News and Information:

RTAC Notes ................................................. 2
IPTA Notes ................................................... 3
Ten Ways to Save $$ on Gas ......................... 4
RMC FY’11 Statistics ..................................... 5
Spotlight ......................................................... 6
Transit Movers ............................................. 8
RTAC Spring Conference Reminder ............. 10
In Memoriam ................................................. 11
Vehicle Safety Issue .................................. 11
Buses for Sale .............................................. 12
Win Cash and a Trip ................................... 12
DOT Releases New Rule ................................. 12

Upcoming Events:

April 3-5, 2012
RTAC Spring Conference, Springfield
April 28, 2012
RTAC Roadeo, New Berlin
On-Going:
On-Site Driver Training and
Classroom Driver Training
(Call RTAC: 800.526.9943)
Over a decade ago, Norm Walzer (founder and then director) of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs facilitated three forums aimed at developing provider consensus on issues to be addressed by a rural funding initiative developed by the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Public Transportation (now Public and Intermodal Transportation). National events several months later pushed the initiative to the backburner, though the Illinois Public Transportation Association eventually succeeded in expanding the Downstate Operating Assistance Program.

Back in 2001 there were 32 counties without a rural public transportation operating assistance grant. Today 20 of those counties have a grant and 12 are working toward achieving one. Achieving a grant which brings your county a rural transit system is indeed a good thing, but it marks a beginning rather than an end. It is the beginning of a journey toward developing a delivery system which provides optimal service and becomes an economic development driver for its community. It is a journey whose destination is never reached. At our spring conference in April we’re introducing a tool designed to help all rural transit systems identify where they are on that journey . . . and how to get further on down the road.

We’re almost 11 years down the road from the funding initiative forums. I found the list of comments from the 2001 attendees, in a document titled: A Vision for Rural Public Transportation for the Next 5 Years.

1. Covers entire state.
2. Modern, quality equipment in adequate numbers.
3. Adequate, stable, predictable source of funding.
4. Continuity of funding.
5. Service standards for funding.
6. Federal/state partnership (state recognizes federal regulations).
7. Intercity services in addition to 5311.
8. High quality service.
10. Efficient, safe operations.
11. Strengthen existing systems.

—RTAC Notes continued on page 10
IPTA Notes

This year, 2012, has brought about a lot of changes for public transportation providers, including a couple of new regulations. The Illinois General Assembly passed a law that took effect January 1, 2012, which requires all passengers of a motor vehicle operated on a street or highway in this state to wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat safety belt. Exempt from this law are passengers of motor vehicles not required to be equipped with safety belts under federal law.

Under federal law, every vehicle that has a gross vehicle weight rating or GVWR of less than 10,000 pounds is required to be equipped with passenger safety belts. Therefore, those vehicles with a GVWR of 10,000 pounds or more are exempt from this provision. In the case of public transportation vehicles, the safety belt requirement would apply only to minivans. All light duty, medium duty, super-medium duty and fixed route vehicles are exempt, are not required to be equipped with passenger safety belts, and would therefore be exempt from the new provision of the Illinois Safety Belt Law.

With that being said, all State procured paratransit vehicles are specified to include passenger safety belts, and providers are encouraged to adopt their own policies as it relates to passenger safety belt use. There are many around the state that already require their use by all passengers. But whatever your policy, for your own safety and the safety of your customers, be sure to clearly publish this and all your rules to your passengers.

The second new regulation affecting public transportation providers is the Final Rule that Bans Hand-Held Cell Phone Use by Drivers of Buses and Large Trucks, which was announced by U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood on behalf of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) late last year. The State has included a similar rule in the Illinois Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. The final rule prohibits drivers of Commercial Motor Vehicles (CMVs) from using a hand-held mobile telephone while operating the vehicle. Those who violate this rule face federal civil penalties of up to $2,750 per offense and the possibility of suspension from operating a CMV for multiple offenses. This restriction also applies to the push-to-talk feature of mobile communication devices. It, however, does not apply to the use of two-way radios or walkie-talkies when necessary.

