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Upcoming Events:

September 4-6, 2013
IPTA Fall Conference, Peoria

On-Site Driver Training and
Classroom Driver Training
(Call RTAC: 800.526.9943)
RTAC Notes

After the passage of the federal transportation bill Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st century (MAP-21), the Transportation for America (T4A) coalition issued an informative handbook titled Making the Most of MAP-21. This publication can be found online at <http://t4america.org/resources/map.21/handbook/>.

This guide includes a section on long-term funding which impacts the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund. Essentially, MAP-21 contained no provisions to address the problem that “the current method of funding transportation is no longer sustainable.” Noting that “the new law relies on borrowing and using financial tools . . . to stretch existing dollars,” the handbook includes a graph that illustrates the trust fund heading for insolvency, starting in 2015. That insolvency would have occurred earlier than 2015 if not for the general revenue fund transfers from 2008 through 2014 which total more than $56 million.

According to the guide, politics have kept potential solutions from being implemented. A popular solution offered has been raising the current motor fuel tax, but “an amendment to MAP-21 that would have indexed the gas tax to account for inflation could not muster enough support to be reported out of the Senate Finance Committee and was withdrawn before a vote could be taken on the measure.” Other funding proposals which have not garnered enough support include implementing a fee based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT), fees on imported oil, expanded tolling fees, and public-private partnerships.

Another section, Tools and Financing, discusses how MAP-21 addresses funding for major infrastructure projects. Grant programs such as TIGER and PNRS are reviewed. TIGER is an acronym for Transportation Reinvestments Generating Economic Recovery, which came about with the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). PNRS stands for Projects of National and Regional Significance. “There are very significant differences between the two programs. TIGER is open to a broad range of applicants, from local governments and metropolitan planning organizations to public-private consortiums and state DOTs. PNRS, on the other hand, is open only to state departments of transportation and transit agencies.” This section also addresses the financing which must also occur with the grants which come

—RTAC Notes continued on page 5

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IPTA Notes

The IPTA Conference will be held September 4 - 6, 2013, at the Peoria Marriott Pere Marquette, 501 Main Street, Peoria, Illinois

Don’t miss this exciting and informative conference in Peoria! The annual conference kicks off September 4, with the traditional golf outing at the picturesque Weaver Ridge . . . The evening of Wednesday, September 4 promises to be great fun with a Dinner Cruise on the Spirit of Peoria. You won’t want to miss our keynote address from former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood on Thursday morning followed by a Tailgate Party that evening!

The hotel is located in downtown Peoria and is within walking distance of the Peoria Riverwalk where you can find various forms of entertainment including the Caterpillar Museum, Peoria Riverfront Museum, and various restaurants and bars. Conference sessions are located in the Marquette Ballroom. We hope you can join us! Take a glance at the preliminary conference schedule below.

Conference Program Schedule
Unless otherwise indicated, all events will be held at the Peoria Marriott Pere Marquette

Wednesday, September 4, 2013
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. – Golf Registration and Lunch, Weaver Ridge Golf Club, Peoria
11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. – IPTA Golf Outing – Shotgun Start, Weaver Ridge Golf Club, Peoria
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Conference Registration – Marquette Ballroom Foyer
5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. – Cocktails aboard the Spirit of Peoria, Downtown Peoria
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. – Dinner Cruise – Spirit of Peoria, Downtown Peoria – Transportation provided from hotel.
9:30 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. – Hospitality Suite

Thursday, September 5, 2013
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Conference Registration – Marquette Ballroom Foyer
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. – Breakfast
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. – Welcome
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. – General Session, 3E’s=QL – Energy, Environment, Economy = Quality of Life
10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. – Concurrent Sessions
   Session A: Design Thinking for Transportation
   Session B: Health Insurance Pool Options/Expansion of Medicaid/Affordable Care Act

—IPTA Notes continued on page 12
Reagan Transit Center

Years ago, the Reagan Transit Center was a dream that the partners of Lee-Ogle Transportation System had and today has become our reality. Funded by the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009, Lee County is pleased to announce that the Reagan Transit Center is our newest community building. Located at 210 East Progress Drive, Dixon, the Center comprises a public lobby and restrooms, central dispatching center, administrative offices, conference center, maintenance bay, and a garage that can house 17 public transportation vehicles. While it has been a long journey, the LOTS team is excited to call the Center our home.

