



TRANSREPORT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
ILLINOIS RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SPRING 2014

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Upcoming Events:

September 3-5, 2014
IPTA Fall Conference, Rockford

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



RTAC is a unit of the
Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs
Western Illinois University



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RTAC Notes



When I was a kid I thought it would be cool to see a tornado first hand. My juvenile thought process convinced me that after getting a good look at the twister I could easily get out of its path. Today, I don't want to witness a tornado and certainly don't want to have to make a split second decision on how to evade it. And after all these years living in the Midwest, I am amazed that many folks still don't understand the difference between a tornado watch and tornado warning. Depending on the amount of caffeine I've had, sometimes I still need to think about it.

While watching a Weather Channel report on the fallacy of taking shelter under an overpass when a tornado is approaching, it scared me that I had to think about the correct procedure in that situation, that I knew too little about tornado response. Using a variety of sources, I came up with a list of tornado facts and myths.

Facts:

- A tornado can occur at any time, but most often between 3 pm and 9 pm.
- A typical tornado only lasts a few minutes.
- Winds are stronger under a bridge (wind tunnel effect).
- Wind speeds can reach 200 mph (higher above ground level, but approaching 0 MPH at ground!).
- Seek shelter in a sturdy, well-constructed building. Another alternative is to lie flat in a ditch, ravine, or below grade culvert.
- If you seek shelter in a building, try to get to an interior room on the lowest floor, under a staircase, I-beam, or sturdy piece of furniture.

Myths:

- Cars can travel faster than the average tornado, so it is better to outrun the tornado than to seek shelter. **For various reasons (some tornadoes move faster than cars, cars can be heavily damaged by even weak tornadoes, cars can be thrown long distances in violent tornadoes, driving is difficult due to accompanying hail and flooding rains) seeking shelter is best. One exception is that mobile home residents, given sufficient advance warning, should drive to the nearest secure shelter during a tornado warning.**
- The northeast or east part of the building is the least safe. **Actually, the section of the building in the direction of the tornado's approach is the least safe.**
- Opening windows helps equalize pressure. **Actually, the atmospheric pressure in the eye of the tornado is only 10% less than the body of the tornado. Opening windows in advance of a tornado wastes time that**

—RTAC Notes continued on page 12

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IPTA Notes

Asking Congress to Support Meaningful Patent Reform Legislation

An issue that IPTA has been working on in Congress recently is patent reform. Patent trolls—shell companies that purchase patents with no intention of innovating or inventing but in suing those who do—have been crippling transit agencies and small business with which transit agencies partner with meritless threats.

To move America forward, U.S. transit agencies can no longer be threatened by frivolous lawsuits from brazen patent trolls. They are draining time, money, and resources that would be better used on deploying high-efficiency buses, investing in improved light and commuter rail systems or enhancing public transit options throughout the country.

The US Senate Judiciary Committee has been considering reforms to our patent system. In March we spent time in Washington D.C. meeting with Senator Durbin, Senator Kirk, and several congressmen to ask them to pass meaningful patent reform legislation immediately. The House has already passed a bill. Without a change in the law, patent trolls will continue to wreak havoc on transit agencies and all types of businesses. They have already sucked \$80 billion out of the U.S. economy and show no signs of stopping.

In Illinois, transit agencies provide rides to millions of passengers every year, getting residents, students, workers, and visitors where they need to go. We are proud to provide transportation across our state, reducing congestion on our roads. We want to continue creating positive transit experiences and innovative technology for customers, but are worried we will be derailed by bogus patent infringement claims from patent trolls. A number of Illinois systems have been targeted by trolls, including Metra, the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, and Rock Island County MetroLink—all of whom settled rather than pay cumbersome legal fees.

The fact is transit systems are run by public money and they are at a disadvantage to defend themselves from frivolous lawsuits by patent trolls. When they are forced to defend themselves or settle meritless lawsuits, it comes at the expense of taxpayers at a time when public transit needs are great. And it's not just transit agencies. All types of businesses, including manufacturers, restaurants, tech firms, retail stores, coffee shops and many more have suffered from the attacks of patent trolls.

