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Upcoming Events:

September 7-9, 2011
IPTA Fall Conference, Galena
On-Going:
On-Site Driver Training and
Classroom Driver Training
(Call RTAC: 800.526.9943)
Years ago a casual acquaintance told me something I have not forgotten. He had called his psychiatrist in the middle of the night to say he wanted to kill himself. His psychiatrist had replied, “You’ve lost perspective.” I don’t know whether the doctor’s absurd reply had anything to do with it, but my acquaintance was still alive the last time I saw him. And the doctor’s reply certainly has stuck with me.

Perspective is everything. My current perspective on Illinois rural transit is much different than it was in 1994. I had accepted a job at a human service agency, where I was told by management, “Just get the clients into the workshop every day.” I later learned that we were ostensibly delivering public transportation trips, though a compliance auditor subsequently changed my perspective on that!

When I joined RTAC, I gained an RTAP perspective. A few years later, RTAC was designated the clearinghouse for the state’s coordinating committee on transportation, bringing yet another (and more comprehensive) perspective. The focused on-site technical assistance which was necessary to fulfill our clearinghouse duties became the most valuable learning experience of my rural transit career.

The pain associated with navigating the minefields of competing interests and funding streams and agendas, as well as political machinations from the local to federal level, paid off with dividends. Just as beneficial was the chance to meet, from Cairo to Galena to Hoopeston and all areas in between, citizens who needed transit service (especially those unable to receive those services).

Today I am positive that the number one barrier to a statewide comprehensive and seamless Illinois rural transit network is a self-serving perspective. Whether on the part of the vehicle driver, the agency providing the ride, the manager of that agency, the funding body, or the legislator whose decisions impact how service is funded or the manner in which it is provided, a non-altruistic perspective ultimately results in decisions in which the needs of the customer take a backseat (or no seat).

Today when I witness any of the aforementioned players make a decision in which the impact on the customer is not the number one focus, I think to myself, “You’ve lost perspective.”
Laura and Miguel Calderon are pleased to welcome their new daughter, Mia Noel. Laura, executive director of the Illinois Public Transportation Association and contributor to this newsletter, will be back at work soon and we look forward to her next article.

Mia Noel (7 lbs 5 oz/20 in) was born at 11:51 a.m. on May 25. Her big brothers, Mateo and Miles, absolutely adore her!

Reminder: IPTA Fall Conference is September 7-9, 2011 at Eagle Ridge Resort in Galena. Register online today at www.ipta-net.org. Contact Laura at lcalderon@ipta-net.org.

Laura Calderon
Shawnee Mass Transit District Helps Evacuate Flood Victims
By Maureen A. Mann, executive director, Shawnee Mass Transit District

Shawnee Mass Transit District (SMTD) recently assisted in the evacuation process in the southern Illinois counties that suffered extensive flooding. Massive rains that began on April 20 caused flooding in the counties of Alexander, Pulaski, and Massac, where it became necessary to evacuate the residents in and around the towns of Cairo, Olive Branch, Ullin, and Metropolis.

Ten SMTD drivers, three transportation aides, and all dispatchers and members of the Administrative Team all were involved in the night and day effort which continued for days. Several nursing homes were evacuated and the residents were bused to alternate facilities as far away as Effingham, Illinois. Residents and their belongings were taken to area shelters that had been set up by the Red Cross. SMTD also assisted in the effort to return residents to their homes and clients back to nursing homes.

"I commend the SMTD employees involved in this process for their dedication, love of fellow man, and endless energy to get all residents to safe areas. We thank our fellow transit systems, RIDES Mass Transit District and Jackson County Mass Transit District, for their willingness to help with getting all residents back safely to their homes."

Maureen Mann, executive director, Shawnee Mass Transit District; Jim Fisher, driver; Sharon Cromwell, Living Hope Fellowship Church shelter coordinator; Linda Van Meter, resident of Metropolis evacuated to shelter.
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

If a transit revenue service vehicle is involved in an accident with a bicycle and the bicycle receives disabling damage, does this meet the minimum threshold for a post-accident test if the employee cannot be completely discounted as a contributing factor?