The FMCSA Rule applies to drivers of a CMV, which is defined as a motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used in commerce or to transport passengers or property if the motor vehicle – (1) has a gross combination weight rating or gross combination weight of 26,001 pounds or more, whichever is greater, inclusive of a towed unit(s) with gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds, whichever is greater; or (2) has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of 26,001 pounds or more, whichever is greater; or (3) is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or (4) is of any size and is used in the transportation of hazardous materials.

According to that definition, the rule would apply to all public transportation vehicles, with the exception of the minivan. However, the rule has an exemption at both the federal and state levels for transportation performed by the Federal government, a State, or any political subdivision of a State, or an agency established under a compact between the States that has been approved by the Congress of the United States. Therefore, public transportation that is operated by a governmental entity, including mass transit districts, counties, municipalities, or state universities, would be exempt from this rule, but those operated by private not-for-profit or other private entities, would have to abide by this final rule.

FMCSA research has shown that using a hand-held cell phone while driving requires a commercial driver to take several risky steps beyond what is required for using a hands-free mobile phone, including searching and reaching for the phone. Their research has shown that drivers reaching for mobile phones are three times more likely to be involved in a crash or other safety-critical event. With that in mind, all public transportation operators are encouraged to adopt policies for their drivers that will promote safety above all else.

Laura Calderon
$5.00 a gallon gas?!

10 Ways to Save Money On Gas

Want to save up to 20% or more on the cost of gas?
Follow these 10 simple tips from the Consumer Federation of America.

Check Your Air Filter
Nearly one in four cars needs an air filter replacement. A clean air filter can improve gas mileage by as much as 10%.

Straighten Up
Poor alignment not only causes tires to wear out more quickly, but also forces your engine to work harder. Align your tires, and save up to 10%.

Tune Up
When was your last tune up? A properly maintained engine can improve mileage by up to 4%.

Pump ‘em Up
More than one-quarter of vehicles are driving on deflated tires. The average under-inflation of 7.5 pounds causes a loss of 2.8% in fuel efficiency.

Check Your Gas Cap
Believe it or not, it’s been estimated that nearly 17% of cars on the road have broken or missing gas caps. What’s the big deal? Escaping fumes not only hurt fuel economy but release smog-causing compounds into the air. Avoid air pollution and improving fuel mileage is as easy as replacing a bad gas cap.

Slow Down
For every 5 mph you reduce highway speed, you can reduce fuel consumption by 7%.

Drive More Smoothly
Avoiding jack-rabbit starts and stops, and herky-jerky driving will improve fuel economy. Don’t believe it? Lousy driving on the highway can add as much as one-third to your gas bill.

Lay Off The Brakes
Riding with your foot on the brake pedal will not only wear out brake pads (which will cost you at the maintenance shop) but can also increase gas consumption by as much as 35%.

Lighten Up
For every 100 extra pounds carried around, your vehicle loses 1 to 2% in fuel efficiency. Don’t drive around with too much junk in the trunk.

Don’t Idle
Besides causing pollution, idling wastes gas. If stopped for more than 30 seconds, turn off the engine, and don’t bother to “warm up” your car before driving -- it is not necessary.

Downloaded March 9, 2012, from: http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/save-gas-47031702#ixzz1oe8sAiEy
Regional Maintenance Center Fiscal Year 2011 Statistics

The IDOT Regional Maintenance Center (RMC) program serves as a maintenance resource for non-routine maintenance and repair. The program is open to all Section 5310 and 5311 grantees, and all non-profit social service agencies. To sign-up call Rockford, 815.961.2241; Springfield, 217.522.6087.

### Agencies Served and Vehicle Repairs

![Bar chart showing agencies served and vehicle repairs in Rockford and Springfield.]

### Top Five Repairs at the RMC's

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMC</th>
<th>Five Top Repairs</th>
<th># of Repairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rockford</td>
<td>Air Conditioning</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brakes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wheelchair Lifts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>Air Conditioning</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brakes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wheelchair Lifts</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Award Winning IDOT Paratransit Vehicle Regional Maintenance Center Program

The IDOT Regional Maintenance Center program has received awards from the National Rural Transit Assistance Program and the American Public Transportation Association.