The approach patent trolls take is deceptive and misleading. That is the business model of the troll—threaten people into settling for large sums. They are not inventors. They are not entrepreneurs. In fact, many are owned by venture capitalists looking to make quick returns. The trolls send vague demand letters and take a shotgun approach in their accusations. These threats are expensive and time consuming and deprive agencies of key resources we need to serve our customers. Congress has spent a great deal of time and resources making investments in transit projects across the country, and we want to see that trend continue without the distraction and threat of trolls.

To combat this loss of resources and innovation, we are urging Congress to support critical solutions to end the abusive practices of patent trolls. Meaningful patent reform should make the Covered Business Method (CBM) available to all industries, including transit, which is not currently protected. Only financial services companies have the benefit of a second set of eyes at the Patent and Trademark Office. Reforms should also require holding companies with no assets, who do the dirty work for patent trolls, to put up a bond to ensure victims are paid when they win in court.

We are joining with a broad coalition of other businesses and organizations in supporting patent reform. Our stories aren't unique. This issue affects the entire country. We believe reform will strengthen the patent system and ensure American transit agencies continue to be leaders in the fields of innovation and technology. Without reform, patent trolls will continue their attacks on transit agencies and all types of businesses across the country.



Twelfth Annual Illinois Paratransit Roadeo

On Saturday, April 26, 2014, the Rural Transit Assistance Center hosted the Twelfth Annual Illinois Paratransit Roadeo at the Sangamon Fairgrounds in New Berlin, Illinois.

We congratulate each participant on their individual performance.

Of the 34 contestants and eleven transportation agencies represented, 21 (denoted by *) were first time participants:

Access Springfield: Frankie Harris, *Ralphell Jackson

Central Illinois Public Transportation: *Nick Briggs, *Angie Pride

Chillicothe Township: *Ray Radley

Futures Unlimited: Dan Faust, Delbert French, Bryce Kirwan, Nancy Lefler, Robin Meckley, *Stephanie Weissmann

McDonough County Public Transit: Pat White, *Kyle Waller

MV Transportation – CountyLink: *Doug Haage, Brian Hiatt

Rich Township: *Laurent, *Carol Marshall

Rides Mass Transit District: *John Heckel, *Jill Lyons, *Charlie Wade

Shawnee Mass Transit District: *John Dewitt, *Mary Law, *Kim Pind, *Tony Smith, *Eric Tellor

South Central Mass Transit District: Anthony Gilio, Jamie Maltman*, Ruth Mateycak, *Richard Parker, *Drew Sanders, Larry Vancil

Voluntary Action Center, Sycamore: Bill Gulke, Maurice Kempton, *Jessica Martin

Voluntary Action Center, Kendall Area Transit: *Charles Sondgeroth



The Twelfth Annual Illinois Paratransit Roadeo Participants

Overall (scores from all categories combined) Winners:

First Place: Bill Gulke

Second Place: Timothy (Pat) White

Third Place: Dan Faust

Novice Award: Richard Parker

— Roadeo continued on page 5



Timothy (Pat) White, Bill Gulke, Richard Parker, Dan Faust, and Ralphell Jackson

Category Winners:

Driving: Richard Parker

Pre-Trip Inspection: Dan Faust

Wheelchair Securement: Bill Gulke

Written Test: Ralphell Jackson

“The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you.”

-- John E. Southard

Many thanks to our volunteers:

Friday set-up: Randy Barrow, Jeff Stark, Edward Heflin, Carol Montague, and Jacqueline Waters

Rodeo Marshall: Edward Heflin

Saturday set-up and event judges: Bob Bugger, Nancy Bugger, Vicki Clift, Adrienne Dewitt, Ron Flynn, Brad Gibbs, JD Hodges, Sara Hodges, Debra King, Mable Kreps, Jo Leinenbach, June Leinenbach, Janet Martin, Carol Montague, Paula Neaveill, Leroy Niederhofer, Sheila Niederhofer, Bob Patterson, Patricia Peters, Nelson Pruitt, Deb Salisbury, Jim Salisbury, Jeff Stark, Erin Trojniar, Jacqueline Waters, Renae White

Score keepers extraordinaire: Bert Weber and Carol Montague

Award Presenter: Edward Heflin

Sponsors: Tom Baldwin, Midwest Transit (prize money) and IDOT (trip for first place overall winner to participate in the CTAA National Rodeo)

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) National Rodeo

On Saturday and Sunday, June 7-8, Bill Gulke, our first place winner, will represent Illinois at the CTAA National Rodeo in St. Paul, Minnesota. Good luck Bill! Keep your tires between the ditches!