The Reagan Transit Center has put Lee-Ogle Transportation System on the map as public transportation heading towards progress. Recently, Governor Quinn approved a Transportation Capital Initiative Grant that has included additions to the Center. Over the next year, we will add a canopy to the front public lobby area to help keep inclement weather from passengers entering and exiting vehicles, a wash bay, a hydraulic lift, as well as additional parking. The additional parking is needed; the Center will soon become a park-and-ride site for Rochelle, Illinois, employees from the west, as well as a hub for area residents to catch the Greyhound Bus into Chicago and Davenport.

Our official open house was on Friday, July 26, 2013, and was very successful. Not only did we invite our local and State representatives, IDOT, fellow transit agencies, but we also invited our passengers and public. We were overwhelmed by the support we received by the people that matter, our riders.

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend!

Sincerely,

Jaime L. Blatti, Executive Director
with large transportation projects. The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) and the loans available are discussed as an alternative to selling municipal bonds.

Other sections address how to fund your project, performance measures, shaping plans and projects in your community, public transportation, and missed opportunities. The value of this guidebook, for me, was in understanding where we are now in order to understand where we are going.

MAP-21 was a stop gap measure. Finding a sustainable transportation revenue source is to the federal government what achieving pension reform is to Illinois government—a tough situation which continually worsens and shouldn’t be neglected any longer. The graph below is found on page 50 of the guide book.

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*2012-2020 numbers are based on most recent CBO projections- August 27th, 2012
*DOT requires a minimum $8 billion cushion, hence the HTF hits the red before crossing zero.

Used with permission from Transportation for America.
“Making the MOST of Map-21”, page 50.
Downloaded from: http://t4america.org/resources/map-21/handbook/
Update on City of Freeport’s Rural Transit Grant

By Kevin M. Cooley, Sr., Transit Coordinator

History of the Grant: The City of Freeport has provided public transportation for many years. However, service has been confined to city limits. I was brought on in October 2012 to manage the transportation program, help with the planned transition to countywide service, and serve as the Program Compliance Oversight Monitor (PCOM). I’ve had the opportunity to observe several systems in our region since I was hired, and I’m exploring ways to provide better customer service.

What’s Currently Happening: The City of Freeport has been diligently working to expand public transportation to all of Stephenson County. We are exploring adding a not-for-profit provider (currently we have one operator, a for-profit entity). And we are getting closer to resubmitting our provider RFP to IDOT. In the meantime, we are working with the local Housing Authority to draft a deal that would help transport workers to Berner Foods for employment. Freeport elected a new Mayor (Jim Gitz) recently, and I’m looking forward to working with him.

Future Plans: Obviously, the main goal is to provide rides out in the county. Realistically, it makes sense to align our start date with the beginning of next fiscal year. By the time our new RFP is submitted and gains concurrence, it will be pretty close to that time. We are also exploring the feasibility of fixed routes. A group of University of Wisconsin graduates are helping us with this study and there seems to be some potential for success.

National RTAP Releases 2 the Point Training

National RTAP’s newest training product, 2 the Point Training, is a series of refresher training cards that can be given to drivers to review in the break room, at a safety meeting, and while waiting for a passenger to finish an appointment. Designed to be completed quickly, this product gives drivers the opportunity to use brief periods of down time on the job to review important training concepts.

Cards cover various topic areas, and each card has training content on the front and includes a quiz and sign-off area for both the trainee and supervisor on the back. The product also includes resources, such as a spreadsheet and answer key, that the training manager can use to track each drivers’ training progress. The training manager can also use a MS Publisher template to create training cards specific to his/her agency’s policies.

This product is now available at http://www.nationalrtap.org/2thePointTraining.aspx
Warranties

If your agency received a vehicle(s) through the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation (IDOT DPIT) Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program, you’ve also received their Developmental Guidelines for a Vehicle Preventive Maintenance Program. This document is an excellent guide to developing a maintenance program which will increase the useful life of the vehicle as well as ensure its safe operation.

