experienced accomplishments never thought possible by his supervisors. Nothing in life is a guaranteed, so David gives 110 percent effort to training, research and effort to ensure all objectives are exceeded. JCMTD requires strong leadership and David is just the proven leader required for the Job.
MAINTENANCE ALERT

TIPS FOR PREVENTING CORROSION

These days, municipalities are using more (and more aggressive) forms of road salt to combat ice and reduce traffic accidents. Unfortunately, this salting of roads is intensifying the rusting process on all motor vehicles, including buses and other transit vehicles. Although modern vehicles are designed with rust prevention in mind (and IDOT includes in its specifications measures that vehicle manufacturers must undertake to prevent corrosion) the fact is that the heavy salting of roads will corrode metal and accelerate rust over time. However, there are steps you can (and should!) take to slow down the rusting process.

1. Wash vehicles often in winter months. Take advantage of warm spells by rinsing the undercarriage and wheelwells every time the temperature rises above freezing. Find car washes that have undercarriage washers built into their washing systems, or do-it-yourself facilities where you can use hand-held high pressure wands to rinse off salt accumulation. Even if you don't use soap, simply rinsing vehicle exteriors, undercarriages, and wheel wells with plain water will remove salt accumulation and help prevent rust.

2. Wash vehicles when they have completed service for the day and will have a chance to dry. Only store vehicles inside a heated area after the salt has been thoroughly removed. If you don't, the heat will actually combine with the salt to accelerate the corrosion process. Conversely, avoid washing and then letting vehicles sit in subfreezing temperatures as door seals, hand brakes, and other parts may freeze.

3. Have vehicles inspected for rust on a regular basis. Touch up exterior painted surfaces at the first sign of chipping. Remove rust and apply rust protection in undercarriage areas where that protection has been compromised.

4. Avoid letting vehicles sit for long periods of time. Once temperatures rise above freezing, the accumulated salt will become active. Wash and put vehicles in service or take them out for a long ride, ensuring they reach operating temperature. Avoid just starting vehicles and letting them idle as a way of "warming them up" because condensation that builds up in the engine will not fully dissipate during this process, which can lead to premature failures.
The picture to the left shows a lift cycle counter. All newer lifts have one. Lift manufacturers are going by cycle counts rather than time or mileage for maintenance intervals and warranty claims. The lift count should be recorded at each service.

This picture is a lubrication diagram. This particular diagram is for a Braun lift. The Ricon lift is similar. When talking to other technicians, I find that there is a huge variety of lubricants being used on these lifts. We have recently been through training and both lift manufacturers are recommending that transmission fluid be used to lubricate the lift. The use of other fluids could void the warranty. One of the worst things to use is WD-40 or other penetrating oils. These are solvent based and will actually wash out the bushing. Use a small amount of transmission fluid and wipe off the excess.
Also, be sure to always care for your pendant. The biggest problems we see with pendants are either the cord being pinched in the bay doors, as this picture shows, or being dropped and broken. Take the time to store the pendant in the proper location and make sure the cord is out of the way.

Remember, maintenance equals vehicle longevity, maintenance equals money savings, and most importantly, maintenance equals safety.

Part Seven of the SMTD’s Maintenance Safety Training will appear in the spring 2015 Transreport.

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Larry Kerrick, director of transportation at Gateway Services, Inc., was an electrical designer for AAF-McQuay International for 35 years. He retired from the Auburn, New York facility in 2000. Larry and his wife, Rosie, moved back to the Princeton area to be near their children and to enjoy frequent family gatherings. Larry started working for Bureau and Putnam Area Rural Transit (BPART) as a part-time driver in 2001, working 20 hours a week.

Larry was shocked and honored when he was asked to become the director of transportation of Gateway Services. He enjoys the challenges and responsibilities of the job. Larry said, “My father instilled in me that challenges are goals that you set and rewards are conquering those challenges. Believe in yourself and always respect those around you.” Larry’s second retirement date is undetermined because he likes the challenges that face BPART at the present time and feels he can make a difference.

Larry’s hobbies include camping, vegetable gardening, wood working and watching sports in the winter. Rosie and Larry most enjoy going on short day trips and seeing all of nature’s wonders, like the hundreds of bald eagles on the Mississippi River in the winter.
No job too large for the Springfield Mass Transit Regional Maintenance Center

Earl Amos, maintenance superintendent, Springfield Mass Transit, located at 928 South Ninth Street, says, “There is no job too large for the Springfield Mass Transit Regional Maintenance Center.” Visit the link below and take a look at a floor that the Springfield Mass Transit Regional Maintenance Center replaced in a transit customer’s bus. The bus’s floor was completely rusted out.

https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B5ipS65oAfFSa3V2WnF6ZmJzNkk&usp=sharing

Earl and his staff would like to help you make the decision on whether a regional vehicle “can’t be fixed”. The Springfield Mass Transit Regional Maintenance Center will never turn away business, no matter how large, if they have the manpower to cover the work.

If you have any questions, or if Earl can be of further assistance, please contact him at: 217.747.1254 or eamos@smtd.org.

Don’t Forget: RTAC Spring Conference, April 1-2

Register online for the 26th Annual RTAC Conference at:

http://www.iira.org/event-registration/?regevent_action=register&event_id=3

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Charles Dickens, in his 1859 A Tale of Two Cities, wrote, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . . it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” The proposed reduction in state funding levels might not be “the winter of despair” if we can use this occurrence to identify areas needing improvement, act upon them to strengthen our environment, and enter “the spring of hope.”