Maintenance Safety Training Part Three

By Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD)

This is the third in a series of maintenance/safety tips culled from presentations by the Springfield Regional Maintenance Center (RMC) at the annual maintenance workshops sponsored by RTAC. The Springfield RMC operates out of Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD) Maintenance Facility.

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

Part Three covers vehicle exterior by technician Cory Melcher, and heating and air conditioning by technician Aaron Beck.

Vehicle Exterior



This is a picture of one of our Access Springfield buses that has been serviced and put away for the night. This particular bus is a 2003 with over 210,000 miles on it. At SMTD, cleanliness is a very important part of our maintenance program. I realize that not everyone has a bus wash at their disposal, but the bus still needs to be washed as often as possible. In the winter, this is even more important to keep the salt off of the bus. The salt and sodium chloride that is use on Illinois roads is extremely corrosive. A wash with under-body wash is preferred in the winter time.

—SMTD continued on page 7



Another area that is frequently overlooked is the headlights. Most modern vehicles use a Lexan or plastic lens with a bulb that goes in from the back as compared to a glass sealed beam that went in older vehicles. These plastic lenses are notorious for getting cloudy which greatly reduces the brightness of the light. It is possible to clean the film off of these and restore them to their original appearance. There are kits available to do this. This is also a service we provide here at SMTD.

Heating and Air Conditioning



Properly maintaining your heating and air conditioning system is important for the comfort and safety of your passengers and drivers. We check both the heat and the air conditioning systems year round. The photo to the left shows a plugged up cabin air filter. The cabin air filter filters the air coming out of the vents of the bus whether it is on heat, air conditioning, or vent. This is the air you and your passengers are breathing. Would you want to breathe air that passed through this filter? Most quick lube places and “mom and pop” garages know about the vehicle’s cabin filter, but not the bus body manufacturer’s filters. We also check and clean these filters at every service. In addition to a complete visual inspection of the systems, we check temperatures and pressures of the air conditioning system. By checking pressures it is sometimes possible to foresee a problem and repair it before it causes more damage.



This is an air conditioning line that has the outer covering ruptured. This line may be holding pressure now, but will most definitely fail. By catching this and repairing it before it fails completely, further damage to the system can be avoided.

TRANSIT MOVERS

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!



Nathan Cobb recently accepted the position of transit director for McDonough County Public Transportation (MCPT). Nathan grew up in the Macomb area, attending Northwestern High School and then Western Illinois University, where he graduated in 2003 with a degree in business marketing with an emphasis in supply chain management. Nathan minored in manufacturing technology, specifically computer aided design. After college, Nathan moved to Bloomington, Illinois where he worked for a home builder, designing new construction home plans.

In 2008, Nathan moved back to the Macomb area to be closer to family and friends. He joined Western Illinois Regional Council (WIRC) as a housing inspector in 2009. Nathan then became the principal planner for WIRC, helping local communities with grants for energy projects and water and sewer improvements.

Nathan currently serves on Western Illinois University's Performing Arts Society Board of Directors. In his free time he enjoys golfing, being outdoors, bow hunting, and working around the home on various projects. Nathan resides in Macomb with his wife, Kate, and their dog, Zoe.



The compressor on the left in this picture has had a catastrophic failure. The one on the right is a new compressor. When a compressor fails in this manner, debris can flow through the entire system damaging several other components.



This picture shows a two orifice tubes. The orifice tube acts as a filter in the system to catch small amounts of debris. A plugged orifice will result in a high pressure reading on the gauges and a loss of cooling. A problem in the system could be detected in this manner and repaired before a catastrophic failure occurs.



This picture is of sludge that came out of a system that had experienced catastrophic failure. Air conditioning systems should always be service by properly trained personnel. Most para-transit vehicles have a rear system, installed by the body manufacturer, which is integrated with the factory system. Be sure that the person servicing the system is aware of this and knows the proper capacities.

Keep your eye out for SMTD's Maintenance Safety Training, Part Four in the summer 2014 *Transreport*.