We’ve excerpts the warranties section, as a reminder that should you encounter problems with a vehicle, address those problems quickly, and do so by first checking to see if the warranty period is still in effect. Please read this section carefully, as it contains some useful tips for establishing an effective preventive maintenance program.

Warranties

Your vehicle will come with a number of warranties from the chassis supplier, body manufacturer and major component suppliers. These can take many forms, but generally include some combination of mileage and time. These warranties often contain exclusions for consumable items, such as brake pads, batteries, and tires. Additionally, warranties generally have stipulations about operating and maintaining the vehicle in accordance with the supplier’s recommendation.

Thoroughly examine and become familiar with all the warranties provided with the vehicle when it is delivered. Make sure that you have read all the fine print. Does your warranty really cover 100% of all repair costs for the entire period, or does it only cover full replacement in the beginning with reduced coverage thereafter? What items are specifically included or excluded? Also, make sure you understand who is responsible for which warranties - is it the vehicle supplier or the local service representative of a component supplier (such as an air conditioning unit or wheelchair lift)?

All IDOT supplied vehicles (through the state’s Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program) have warranties which, at a minimum, cover all labor and replacement parts for a period of one year or 12,000 miles (whichever comes first). Warranties cover the basic vehicle and all auxiliary equipment supplied with the vehicle (i.e., air conditioner, wheelchair lift, wheelchair tie-down systems, seats, etc.). Note that even replacement parts have warranties that should be logged and studied so you know how they apply to your application.

No vehicle will be perfect upon delivery and vehicle manufacturers expect some adjustments will be needed. Therefore, plan to take the vehicle to the proper facility to correct these items within the warranty period. It is highly recommended that you take care of problems quickly, before they cause major failures (which might occur after the warranty period). Arguing that you knew of a problem while still under warranty, but could not afford the time to have the vehicle serviced, rarely results in a favorable claim. The end results are that your vehicle may be out of service longer and your agency may have to pay costly repair bills.

Follow the instructions you received at vehicle delivery. Establish a file for each vehicle with that vehicle’s specifics and vendor contacts. Most repairs can and should be handled by the local auto or truck dealership representing the chassis manufacturer (e.g., Ford, Chevrolet, Dodge, etc.). However, in order for your warranty to be honored, you must take the vehicle to an authorized service representative. If that representative cannot solve the problem to your satisfaction, contact the vendor who delivered the vehicle. In most cases, this vendor is the one who submitted the original bids and is most familiar with all aspects of your vehicle (i.e., chassis, body, auxiliary equipment, etc.). The vendor should advise you of the proper procedures. If for some reason you are unable to obtain assistance from either the local dealership or the original vendor, contact IDOT.

Use the warranties as a basis for future maintenance activities by ensuring that any required servicing is directly incorporated into your preventive maintenance program (e.g., lubrication schedules for lifts). Plan on reviewing the performance and condition of specific warranty-related items and components shortly before any major warranty milestones in order to ensure that you recoup as much benefit as possible from your vehicle, replacement parts or service warranties.

In many cases, extra-cost extended warranties are available. These should be closely examined for applicability to your operation before any purchase is made. Extended warranties on items such as power trains, often have limitations regarding which components are covered. They are often progressive in nature, with a diminishing coverage for labor and parts costs as time goes by and mileage increases. Therefore, it is essential to think in terms of which combination of conditions are most favorable to you, given your anticipated annual mileage and whether you are able, and authorized, to conduct warranty repairs in-house or through a repair shop of your choice.
Transit Movers recognizes people in Illinois transit who have been promoted, changed responsibilities, moved to a different transit agency, etc. If there are people within your agency who fall into these categories, contact the RTAC staff at 800.526.9943, e-mail rtac@wiu.edu or fax 309.298.2162. Please include pictures!

Tori McDaniel is the transportation director for Whiteside County Public Transportation (WCPT). She has been with WCPT for one and a half years and says she loves working in the transportation field. Before coming to WCPT she completed her Bachelor of Science Degree from Northern Illinois University, where she studied psychology and completed neuroscience research with her professor. When not in the office, Tori loves to spend time with her family and their two dogs. Tori has a 10 month old little girl who she says, "Keeps us busy!"

Royal White was named the new HSTP Coordinator for Regions 4 and 7 (Western and Central Illinois) on July 31, 2013. Royal has worked for the Western Illinois Regional Council-Community Action Agency for 13 years with primary responsibilities in the Housing Rehabilitation grant programs.