The Paratransit Vehicle Regional Maintenance Program is a partnership project between Springfield Mass Transit District and Rockford Mass Transit District and the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation, whose goal is to have the Regional Paratransit Fleet operate under the highest possible safety and maintenance standards.

In 2001 these partners developed a paratransit vehicle regional maintenance program for all agencies operating paratransit vehicles in central and northern Illinois. Because technically sophisticated maintenance services were unavailable to many of the smaller paratransit operators, this program was designed to be concentrated at a public transit service department, which would provide technical expertise and the opportunity for quality service at the lowest possible cost.

The Springfield Regional Maintenance Center (RMC) and Rockford Regional Maintenance Center (RMC) offer services to any nonprofit agency in their region, but Section 5310 and 5311 paratransit vehicles from IDOT’s CVP program will be given first priority in scheduling repairs.

Technical Assistance: The RMC’s are an excellent resource for solving or analyzing problems with any paratransit vehicle. RMC personnel are available by telephone or e-mail to provide your maintenance staff with technical support.

Springfield:
SPRINGFIELD MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT
Paratransit Vehicle Regional Maintenance Center
928 South Ninth Street
Springfield, Illinois 62703
Telephone: 217.522.6087
Fax: 217.789.9819
E-mail: eamos@SMTD.org

Rockford:
ROCKFORD MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT
Paratransit Vehicle Regional Maintenance Center
520 Mulberry Street
Rockford, Illinois 61101
Telephone: 815.961.2240
Fax: 815.961.0326
E-mail: dengelkes@rmtd.org

Loaner vehicles: A complimentary loaner vehicle will be available for agencies within a 60-mile radius of Springfield and Rockford, on a first-come first-serve basis. The loaner vehicle is not available to agencies outside of this area. A CDL license is not required to operate this loaner vehicle. Please call the Springfield or Rockford RMC for details.

This project serves as a maintenance resource for non-routine maintenance and repair, and is not designed to compete with local private repair shops for routine service. A routine maintenance item should be considered:
if, while in the completion of a major repair on a vehicle, it is determined by both parties that it would be advantageous in cost, time and/or safety to have the item repaired at that time; and if the vehicle owner determines that the needed maintenance could not be repaired satisfactorily by another source.

To schedule a repair time for your vehicle, simply call the appropriate RMC, which will work with your schedule and, if needed, reserve a loaner vehicle for you. When you bring your equipment in for repair, the RMC staff will complete an overall vehicle inspection and inform you in writing of both the extent and the estimated cost of the needed repair. You will also be notified of any additional repairs that RMC staff may note (repair items not in the original request). No work will be initiated without your approval.

**Policies and procedures for the Regional Maintenance Center.**

1. A pre-registration form and a loaner agreement must be completed by the user agency prior to any repair work being performed (printed forms are available at the RMC offices).

2. As part of the pre-registration, user agencies must obtain concurrence from their governing boards to participate in the program and to authorize payment to RMC.

3. Payments for repair work shall be received by RMC within 30 days of invoice.

4. User agencies shall provide proof of insurance covering the loaner vehicle when it is picked up, and while it is in possession of the user agency.

5. Any damage to the loaner vehicle shall be the responsibility of the agency operating the vehicle.

6. The loaner vehicle will be provided with a full tank of fuel. The user agency shall return the vehicle to RMC with a full tank.

7. The program for paratransit vehicle repair is open to all non-profit Section 5310 and Section 5311 grantees, and other non-profit social service agencies within a 60-mile radius of RMC.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Springfield or Rockford office.

**Regional Maintenance Workshops**

Each RMC provides an annual workshop sponsored by the Rural Transit Assistance Center. The Rockford workshop is held in May and the Springfield workshop is held in October. Air conditioning maintenance, lift maintenance, proper wheelchair tie down demonstrations, and maintenance issue round tables are a few of the topics covered. The Rural Transit Assistance Center mails an announcement letter approximately thirty days before each workshop. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please contact us.
Bev Atherton was hired as Director for the Carroll County Senior Center in October of 2008. She knew there were two vehicles, two drivers, and a little bit of senior and disabled transportation going on. She did not know what was going to unfold as a major transportation system for a small rural county.