The portion of the accident definition that describes disabling damage (§655.4) refers to “one or more vehicles (including non-FTA funded vehicles)” that incur disabling damage. The definition of a vehicle that is also provided in this section of the regulation defines a vehicle as “a bus, electric bus, van, automobile, rail car, trolley car, trolley bus, or vessel.” There is no mention of bicycle. Therefore, in a non-fatal accident where no one is immediately transported to a medical treatment facility, and the only damage is to a bicycle, the minimum threshold for a FTA post-accident test is not met and a DOT test should not be conducted.

Downloaded on February 28, 2011

Technical Assistance Note
No Change to US DOT ADA Regulations for Service Animals and Mobility Devices

FTA has become aware of various inquiries from transit operators and members of the public concerning “new ADA regulations” that went into effect on March 15. Of particular interest have been various provisions relating to service animals and how “wheelchair” is defined.

Please be advised that the U.S. Department of Transportation has issued no changes to its ADA regulations, which cover transportation provided by both the private and public sector.

The cause of any confusion has been a Final Rule issued several months ago by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), which made a number of changes to their ADA regulations that went into effect on March 15, 2011. While the purpose of DOJ’s revisions was to adopt the 2004 accessibility standards (which DOT did in 2006), they also contained language amending provisions for service animals and introduced a new distinction between “wheelchairs” and “other powered mobility devices” or OPMDs.

These changes to DOJ’s regs do not affect the DOT ADA regulations, which cover transportation (both public and privately-operated). The DOJ regs do not compel transit operators to make any changes to their service animal policies or the manner in which they regard mobility devices, nor should transit operators elect to make any changes on this basis. In fact, because the DOT and DOJ regulations now read differently in this regard, changes to accommodate DOJ regulations could result in a grantee being out of compliance with the DOT ADA regulations.

Any amendments to the DOT ADA regulations would be announced in the customary manner – through publication of rulemaking documents in the Federal Register, with an effective date. Unless and until such documents are published, the DOT regulations remain unchanged.

With a single goal in mind, dozens of community leaders spent hundreds of hours of volunteer service over 18 months to develop a plan for Public Transportation for the citizens of Pike County. That vision came to life on January 1, 2011, with the opening of the Pike County Public Transportation System.

A division of West Central Mass Transit District, the Pike County Transportation System has grown at a pace that dwarfed all projections. In January, we provided more than 1,400 one-way trips travelling 8,900 miles. February’s trip numbers were equally astonishing considering the terrible weather. A total of 5,721 one-way trips were provided for the first four months of 2011, including trips to Quincy, Springfield, Winchester and Jacksonville for medical appointments, racking up a total of 47,530 miles.

The system started with four fully trained drivers, two dispatchers, and a fleet of four vehicles. In April, two additional vehicles were added to the fleet and two more drivers hired. In May, West Central Mass Transit hired a Pike County Manager to oversee the operations of the system.

Stephanie Dehart officially takes over the operations from interim manager Loretta Oden on June 1, 2011. Ms. Dehart is a resident of Pike County. She was one of the organizers of the original Transit Partnership Group and was intimately involved with the organizational process from day one. Her background is in Planning and Economic Development having spent four years as a Community and Economic Development Educator for the University of Illinois Extension in Pittsfield and the Pike County Economic Development Corporation Coordinator. A graduate of Illinois College in Jacksonville, Ms. Dehart attended the University of Springfield where she earned her Master of Arts Degree in Political Studies. She worked as a legislative intern for Representative Dan Rutherford prior to accepting a position with Western Illinois Regional Council in Macomb as an assistant planner. Ms. Dehart and her husband, Brad live in Pittsfield and farm in Pike County. They have one son, Lucas.