Royal graduated from Western Illinois University with a Bachelor in Business and resides in Beardstown, Illinois.
Mike Healy was hired in June 2013 by the Illinois Department of Transportation Department of Public and Intermodal Transportation as manager of the Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) program. In this capacity Mike will be working to offer capital and technical assistance to paratransit providers across Illinois, particularly in the acquisition and management of rolling stock for transportation of senior citizens and disabled individuals. Prior to joining IDOT, Mike worked extensively in the fields of local economic development, policy/program design, and public outreach. He holds a B.A., in American Studies & Public Service from the University of Notre Dame and a Master of Urban Planning degree from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design.

Lindsay Whitson is a new planner and HSTP coordinator for the Bi-State Regional Commission. She is a recent graduate from the University of Iowa with a Master’s of Science in Urban and Regional Planning. In May of 2009, Lindsay received her undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa with a Bachelor’s of Art in Communication Studies and in Entrepreneurial Management. She recently moved from the Iowa City area to Davenport, IA, where she is excited to learn what the Quad Cities has to offer! She enjoys spending time outdoors, traveling, Hawkeye football and spending as much time as possible with friends and family.

Mary Steele is the transportation coordinator, office assistant, and driver for Rock River Center. She began as a driver in September 2011 and was recently promoted to transportation coordinator. As the transportation coordinator, she schedules rides, schedules drivers, and does monthly reports for the executive director Ann Haas. Mary continues to drive the van daily.

Mary went to Oregon schools and Rock Valley College. She previously worked at Caron International, Quebecor. Her hobbies are cross-stitching and playing on the computer.
Whiteside County Public Transportation Welcomes VISTA Member

What is VISTA?

As most of our readers are aware, RTAC is a unit of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) at Western Illinois University. Other IIRA units assist rural Illinois citizens in the areas of community visioning and planning, community interns, agriculture (biofuels, wind energy, value-added agriculture), health and housing, rural broadband development, and small business development and entrepreneurship.

The community visioning and planning unit (MAPPING), among its other services, has a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program. The mission of VISTA is to “increase the capacity of low-income people to improve the condition of their lives.”

VISTA members serve others and support community residents and organizations to build their capacity to respond to problems within the community. To volunteer with VISTA is a commitment to national and community service. VISTA is not considered to be paid employment. Since 1965, VISTA has helped bring communities and individuals out of poverty. Today, nearly 6,000 VISTA members serve each year in hundreds of nonprofit organizations and public agencies throughout the country—working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities, or bridge the digital divide. VISTA members leave behind lasting solutions to some of our country’s toughest problems.

VISTA members work 40 hrs/week with local leaders on community and economic development initiatives within a rural community. Depending on their specific work plan, VISTA members are responsible for a variety of activities including such things as:

- Attending and convening meetings.
- Communicating effectively with a wide range of people.
- Recruiting, training, and coordinating community volunteers.
- Researching rural community development issues.
- Finding resources to accomplish community and economic development projects, such as locating and writing grant proposals.
- Writing reports which detail their accomplishments and challenges.
- Developing partnerships to accomplish the goals of the community.
- Providing the vision, focus, and hard work necessary to make positive, sustainable change.
- Organizing and participating in required National Days of Service.
- Specific duties are determined by the sites.
- The VISTA’s core mission is poverty alleviation, and all of their duties are tied to this cause.
- A VISTA provides indirect service, they initiate projects, build sustainability, and undertake initiatives that remain intact long after their VISTA term of service is completed.

If a community wants to host a VISTA member they must provide:

- Annual fee of $1,500 to IIRA per VISTA member for non-MAPPING communities; $800 for MAPPING communities.
- Suggested annual contribution of up to $3,600 set aside to pay portion of VISTA member’s rent or mortgage (up to $300 per month paid directly to landlord or mortgage company) for their term of service. Alternatively, if available, a community may provide suitable no-cost housing for the VISTA. However, this arrangement must be approved by the IIRA VISTA supervisor.
- A work plan based on community needs that has clear guidelines and achievable timeframes for projects. The work plan must span three years and plan for the sustainability of the project. IIRA will provide assistance in developing the work plan. Work plans must be approved by IIRA and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).
- An on-site supervisor available for mentoring and support, and to keep track of VISTA timesheets. IIRA staff will provide program support to both the community supervisor and the VISTA.
- A three person community Advisory Committee to provide ongoing support and supervision for the work plan.
- Office space with computer, telephone, and internet access.
- Reimbursement for project-related travel.