In November of 2008 the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation (ICCT) Clearinghouse Transportation Coordination Primer Process began with Edward Heflin, Rural Transit Assistance Center manager, providing the support service. Gradually the plan for Carroll County was assembled and the Senior Center became the “Provider” and “Grant Writer”. The grant was submitted in January of 2011 and Carroll County’s “5311” designation was announced in May of 2011 with a visit from Gary DeLeo, section chief Non-Metro Programs, IDOT, Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation.

There are now six vehicles, five drivers, and many rides for seniors, people with disabilities, and the general public. This provides a much needed service to Carroll County for young families getting to appointments, college students getting to Freeport, Illinois, or Clinton, Iowa, as well as a variety of other public transportation requests.

Bev was raised on a farm in Mercer County, graduated from University of Dubuque with a degree in Elementary Education, and later received registered nurses (RN) training at Clinton Community College in Clinton, Iowa. She has taught school, worked at various medical facilities, and taught beginning nursing for nine years at Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois. She continues to work as an RN at a local nursing home on evenings, weekends, and holidays, while still managing to run the Senior Center.

Public Transportation continues to grow each day with more clients and more miles traveled. It is a lot of work for the dispatcher, the drivers, and Bev for the reporting and submission of paperwork. Carroll County residents are very lucky to have received the help in the Primer Process and the award of a 5311 Grant.
Randy Barrow recently accepted a new position with South Central Transit (SCT) as director of operations. Randy began his career with SCT as a part-time bus driver in 2005. In 2006 he accepted a position as Jefferson County supervisor. He became the director of training in 2011 with SCT, and later that year moved into his current position.

Randy is married to Lisa, and they have three children, Eli, Sophia, and Cecilia. In his spare time he enjoys spending time with his family and loves to spend time outdoors.

John Lester was recently appointed director of training for South Central Transit (SCT), which is located in Centralia. John started with SCT as a part-time driver and accepted the position as full time trainer/instructor in July 2011.

John has a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from University of Charleston, Charleston, West Virginia, and a Master of Education in Adult Education from Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. John has over 45 years involvement in the fire service (Ohio, Florida, and Illinois) as a volunteer firefighter-EMT-A, with many years devoted to driver training as well as fire science and Emergency Medical Technician training. He currently serves as a volunteer Lieutenant with the Jefferson Fire Protection District, Mount Vernon, Illinois, where he is President of the volunteers organization. For 12 years, John was an Associate Professor, Fire Science and EMS, at Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, Florida. He has over 40 years of experience as an American Heart Association/Red Cross CPR-AED-First Aid Instructor, and State Certified Instructor, (Ohio) Fire Science & Emergency Medical Service. For over 40 years he has also been a sales representative for several ambulance and fire apparatus manufacturers and fire/EMS equipment manufacturers.

John has one daughter, Paige Cline, who lives in Ohio, and is married to Neil, a career firefighter-paramedic. John is blessed with Morgan, his four and a half year old granddaughter, who, needless to say, is the light of his life.

John shares his down time with long time friend and significant other, Kimberly. She has the task of keeping track of where he is supposed to be and when. John enjoys being a member of the Elks, Masonic lodge, working with model trains, (HO gauge), and tries to keep up with the yard work.
Chuck Kadlec, the Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program Manager for IDOT DPIT is retiring after more than twelve years of service. He and his wife Patsy purchased a house last year in the Sarasota, Florida area. Patsy has been enjoying the Florida sun for the past several months, so it is time for Chuck to join her. They are planning to continue to spoil their five grandchildren in Cincinnati and Chattanooga, and will spend some of the holidays with each family. In addition, Chuck’s daughter is planning to get married in summer 2013, so things will be busy. For other leisure, they plan on one day trips in the Florida area, some beach time (only 25 minutes from the gulf shore), fishing, and golfing. In his spare time, Chuck will look for some part time work, possibly driving for one of the senior centers or a local paratransit operator. Patsy already is doing some part time bookkeeping for a local business. And of course they plan to sleep late whenever they want to!

Chuck says, “It has been great working with all the agencies, and continued success in all your transportation endeavors.”

We say, “Wear lots of sunscreen, send us your address because you never know when we might drop in, and best wishes for a fun-filled retirement!”

