News and Information:

RTAC Notes................................................. 2
IPTA Notes .................................................. 3
KAT Provides 10,000th Trip ......................... 4
Spotlight....................................................... 6
Transit Movers ............................................ 8
CTAA Insurance Store................................. 10
New Library Item........................................ 10
Roland Mross’ July Ambassador Blog........... 11
How to Schedule a RTAC Training ............ 12

Upcoming Events:

April 4-5, 2012
RTAC Spring Conference, Springfield
On-Going:
On-Site Driver Training and
Classroom Driver Training
(Call RTAC: 800.526.9943)
Both RTAC and IPTA include an attendee roster as part of the packet at our conferences. We list phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Why? It’s not because we hate the environment. Instead, the cheapest and best advice you can get about a variety of operational and administrative issues comes from successful longtime Illinois rural transit practitioners.

We certainly want you to continue to call us, and as often as you’d like. But we do not operate a transit system. We do not encounter the logistical roadblocks which are part of your daily existence. It has helped that I have some operational experience and therefore can use that as a reference in formulating advice, yet there are times when the best advice I can give you is to call someone in your same situation.

For example, a number of new starts involve operators (or administrators) from a senior center or a human service agency. Some of your problems emanate from the need to please your main funding body while simultaneously satisfying the requirements you face as a public transportation operator/administrator for your county’s grant. Sure, RTAC is glad to provide the advice you seek, but in the situation I just described, your smart choice is to augment the call to us with a call to a longtime operator which shares your background.

Unfortunately, time and again I offer names of seasoned successful operators for customers to call, and when I call those veterans (yes, I do follow up) to see if they have been contacted by you, too often I hear, “No, haven’t heard from them.” That is unfortunate, as well as unwise.

One of the biggest challenges you will face is accepting that when you become an operator/administrator for a county’s Section 5311 grant, you are working for the county. Your agency is NOT the grantee. In addition, you will face the prospect that some of the personnel associated with your agency’s main funding stream might not understand that distinction. I still meet aging-related personnel from around the state, and at different levels of the food chain, who dispute that senior centers may provide a ride to anyone, not just someone over 60. I’m not picking on the Aging folks, as they have been a huge help to the transportation coordination effort, I’m just saying that the job is not done.

When you are wearing your Section 5311 grant hat, everyone is your customer, not just your clients. Ridesharing is the basis for making your system successful. If you want to find out how to fill your busses . . . call a peer who is doing that. You know who they are . . . and you know their phone number.
IPTA Notes

Getting to know your locally elected officials is one of the most important things you can do as a publicly funded transportation provider. Not only should you take the time to get to know the mayors and county board members in your service area, but your state legislators and members of Congress as well. After all, these are the people who decide how much state and federal funding you receive each year.

It’s best not to wait until you’re in crisis mode to visit your elected officials. Make time to meet with them periodically throughout the year so that they know you and so that you can educate them on what your organization does for your community. They should be very familiar with how much the community relies on your service, and how much you rely on their funding. The better they know you and what you do, the more likely they are to help in your times of need.

Now is the time to make visiting your elected officials a priority. At the federal level, the surface transportation authorization (SAFETEA-LU) expired nearly a year ago. Congress has been discussing various proposals for reauthorization. In July, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman and the Senate Environment and Public Works committee Chair unveiled their plans for a new reauthorization bill. The House T & I Committee Chairman’s bill is a six-year bill that cuts transportation funding by 33%. While we don’t have specifics for particular funding, this could potentially be devastating for your operations. The Senate Committee Chair proposed a two-year bill that authorizes transportation spending at the current level.

Neither proposal is sufficient. We should be urging our elected officials to pass at least a six-year surface transportation reauthorization bill that at a minimum maintains current funding levels, streamlines project delivery, and considers increasing funding for critical infrastructure development. While the economy is still suffering from the recession, and it is important to begin getting the nation’s deficit under control, Congress should be focused on high-return investments in our country’s infrastructure. Continued and increased investment in public transportation construction projects will create long-term jobs and can be part of the solution to the fiscal crisis in the United States.

It is time for Congress and the Administration to make some hard choices, including looking at raising revenues for transportation spending. The federal gas tax expires September 30, and while it is likely that Congress will extend it, the amount it raises is inadequate to support current transportation spending. This is why the House Committee has proposed such severe cuts. What we should be advocating for is an increased or new funding stream for transportation, possibly some kind of additional user fee.

With the end of September deadlines looming, there is no time to waste. We must get our message to Congress. If you don’t already have a relationship with your local Congressmen or their staff, take time to visit them. At the very least make a phone call or write a letter, and tell them what a 33% cut would do to your service and the people in your communities. Take the time to spread the message about how important investment in public transportation is to the most vulnerable populations in our state and in our country.