The Pike County Transportation system provides public and paratransit transportation to Pike County residents. The program is a curb-to-curb service provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Rides are provided throughout the Pike County area and to surrounding communities including Quincy, Jacksonville, Jerseyville, Winchester, Mt. Sterling, and Springfield as time, equipment, and financial resources permit. Occasional medical trips are available to Peoria, St. Louis, and Hannibal on an as-needed basis.

Rides are now available to Beardstown for those individuals who are working at Cargill and efforts are underway to explore the need for other Job Access routes for Pike County citizens.

Senior citizens in Pike County have the added advantage of riding free. A partnership between West Central Mass Transit District and the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging in Quincy provides for free access to public transportation (with advance reservations) for all individuals aged 60 or older.

Pike County Public Transportation is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Rides are provided on a first come, first served basis with advance reservations highly recommended. Same day
reservations may be accepted as resources permit but at a higher fare rate. All vehicles are accessible with either hydraulic wheelchair lifts or ramps for ease of loading.

The Pike County system has been successful in large part because of the work done by the Transportation Planning Group (TPG). This group of more than 50 individuals worked with RTAC through the three part “Primer” process to ensure that all the research and information that could possibly be of assistance to a new provider was in place to make decisions appropriate for the development of an efficient, user friendly rural transportation system. I know that there were times when the committee was frustrated by the seemingly endless paperwork and research required, but they persevered and the results are a system that started right.

For more information on transportation in Pike County, please contact Stephanie Dehart at 217-285-4529 or R. Jean Jumper at 217-245-2900.
Barb Long is the agency administrative coordinator for Fulton County Rehabilitation Center (FCRC), and has worked at FCRC for over 25 years. Barb also became the Fulton County Rural Transit (FCRT) operations director in January 2011. She started out as a parent infant educator in the Birth to Three Program and went on to become the coordinator for the program until it closed. On July 1, 2008, Barb moved to the FCRC Main Street office and began as the agency administrative coordinator (AAC). As the AAC for FCRC she gained knowledge of all of FCRC’s programs and even served as the Safety Officer for a year.

Barb started working in transportation in 2010. She and the transportation committee wrote the grant to apply for the funds to open the Fulton County Rural Transit. Barb was born in Canton, and graduated from Spoon River College and Western Illinois University (WIU). Barb has two teaching degrees from WIU, and has over 25 years of experience in education, social services and working with persons with disabilities.

Rex Lewis has been the executive director of Fulton County Rehabilitation Center for 31 years. On April 23, 2010, he was named the chief executive officer of Fulton County Rural Transit, which officially began service on April 4, 2011. Rex has spent eight years in education, and 32 years in social work and administration of a not-for-profit corporation. He has over 30 years experience with school buses and transportation systems for persons with disabilities. Rex was born in Canton, Illinois, graduated from Canton High School, Canton Junior College, and Western Illinois University. He is married to Sonya and they have five children and eight grandchildren.

Editor’s Note: Rex also is a vocalist and guitarist with a special interest in Delta blues. He has recorded a couple of albums and over the years has performed or sat in with a variety of bands.
Kent Tarro, director of the Macoupin County Public Health Department, has held the position of Public Health Administrator for the past 21 years, WIC Coordinator and Nutritionist the past 28 years, Dental Program Administrator the past 18 years, Medical Program Administrator for the past 15 years, Domestic Violence Victims Services Administrator for the past 11 years, and Medical Transportation Program Administrator for the past 16 years. Kent has been the Public Transportation Program Administrator for the past 3 years.

He also previously worked four years in corporate administration and has two years experience as a hospital clinical dietician. Kent is currently active in the Illinois Rural Health Association, the Illinois Public Transportation Association, the Illinois Association of Public Health Administrators, the Illinois Public Health Association, the American Dietetic Association, the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, and the American Cancer Society.

Kent grew up in Macoupin County. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Illinois State University and his Masters degree from University of Illinois –Springfield. Kent has been married for 33 years and has two children. His son, Eric is 24, autistic, and lives at home. Adam is 21 years old and is a speech pathology student at SIU- Edwardsville.