Rural Transit Assistance Center
23rd Annual Spring Conference
Noon registration, Tuesday, April 3 -- Noon, Thursday, April 5
Northfield Conference Center
3280 Northfield Drive, Springfield
Sign up at: http://www.iira.org/conference/conference.asp

— RTAC Notes continued from page 2

12. Stable base upon which to expand services.
13. Increase in number of general public riders.
14. Local autonomy/minimum state intervention in local operations/locally- or regionally-based system.
15. Appreciation and recognition of role of transportation.
17. Downstate rural office for IDOT.
18. Urban/rural cooperative effort.

I’m not sure how we should put it together, but I believe today’s key stakeholders should convene to formulate an updated vision which takes into account factors such as the federal and state funding environments, what other states are doing in regard to grant oversight, and the needs of our riders.
In Memoriam

**Michael Miller** passed away Wednesday, February 29, 2012. Mike was our emergency procedures trainer since September 2007. But more importantly, Mike was our friend. If you were fortunate to be on his email forward list you knew Mike was a Christian, loving husband, father (three daughters), and grandfather (six grandchildren), proud United States Marine, staunch Republican, and loved a good joke.

Mike was a highly decorated retired (30 years) U.S. Marine Corp First Sergeant, having served in Vietnam and Desert Storm. Mike received his Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Before retiring in 2010, Mike served as director of two programs, sheltered employment and transportation, for the Moultrie County Beacon in Sullivan. After retirement he and his wife of over forty years, Mary Lou, owned and operated Uncle Leroy’s Concession Stand.

Mike was a member of the Sullivan First United Methodist Church, chairman of the church outreach committee and active in the church’s Honduran Mission Team. He was past president of the Sullivan Rotary Club and the Sullivan Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Sullivan Community Education Foundation Board of Trustees and the Moultrie County Republican Central Committee. Mike served on the Moultrie County Board, chairing the Budget and Finance Committee. Mike authored the weekly “Scuttlebut” column for the Sullivan News Progress.

**Semper Fidelis** Mike, you will be missed.

Vehicle Safety Issue

A rural transit agency recently took five of their medium duty passenger buses in for maintenance. Cracks on the wheelchair lifts were discovered on three of the five vehicles. The buses were manufactured between 2000 and 2002. At first glance the crack appeared to be a hair on the lift, until a closer inspection revealed it was actually a crack. The welding wasn’t complete and there weren’t any welds underneath the lift.

In light of this incidence, please heed this reminder: **All vehicle maintenance inspections should include inspection of welds.** According to Chuck Kadlec of IDOT, “The more we can alert our grantees of proper maintenance procedures, the safer and more dependable the vehicles will be.” However, it is likely that a number of rural mechanics when performing routine maintenance, might not know to inspect welds. Therefore, please make sure you understand all of the items which should be inspected on your vehicle, and make sure your mechanic understands your expectations.
EIGHT BUSES FOR SALE

Eight buses for sale due to replacement. All are in excellent condition. The buses have between 200,000 and 350,000 miles on them.

Please contact:
Southwestern Illinois College
2500 Carlyle Avenue
Belleville, Illinois 62221
618.222.5619

WIN $150 AND AN ALL EXPENSE PAID TRIP TO Baltimore, Maryland for an opportunity to compete in the CTAA National Roadeo on May 19-20, 2012!
Participation in the April 28 RTAC Roadeo is required.
Call 800.526.9943 for details.

DOT Releases New Rule that Enhances Transportation Services for Americans with Disabilities

On September 15, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation is amending its Americans with Disabilities Act regulations, which will include requiring passenger railroads to provide level entry boarding at new or altered stations in which no track passing through the station and adjacent to platforms is shared with existing freight rail operations.

The rule also requires that transit providers carry a wheelchair and wheelchair-user if the lift and vehicle can physically and safely accommodate them. The final rule and the summary of major points both may be viewed online at http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12325.html.

From: http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_Newsletter_2011_Fall

Western Illinois University complies fully with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws, orders, and regulations. The University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity institution and affirms its dedication to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability, or veteran status in employment, programs, and services.