Laura Calderon
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 3, 2011

CONTACT:
JEFF WILKINS
(630) 553-4171
PAUL LaLONDE
(630) 882-6970

KENDALL AREA TRANSIT PROGRAM PROVIDES 10,000th TRIP

In winter of 2010, Voluntary Action Center, through the Kendall Area Transit (KAT) program, provided its first ride. This July, less than 16 months later, VAC has provided its 10,000th ride!

KAT is the first ever county-wide community transit program for Kendall County. Ten years in the making, the project mobilized community leaders and citizens to a single purpose—public transportation! KAT provides public transportation to all Kendall County residents but is particularly vital to seniors and persons with disabilities. KAT is administered through the County of Kendall with daily operations provided by the nonprofit Voluntary Action Center. KAT has quickly become known as a reliable transportation provider. All KAT riders happily call 1-877-IGO-4KAT when they need a ride in Kendall.

Over the past year, KAT has grown tremendously and continues to grow. Registered ridership has grown to over 900 participants, which is an increase of over 67 percent. Daily trips average over 50 a day, which is an increase of over 200 percent since KAT’s inception. And total monthly trips provided have grown by over 175 percent! KAT riders schedule trips for many purposes, including, but certainly not limited to, medical, employment, social or recreational, shopping, and educational reasons.

It is impossible to name all the participants who have made KAT so successful so quickly, but particularly instrumental are the County and municipalities, which help provide matching funds for state and federal grants; the staff of Voluntary Action Center, especially the dispatchers and drivers whom so many riders rely on for safe and courteous services; partner social service agencies such as Senior Service Associates, Open Door, and Education Services Network; and state and federal agencies.

Hopefully, our 10,000th ride is a revelation of great things to come. Soon, VAC hopes to provide 100,000 trips, 500,000 trips, even one million trips through the KAT program. As KAT continues to grow and expand, the residents of Kendall County continue to be the chief benefactor of these transit services.

###

If you would like more information on this topic or to schedule an interview with either Jeff Wilkins or Paul LaLonde, please contact them at the phone numbers listed above.

This project is funded, in part, with a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority through the Federal Transit Administration Section 5317 New Freedom Grant.
From left to right: Pamela Leonard, KAT Driver; John Shaw, Kendall County Board; John Purcell, Kendall County Board; Joan Bernhjelm, 10,000th rider; Jesse Hafenrichter, Kendall County Board; Suzanne Petrella, Kendall County Board; Jeff Wilkins, Kendall County Administrator; Dan Koukol, Kendall County Board

Back from left to right: Diannaha Thompson, KAT Lead Dispatcher; Pamela Leonard, KAT Driver; Paul LaLonde, Program Director, KAT Front: Joan Bernhjelm, 10,000th rider
Fulton County Rural Transit Program (FCRT) provides door to door public transportation to residents in Fulton County. The county covers 883 square miles with a population of 38,250. The program employs 12 individuals including six drivers, two dispatchers, a transportation coordinator, an operations director, a chief financial officer and the chief executive officer. We have a six member Board of Directors and a 12 member Advisory Board. Funding comes from the Federal 5311 Grant, match funds, fare boxes and local donations. This year we will receive an Illinois Downstate Operating Assistance Program Grant.

The Fulton County Rural Transit Program is available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Rides are scheduled 24 hours in advance by calling our toll free number (309) 357-5226. One way fares are $2.00 in town, $5.00 in the County, $7.00 each County line crossed and we also have a $10.00 wait fee for appointments. Seniors and persons with disabilities receive half price fares.

FCRT has two vans that cover the Fulton County area. We are waiting for two or three additional vehicles to be delivered in the fall through the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program. All vans are equipped with wheelchair lifts. FCRT gave its first ride on April 13, 2011. Since that day we have given 1,830 rides in 53 days. Our service allows riders to access community resources including medical appointments, dental appointments, grocery stores, banks, employment, court, entertainment, and shopping. FCRT helps provide a way for some to be self-sufficient and independent. We strive to provide as many rides as possible to the residents of Fulton County in a safe and timely manner.
— Spotlight continued from page 6

Jerry Danielson, driver

Charity Long, dispatcher

Mark Williams, driver

Carrie Bailey, dispatcher

Darrell Walker, driver

Tim Bishop, transportation coordinator

Cheryl Wirebaugh, chief financial officer

Rex Lewis, chief executive officer

Linda Rosecrans, driver

not pictured:
Drivers Ted Martin and Teresa Coulter.
Transit System Pulls Together
By Kathy Lally

The past year has seen tremendous change and cohesion for the Lee-Ogle Transportation System (LOTS) based in Dixon, with providers in Dixon, Oregon and Rochelle. Coordinating five different providers into an efficient system has not always been easy, but with everyone working to make it happen, it just keeps getting better.