Margaret Rose Dunn, named after her grandmother, goes by Peggy, a common nickname for Margaret, but Peggy says she could never figure out how they got Peggy out of Margaret. Peggy grew up and got married in California, and it wasn’t until 1991 that she, her husband, and their four boys moved to Chesterfield, Illinois, to be close to her in-laws. After moving to Illinois, Peggy worked in the food industry and retail business, but decided to return to school at Lewis and Clark Community College where she graduated with an Administrative Professional Associates Degree in June 2004.

In January 2004, she was employed by the Macoupin County Public Health Department as a full-time receptionist. Peggy answered calls, helped clients, created databases, made flyers and much more. In 2005 she started scheduling medical transportation, and began to bill Medicaid for rides, allowing the transportation program to grow rapidly. By October 2007, the Macoupin County Public Health Department was offered the opportunity to provide senior transportation through the Area Agency on Aging, and began to organize recreational rides such as the Great River Road rides and Our Lady of the Snows Christmas light display trips. Peggy organized and did all the scheduling for both programs.

In 2008 Kent Tarro, administrator of the Macoupin County Public Health Department, and Peggy, along with the Macoupin County Board’s support, helped start the ICCT Coordination Primer process whose completion resulted in a Section 5311 operating assistance grant for the County. In July 2010, the Macoupin Transit Partnership Group completed the Primer and the Macoupin County Public Transportation (MCPT) program began. Peggy was promoted to transportation coordinator. She hired two dispatchers, and the program was moved to the Maple Street Clinic building in Gillespie. MCPT has 22 drivers and 13 vans stationed in three parts of the county—Gillespie, Carlinville and Girard. The program is in full swing. Peggy says she has been presented with a great opportunity for which she is very excited. She enjoys working with the public, and one of her main priorities is helping make Macoupin mobile by providing transportation to all of its residents.

Just recently Peggy became a first time grandma, which she is very excited about. In her free time, she loves snow skiing, horseback riding and spending time with her family.
Chelsey Waterman, former senior planner for Bi-State Regional Commission and Region 2 Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) coordinator has accepted a new position as transportation planner with the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK) in Rock Island, Illinois. Some of Chelsey’s responsibilities will be collecting and analyzing ridership and mileage data to improve service delivery, creating service area maps, and reporting to NTD, APTA, and FTA. She'll also be revising existing routes, researching new ideas for future routes, conducting ridership surveys, and responding to customer inquiries or suggestions about route logistics.

Nicole George, former Region 8 Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) coordinator at the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, recently accepted a position with the Illinois Department of Transportation, Urban Program Planning-Transit Unit, as a transportation program advisor. Nicole’s responsibilities include assisting with preparation of transit information for program budgets, reports, and the State Transportation Plan, as well as reviewing and tracking grants and contracts.

Everyone at RTAP wishes Chelsey and Nicole the greatest success in their new careers!

New Library Item Available

TCRP Report 139: Guidebook for Recruiting, Developing, and Retaining Transit Managers for Fixed-Route Bus and Paratransit Systems provides fixed-route bus, general public demand response, and ADA paratransit systems resources to assist in the recruitment, development, and retention of managers. The Guidebook is accompanied by CRP-CD-77 that provides Model Job Descriptions for 32 broad job titles that indicate the structure and content for job descriptions for manager jobs. This Guidebook will be of interest to transit providers and their governing boards.

The Guidebook is designed primarily to address the needs of rural and smaller urban bus transit systems; however, large and mid-sized urban bus and rail transit providers may find suggestions in this Guidebook helpful and are welcome to modify guidance to meet their needs. Brief descriptions of related practices within transportation and other industries are also included.

The TCRP Report 139 is available through the Rural Transit Assistance Center lending library or can be downloaded as a pdf at: onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_139.pdf.

