



## **TRANSIT TIDBITS**

**Issue 18-March, 2013**

### **NEW TRANSIT DIRECTOR**

**Diane A. Lopez, Project Director  
Northwest Dakota Public Transit  
Williston, ND**

Hello, my name is Diane A. Lopez, Director of the Williston Council for the Aging, Inc. NW Dakota Transit in Williston, ND. I have only been in this position since January 2013 and I am still learning and having a great time. I have lived in Williston for almost 3 years and prior to joining this team I was the Office Associate at the JC Penney's here for 2 years. I was born and raised in Idaho. We moved around a lot but I would say for the most part I grew up around Caldwell, Id. Prior to moving to this area I lived in Ontario, Oregon for 10 years raising my 4 wonderful kids alone. I have 3 sons and 1 daughter however; I did raise 2 stepsons before separating with their father. After the separation, I got hired on at the Malheur Council On Aging, Inc. (MCOA) in Ontario, OR. This was a Non-Profit organization which housed the Transit Department, Information & Assistance, Low Income Energy Assistants (LIEAP), Weatherization, Meals on Wheels, Congregate and Outreach for the seniors. I worked for MCOA for 7 years before moving to Williston. I was hired as a driver/ dispatcher in Williston. I drove on and off for about 2 years. I then moved into the office where I worked as a receptionist, LIEAP in-take worker and back-up for transit. I then moved over to the senior's side for about 2 years. Duties there were Senior Manager for Meals on Wheels & Congregate sites. I feel with the training & coaching I receive through MCOA, I will always have a deep passion for this

type of work. I love working with the public so having the opportunity to join this team has definitely been a great enjoyment and career move for me. I also would like to share that not only am I a mother of 4 wonderful children but I am also a proud grandma of some extra special little ones.....they are truly SPECIAL!!!

**2013 FALL CONFERENCE  
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA  
RAMADA INN (FORMALLY THE  
DOUBLEWOOD INN)**

**Your Board of Director's are working diligently to put together the BEST Transit Conference ever.**

**The dates for the Fall Conference are:  
Rodeo September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>  
Conference September 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>  
Please mark your calendars as this proves to be an exciting conference.**

### **RETIREMENT**

**Beatrice Delvo  
Cavalier County Senior Meals/Services  
Langdon, ND**

I retired on January 31, 2013 after 33 years with Cavalier County Senior Meals/Services. I started part-time as a bus driver and in 1992, became the Project Director of CCSMS. "I have enjoyed working with all of you and I will miss seeing all the friendly faces.

**NEW TRANSIT DIRECTOR  
Chanell Walby, Project Director  
Southwest Public Transit  
Bowman, ND**

I grew up in a small town in southwest North Dakota. I attended Moler Barber College in Fargo and worked as a barber for three years in Hazen and Bismarck. I decided I wanted to learn more about business so I

enrolled at the Black Hills State University in Spearfish, SD. I received a degree in wellness and minored in business. While working as the Intramural Secretary, I found I loved to organize and promote sport programs so after graduation I went on to Bemidji State University and received my master's in Education-PE Administration. I worked in the recreation field for 15 years and was commuting two hours per day the last 5 years. I then decided to make a career change to logistics for a trike (motorcycle with three wheels) manufacturing company in Spearfish, SD. At this time I had two small children and wanted to be in town for their activities.

I was working in transit without really knowing it while working in recreation and logistics. One of my duties at Ellsworth Air Force Base was managing tours. I scheduled vans and buses for tours; outdoor programs; and scheduled the shipping of trikes and trike parts throughout the world. I used the company owned tractor/trailers and freight forwarders at the trike company. These partial transit duties helped give me experience in the industry. I began working at Prairie Hills Transit as a Mobility Manager in 2011. During this time my husband changed careers and the family decided to move home to North Dakota. Fate took over as Southwest Public Transit in Bowman had advertised for an assistant director the same month. Donna Schaff, Program Director, of 17 years retired in January and Chanell was named project director.

"I am so grateful for this profession and the people who have inspired me. Barb Cline is a leader on the front lines of rural transit and continues to improve and move this industry forward. Donna Schaff has improved and sustained the Southwest Transit project with her organizational leadership. Both of these ladies are wonderful mentors and I am forever grateful for their guidance."

Southwest Public Transit is currently working with the Bowman Park and Recreation Board on an expansion project for the recreation center. Southwest Transit is in need of garage space and the recreation center is in need of recreational space. I had experience in both entities so I am working with

the Board on the project. I am researching the possibility of marrying these projects together. I believes this 'out of the box' type of thinking is a win-win for the community. Southwest Public Transit has also just incorporated a new logo to trademark their services. They just received a mid-year grant from the NDDOT to start a marketing campaign to increase ridership and educate the four counties about the services Southwest Public Transit offers. We also received a grant to design and estimate construction costs for transit facilities within the recreation expansion project. "It is a pleasure serving the citizens of Adams, Bowman, Hettinger, and Slope counties and I want to say thank you to the

drivers for the dedication and care they give the riders. We're a team and without their professionalism and caring nature, I wouldn't have the opportunity to help grow transit!"

**Interim Director**  
**Karrie Mikkelsen**  
**Cavalier County Senior Meals/Services**  
**Langdon, ND**

Hi, I am Karrie Mikkelsen filling Beatrice Delvo, Project Director's position. Beatrice retired January 31, 2013, from Cavalier County Senior Meals and Services. I have been employed at Cavalier County Senior Meals and Services for the past 13 years. I started out part-time as an activities director and bus-driver. I now work full-time as the bookkeeper - interim director. I am currently enrolled at Lake Region State College pursuing a two-year Business Administration/Accounting degree. My plans are to graduate in May 2013. In the past, I attended the University of North Dakota for one-year and then decided to become a Cosmetologist which I have been working at since 1985. Also, in the past, I was a farm-hand/truck-driver/grain-hauler for my dad. That experience came in quite handy for me when I started driving bus for Cavalier County Senior Meals. Every day I come to work is an enjoyable, exciting, experience.

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