The system moved in a different direction last year when the grantee, Lee County, decided to take a more active role in the oversight of the system. Kathy Lalley was appointed as acting administrator. Kathy has been an investment officer working in the Lee County Treasurer’s Office since 1998. Her role was expanded to include the administration of several transportation grants including 5311, New Freedom, and JARC. Lee County’s largest transportation grant is an ARRA Grant to build a new transit facility for LOTS, with a targeted occupation date of September 2012.

The departure of the previous administrator gave the county the opportunity to expand its active role in the transportation system. In addition to Kathy, the County also appointed board member Hal Maroney to act as liaison between the LOTS Advisory Board and the County Board. Each month both the directors of the providers and the active dispatchers meet separately and together to discuss issues affecting the system. Any changes recommended by the Advisory Board then go to the County Board after a report by Kathy to the Executive Committee. Hal Maroney then gives a report to the entire County Board.

Using this system, the past year has gone very smoothly. Kathy says that a great share of the credit goes to Rock River Center director Karen Copeland, Hub City Senior Center director Connie Dougherty, Kreider Services director Arlan McClain, Village of Progress director Craig Carpenter, and Geoff Vanderlin, new director at Lee County Council on Aging which continues to house the Central Dispatch until the completion of the new Transit Facility. “I can’t stress enough that our growth of over 20% for FY11 could not have been accomplished without each provider giving 100%.” Kathy says.

As the system grows, Kathy plans to work closely with other counties to coordinate services to aid in Mobility Management. They will be installing new dispatching software with CTS in the next few months which will give the opportunity to be a much more efficient system. They have just recently applied for a New Freedom and JARC Grants for FY12 and upon approval will be able to add new services for all Lee and Ogle County residents. At the one year anniversary of Kathy being introduced to the world of public transportation and surviving a Federal audit, she can’t wait to see what the next year has in store for the Lee Ogle Transportation System.

A lifelong resident of Lee County, Kathy is passionate about improving transportation to make a positive impact in the community. Kathy is married to her husband, Kevin, and has three grown children. She is active in her church, including service on the education commission.
Angie Jenkins has been the director of the Senior Programs for the Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois since September 2005. The Senior Programs Department has been providing congregate meals, home delivered meals and transportation services to those age 60 and older in Logan and Mason counties for over 35 years. As the current director of the transportation program, Jenkins has played a critical role in the development of an application to provide Section 5311 public transportation to Logan and Mason Counties. She is now serving as the president of the Transit Advisory Board as the agency is waiting for funding to begin the program in winter 2011. She and her husband of 21 years have a 20 year old daughter and 19 year old son.

Angela Stoltzenburg has been serving in the capacity of executive director/CEO since August 2005 for Community Action Partnership of Central Illinois. Stoltzenburg earned her Masters of Business Administration from Eastern Illinois University. Her working career has included higher education and the non-profit sector. In her role as executive director/CEO, Stoltzenburg is responsible for a variety of programs being administered by the Community Action Agency, including Early Head Start, Head Start, Energy Assistance, Senior Nutrition and Senior Transportation, to name a few. The agency has been working with the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation Clearinghouse (based at the Rural Transit Assistance Center) for three years. They have completed the primer process and will be taking the role of administrator, dispatcher and operator for Logan and Mason Public Transportation. Services are anticipated to begin in winter 2011. Angela and her husband of 12 years have a two year old son and another on the way this winter.

Elton Trojniar is the new director of Illinois River Valley Public Transit, which serves Cass and Schuyler Counties. The new public transit program is administered by Cass County Human Resource Center, located in Beardstown. His goal for the Illinois River Valley Public Transit program is to establish an efficient regional system, which includes fiscal sustainability, an increasing level of mobility for the residents of Cass and Schuyler Counties (including senior and medical transportation), as well as a need for outreach to Spanish and French speaking populations. The Illinois River Valley Public Transit, named by the Transit Partnership Group, hopes to begin public services early fall 2011.

Elton’s graduate work from Western Illinois University is in regional planning. Prior to working in transportation he studied chemistry and microbiology as an undergraduate and has worked for various Illinois city and county departments in several roles including health inspector, water chemist, historic preservation planner and geographic information technician. Most recently, Elton was a Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) coordinator for region 9, 10 and 11. Elton is married and has two young children. When not working, he spends much of his time with his family. Elton enjoys gardening, studying nature, and is a self-described “hobby Industrialist and developer”.