The Rural Transit Assistance Center lending library includes videos, manuals, DVD’s, and CD’s. Please call us at 800-526-9943 to request any of our library materials. Visit <www.iira.org/outreach/rtac.asp> to view the complete library list and loan procedures.
On Saturday, April 30, 2011, the Rural Transit Assistance Center hosted the Ninth Annual Illinois Paratransit Roadeo at the Sangamon Fairgrounds in New Berlin, Illinois. The indoor accommodations were fabulous! No blowing score sheets this year! But the wind did blow outside. Linda Shaw, who has judged the diminishing clearance driving exercise (with the big orange barrels) for the past several years, really got her exercise this year.

Of the 26 contestants, and nine transportation agencies represented, 12 were first time participants.

Access Springfield: Calvin Shannon*
Cass County Council on Aging: Ronnie Jones, Roy Knouse
Central Illinois Public Transportation: Larry Bragg, Elvis Bunch*, Tari Howard
Futures Unlimited: Dan Faust, Delbert French, Bill Gates*, Nancy Lefler, Robin Meckley*, Ellen Spencer
MV Transportation: Bruce Estes*, Darick Grant*, Reginald Hobson*
Rides Mass Transit District: Eddie Beavers
Shawnee Mass Transit District: Raven Cooksey, Buster George*, Carl Horn*, Denise Schuetz, Larry Stevens
South Central Transit: Tom Deien*, Alex Matlock*, Albert Overbey*
Voluntary Action Center: Maurice Kempton, Lowell Lumpkin

Overall (scores from all categories combined) Winners
First Place: Alex Matlock
Second Place: Eddie Beavers
Third Place: Lowell Lumpkin
Novice Award: Alex Matlock
This is the first year that the Novice Award winner was also the First Place winner!

Category Winners
Driving: Alex Matlock
Pre-Trip Inspection: Alex Matlock
Wheelchair Securement: Tom Deien
Written Test: Alex Matlock

The evaluation question, “What did you like best about the Roadeo?” responses echoed what we observed:
- The networking with other drivers, sharing stories and comparing notes with other drivers
- Enjoyed the banter
- Meeting people and new faces
- The opportunity to meet with drivers from other agencies and practice more skills
- Everything
- Love it all
- All of it
- Fun

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

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart. ~Elizabeth Andrew

Many heartfelt thanks to our volunteers.

Friday set-up: Keith and Linda Shaw, Edward Heflin, and Jacqueline Waters; Roadeo Marshall: Edward Heflin; Saturday set-up and event judges: Randy Barrow, Terri Beer, Bob Bugger, Nancy Bugger, Vincent Caldara*, John Edmondson*, Chris Garner, Brad Gibbs*, Joseph Harris*, Brian Kreps, Mable Kreps, Maureen Mann*, Carol Montague, Dawn Piper, Deb Salisbury, Jim Salisbury, Treesa Sauерbrun*, Duane Schaefer, Mark Schlensker*, Keith Shaw, Linda Shaw, Debra Staggs, Jerry Tilley*, Elton Trojniar, Bill Warfel, Kristie Warfel, Al Waters, Jacqueline Waters; Score keepers extraordinaire: Bert Weber and Erin Trojniar; Score keeping PowerPoint which made the score keeper’s job so much easier: John Edmondson; Award Presenter: John Edmondson; Sponsors: Tom Boldwin, Midwest Transit (prize money) and IDOT (trip for first place overall winner to participate in the CTAA National Roadeo); Orange barrels: Geno Koehler, IDOT, Troy Gundy, Day Labor, IDOT; Returning the orange barrels to IDOT: Springfield Mass Transit District.

National Roadeo
Hip-hip-hurray to Alex Matlock, South Central Transit, for his outstanding performance in placing 17 out of 57 participants at the June 4 National Community Transit Roadeo Body-on-Chassis competition that was held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Hurray Alex!

* Denotes first-time contestants and judges.

National RTAP Released a FREE Website Builder Resource!

The National Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) has developed a website builder tool for rural transportation agencies to utilize in improving or establishing an online presence. To read more: http://ctai.org/AnnouncementRetrieve.aspx?ID=58016.

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