Meet the New RTAP Advisory Council Members

Please welcome new RTAP advisory council members Tia Blakeman (representing Section 5311), Maureen Mann (rural MTD), Tori McDaniel (Section 5311), Kim Taylor (Section 5310), and Bert Weber (Illinois Department on Aging).

For their years of dedicated service, we thank advisory council members whose terms recently expired: Kevin Carr, Bill Jung, Rich Machala and Anna Oestreich.



Tia Marie Blakeman is the finance manager of Monticello based Piatt County Public Transportation (Piattran), a department of Piatt County, Illinois. With a strong background in business management and event planning, Tia joined the Piattran team in December of 2009 and has played a key role in strengthening administrative controls and expanding the departments' resources. While her primary focus continues to be the care of Piattran's fiscal concerns and capital project development, Tia also provides leadership in the operational aspects of running the rural demand-response transit system. A lifelong resident of central Illinois, Tia likes to stay active and enjoys running, cycling, and taking a variety of classes at the local Y.



Maureen Mann has been the executive director at Shawnee Mass Transit District since July 2009. She earned her undergraduate degree in education from Southern Illinois University and her master's degree in administration from Southwest Missouri State University. Prior to joining Shawnee, Maureen worked in education for 30 years, serving as elementary school principal for eleven of those years.

Maureen often jokes that she used to have little kids and buses and now she has big kids and buses. She loves being in the transit business and has put together what she calls the best administrative team in the whole state. She says their input and passion for transit is what motivates her and makes her look good. She is honored to be part of the RTAP Advisory Council.

— Advisory Council continued on page 11



Tori McDaniel is the director of transportation for Whiteside County Public Transportation (WCPT). She has been with WCPT for two years and loves working in the transportation field. Tori earned a bachelor of science degree from Northern Illinois University, where she studied psychology and completed neuroscience research with her professor. She loves to spend time with her family and their two dogs. Tori has a 16 month old little girl who she says, “Keeps us busy!”



Kim Taylor is the executive director of FAYCO Enterprises, Inc., which serves Bond, Fayette, Montgomery, and surrounding counties. As executive director, she is responsible to the Board of Directors for the overall operation and funding of the non-profit organization. With over 30 years of experience in the provision of services to persons with disabilities, Kim has come to know not only the field of community services but also the critical role transportation plays in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Kim started at FAYCO in 1983, serving as division director of finance and support from 1992-2013, and as executive director since 2013. In her role as division director she directly supervised the transportation department within the agency with a fleet of over 40 vehicles, serving over 180 individuals on a daily basis. Kim is a Vandalia native who earned a Bachelor of Arts in organizational leadership from Greenville College in 1999, as well as degrees in accounting and data processing from Lakeland College.



Bert Weber is the regional coordinator/state co-disaster coordinator for the Illinois Department on Aging (DoA) Division of Home and Community Services. Bert graduated in 1975 from the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh with a bachelor's degree in social work, and from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri in 1979 with a master's degree in social work.

Bert began his professional career at a workshop serving developmentally disabled individuals, and then worked at a couple of area agencies on aging before joining DoA in 1980. His DoA experience spans the division of planning and resource development, the division of home and community services, and the bureau of community operations and technology. He is co-chair for the department's disaster preparedness coordination and information designation, and is the department designee to the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Transportation. Bert has long been the department liaison to the Illinois rural transit community, and provides important support at the annual RTAC Rodeo.

could be spent seeking shelter, and being near windows is dangerous because it exposes people to flying glass.

- Tornadoes move exclusively in a northeasterly direction. **The majority of tornadoes move northeast, but tornadoes can shift suddenly due to storm motion changes or rear flank downdraft.**
- Tornadoes don't occur in winter. **Though tornadoes generally occur in warmer weather, they can occur in winter, and tend to move faster than at other times of the year.**

Twenty years ago, while working as operations manager at a large human service agency, I conducted monthly disaster drills, which were quite unpopular with some staff and consumers. Vehicle evacuation and building evacuation drills were especially unpopular. Those drills paid off on a number of occasions, including the day one of our buses found itself in the path of a tornado. The driver safely evacuated all passengers into a ditch. The evacuation went smoothly because the driver and consumers had practiced it.



Richard Parker and John Heckel



Brian Hiatt, Carol Marshall, and Laurent



Wheelchair Securement and Pre-Trip Inspection area



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