Elton Trojniar is the new director of Illinois River Valley Public Transit, which serves Cass and Schuyler Counties. The new public transit program is administered by Cass County Human Resource Center, located in Beardstown. His goal for the Illinois River Valley Public Transit program is to establish an efficient regional system, which includes fiscal sustainability, an increasing level of mobility for the residents of Cass and Schuyler Counties (including senior and medical transportation), as well as a need for outreach to Spanish and French speaking populations. The Illinois River Valley Public Transit, named by the Transit Partnership Group, hopes to begin public services early fall 2011.

Elton’s graduate work from Western Illinois University is in regional planning. Prior to working in transportation he studied chemistry and microbiology as an undergraduate and has worked for various Illinois city and county departments in several roles including health inspector, water chemist, historic preservation planner and geographic information technician. Most recently, Elton was a Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) coordinator for region 9, 10 and 11. Elton is married and has two young children. When not working, he spends much of his time with his family. Elton enjoys gardening, studying nature, and is a self-described “hobby Industrialist and developer”.

Elton’s graduate work from Western Illinois University is in regional planning. Prior to working in transportation he studied chemistry and microbiology as an undergraduate and has worked for various Illinois city and county departments in several roles including health inspector, water chemist, historic preservation planner and geographic information technician. Most recently, Elton was a Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) coordinator for region 9, 10 and 11. Elton is married and has two young children. When not working, he spends much of his time with his family. Elton enjoys gardening, studying nature, and is a self-described “hobby Industrialist and developer”.

Elton’s graduate work from Western Illinois University is in regional planning. Prior to working in transportation he studied chemistry and microbiology as an undergraduate and has worked for various Illinois city and county departments in several roles including health inspector, water chemist, historic preservation planner and geographic information technician. Most recently, Elton was a Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) coordinator for region 9, 10 and 11. Elton is married and has two young children. When not working, he spends much of his time with his family. Elton enjoys gardening, studying nature, and is a self-described “hobby Industrialist and developer”.

Elton’s graduate work from Western Illinois University is in regional planning. Prior to working in transportation he studied chemistry and microbiology as an undergraduate and has worked for various Illinois city and county departments in several roles including health inspector, water chemist, historic preservation planner and geographic information technician. Most recently, Elton was a Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP) coordinator for region 9, 10 and 11. Elton is married and has two young children. When not working, he spends much of his time with his family. Elton enjoys gardening, studying nature, and is a self-described “hobby Industrialist and developer”. 
New CTAA Insurance Store Benefits: A Direct Response to Member Requests!

As part of CTAA’s continuing quest to provide value added services, the Association has developed a long term solution to the challenge of providing quality benefits -- at an affordable price. As a direct response to your concerns over the Healthcare Reform law and rising insurance costs, CTAA, in conjunction with Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc., has developed an Employee Benefits Group Purchasing Cooperative that will use the Association’s group purchasing power to obtain discounted costs, ultimately developing a competitive benefits program. You may have already seen several heads-up notifications about the 2011 CTAA Benefits Program via Fast Mail and the CTAA Insurance Store website (http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles//anmviewer.asp?a=2082&z=5). Now the programs have been finalized and members may start requesting information and quotes. The goals of these programs are to:

- Provide you with guidance on meeting the requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)
- Use CTAA’s purchasing power to lower the costs of insuring your employees
- Provide superior products and coverage for your employees
- Provide a long term solution insurance rate stability

A brochure available on the website will introduce you to the products available, the value proposition of purchasing through these products, how long it takes to receive a quote, and who to contact. We realize rising insurance costs are squeezing your organization's bottom line—and that's why we're here to help. For any questions about the Insurance Store, please contact Mike Hubbart at Michael_Hubbarth@ajg.com or Mike Woytowicz at mike_woytowicz@ajg.com.


New Library Item Available

Transit Safety

The goal of FTA’s Safety and Security Program is to achieve the highest practical level of safety and security for all modes of transit. In order to protect passengers, employees, revenues, and property, all transit systems are encouraged to develop and implement a proactive system safety program plan. FTA supports these efforts by developing guidelines and best practices, providing training and by performing system safety analyses and reviews.

Transit Safety Management and Performance Measurement - Volume 1: Guidebook

This guidebook was prepared with the objective of providing resource information for transit agencies and the FTA regarding the development and implementation of Safety Management Systems (SMS) and Safety Performance Measurement Systems (SPMS). SMS offer the most promising means of preventing public transportation accidents by integrating safety into all aspects of a transit system's activities, from planning to design to construction to operations to maintenance.