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The purpose of the VISTA member is to help a community achieve their community and economic development goals as defined in the work plan; therefore, VISTA members must focus solely on that purpose, and not be utilized for other activities.

A VISTA member:
- Must be at least 18 years old (no upper age limit).
- Is either a college graduate or someone with at least three years of work experience.
- Is committed to community service in a rural location, is motivated to lead a change initiative that is sustainable long after the VISTA has gone.
- Is a self-starter and able to take charge to move projects forward, while being patient enough to work on a project that might not have immediately visible results.
- Is comfortable using computers, internet, e-mail, and word processing.
- Has excellent communications, leadership, and organizational skills.
- Enjoys public speaking.
- Has strong skills in meeting facilitation.
- Preferably has grant writing experience.

For more information about VISTA, contact IIRA VISTA Project Director Gisele Hamm, at 309-298-4019 or GF-Hamm@wiu.edu.

**Whiteside County Public Transportation VISTA Plan**

Whiteside County (pop. 58,388), in northern Illinois, has suffered recent economic hardship due to large manufacturing companies closing their doors or outsourcing their work. The U.S. Census Bureau (2007-2011) stated that the county’s median household income is approximately $46,444 and 11.7 percent of county residents live below the poverty level. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the county’s unemployment rate to be 9.3 percent in December 2012. A look at the school system shows that during the 2011-2012 academic year 47.4 percent of our county’s children were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Whiteside County Public Transportation (WCPT) provides rides to the general public with destinations such as work, educational facilities such as community colleges, medical appointments, shopping, social gatherings, and many other places within the county. WCPT offers trips to Rockford twice a month and also travels to other out-of-county destinations to ensure our riders are able to keep medical appointments and meet other needs. Last year WCPT provided more than 35,000 rides and traveled approximately 218,000 miles. To further community development and fight poverty, WCPT has been chosen as a work site for the IIRA VISTA program.

Edith Canales has made a commitment to one year of VISTA service with WCPT. Ms. Canales will work with WCPT transportation director Tori McDaniel on three goals:

1. Developing partnerships to increase the long term sustainability of WCPT.
2. Developing awareness and education programs.
3. Enhancing ridership and community partnerships.

Goal 1 includes service contracts development. Current service contracts include Sinnissippi, Regional Office of Education, and CGH Medical Center. Service contracts between WCPT and local agencies allow those agencies’ clients to get rides to access services and other life situations. Another part of Goal 1 is to seek donations and increase advertisements to aid in WCPT’s overall financial stability.
1:00 p.m. – Luncheon – IPTA Legislators of the Year Award Presentation

1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. – Concurrent Sessions
   Session A: MAP-21
   Session B: Alternative Fuels

3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. – Vendors’ Showcase

6:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. – Tailgate Party, Festival Park - Riverfront

Friday, September 9, 2011
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. – Breakfast,

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. – Annual Meeting and DOAP Funding Discussion

10:15 a.m. – Noon – APTA, CTAA, IDOT, and FTA Updates

Noon – Luncheon, Vendor Punch Card Awards & Conference Adjournment

Laura Calderon

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Goal 2 seeks to help the general public, agencies, and other groups throughout Whiteside County better understand WCPT. WCPT is happy to have provided 35,000 rides last year, but still receives calls each day from residents asking what WCPT does and if they can get a ride using the system.

As part of Goal 3, Canales and McDaniel will develop a distribution strategy of materials created in Goal 2, as well as focusing on enhancing riders’ experiences. This final step could be the most rewarding for Ms. Canales because she will be interacting heavily with the residents of Whiteside County. She will get to see the direct and lasting impact WCPT makes on the lives of Whiteside county residents as citizens are enabled to access health care, jobs, and education; stay in their homes instead of moving to an urban area if they are unable to drive; and stay connected with the community and the people they care about.