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.
The major focus in the weeks leading to early June was the Community Transportation Association of America’s National EXPO in Indianapolis, June 5-10, 2011. This was the 25th Anniversary of EXPO and having it in Indianapolis had special significance for me and, as it turned out, more than I anticipated.

I was with the Indiana Department of Transportation when the first EXPO was held in Indianapolis in 1987. As I’ve been careful to explain, I take no personal credit for bringing the event to the city. It was several staff in the Public Transit Section of the DOT who were responsible for suggesting we sponsor the event and for doing all the planning to make it a success. Fortunately, many of those involved in planning the first EXPO, both from Indiana and elsewhere are around and were able to enjoy the silver anniversary. Our only lament is that we didn’t keep more of the materials such as programs and handouts from special events.

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) has come a long way in 25 years just as the City of Indianapolis has. It was truly enlightening to hear so many people compliment the hotel and conference facilities. We sometimes refer to good Midwestern hospitality, but so many of our attendees remarked how they appreciated the sincerity of everyone in the city and not just those associated with the conference. It is another case of having visitors point out the things we sometimes take for granted.

The conference was a huge success by any measurement. The training, special conference sessions, workshops and Trade Fair all were highly complimented. The Roadeo Awards Banquet was another testimony to the spirit and dedication of the people who make us all look good—the drivers.

One of the conference highlights for me was moderating a workshop session on the role of brokerages in Medicaid transportation. With the able assistance of Senior Transportation Programs Coordinator Jane Hardin of the CTAA staff, we had a very active and spirited discussion on how brokers work and their role in coordinated transportation. The session reminded me of some of the very early local human services transportation coordination meetings where people came together for the first time to discuss coordinating service. Sometimes the moderator feels like a referee, but getting people engaged in the conversations was no problem. On a positive note, I feel the attendees in the session gained a better understanding of brokers and how they contribute to delivering non-emergency medical transportation.

I mentioned in the beginning this conference had an unanticipated special meaning for me. My colleagues presented me with the 2011 Founder’s Award. To be recognized with this award by your friends and associates, especially people that you respect and admire for what they do, is truly humbling.

However, I was quickly returned to reality when I later mentioned the Award to my grandchildren and they wondered if I was one of the founders of our national Constitution.

Next month back on the road again.
The Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC) offers, free of charge, three driver training classes.

**Defensive Driving:** The course focuses on driving techniques that will enable transit drivers to drive in a more defensive manner. It addresses issues such as stopping distance, field of vision, vehicle controls, speed management, and vehicle inspections. Resha Oylear is the Defensive Driving instructor.

**Emergency Procedures:** Focuses on emergency preparedness (safety checks the driver should conduct before leaving on the trip and types of emergency equipment that should be on the vehicle) and on procedures to follow in case of an actual emergency (evacuation of passengers, first aid, etc.). Michael Miller is the Emergency Procedures instructor.

**Passenger Assistance:** In addition to explaining proper securement of wheelchairs, use of wheelchair lift, and various ways to physically assist passengers, this course also addresses sensitivity issues and the best way to communicate with people with disabilities, manual operation of the lift in case of mechanical failure, as well as a customer service component. Rudy Muzzarelli is the Passenger Assistance trainer.

Each year the RTAC Defensive Driving, Emergency Procedures, and Passenger Assistance trainers create true/false and multiple choice question tests that pertain to the hands-on training. They focus on questions that they have encountered during the previous year’s trainings. Please complete the tests prior to the hands-on trainings. This will allow discussion of questions with the instructor.

To be cost effective, please invite at least ten drivers to the hands-on trainings. Also, RTAC cannot repeat a training at an agency during the same calendar year. New agencies might consider promoting a driver to a lead position, which means the lead driver would be a training resource for new drivers.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In recent months, several accidents involving wheelchair lifts have occurred at rural transit agencies. From the incident descriptions provided, it appears that improper usage of the lifts resulted in these accidents. In addition, if the lift was functioning improperly prior to the incidents, a proper pre-trip inspection would have uncovered the issue. In at least one of the situations, our records indicated years had passed since a hands-on training had occurred, at least via RTAC trainers. Please check your training records and please assure that proper pre- and post-trip inspections are occurring.

Please call Jacqueline Waters to schedule a Defensive Driving class, and Mable Kreps to schedule an Emergency Procedures or Passenger Assistance class, at 800.526.9943.

All of the driver training classroom material may be accessed at www.iira.org/outreach/rtac.asp. Also, please visit our Web site to view the library items that correlate with the three trainings.