2007 Dakota Transit Association Awards

Driver of the Year

The Dakota Transit Association Driver of the Year Award recognizes an outstanding driver from each member state whose service has enhanced the quality of public transportation in his or her community. To qualify, nominees must have an excellent driving record and display a positive image for public transit.

Stan Knox of River Cities Public Transit (RCPT) in Pierre has been named the 2007 South Dakota Driver of the Year. According to the nomination letter, Knox is “someone who every day shows in many ways his dedication, compassion and patience to his passengers and fellow employees. He is careful and thoughtful when dealing with all passengers, young and old alike. The passengers all like him, and quite often compliment his driving and his courteous, friendly nature. Stan is always willing to pitch in and work holidays, weekends, and many other odd times when we need him.” Stan is also very respectful and encouraging to his fellow workers, especially with his cheerful attitude. River Cities Public Transit relies on Stan many times when the going gets tough.

Innovative Agency

The Innovative Agency of the Year Award recognizes a transit project that has overcome a major obstacle, barrier, or stumbling block; initiated a new or improved service; innovated a coordination program; improved or expanded service and funding revenue or source; implemented a new technology or expansion; conducted an innovative training program or activity; and displays a degree of professionalism above average which is exemplified by excellent public relations, increased ridership and setting an example for others to follow.

Vermillion Public Transit was named the 2007 South Dakota Innovative Agency of the Year. The nomination listed many accomplishments Vermillion Public Transit has achieved in the 10 years since the agency began as a shared system between the Senior Center and South East South Dakota Activity Center (SESDAC). Highlights include: the new transit agency has increased its hours of public transit
Standing Rock Public Transportation, a program of Sitting Bull College, was named the 2007 North Dakota Innovative Agency of the Year. Standing Rock Public Transportation was nominated for its development and implementation of the North - South Shuttle, which provides a significantly more direct and expedient route for travelers between the cities of Bismarck and Rapid City, and also provides transportation for mid-Dakota residents between cities along its route. In order to implement the new route, Standing Rock Public Transportation coordinated with three transit programs and two government agencies in two states; developed the route, schedule and training for its drivers and dispatchers; created public and community awareness through a media event at the shuttle’s first arrival in Bismarck; and encouraged ongoing increases in ridership through continued media follow-up.

Friend of Transit

The Friend of Transit Award recognizes a member of the community from each member state whose dedication has enhanced the quality of public transportation in his or her community. To qualify, nominees cannot be employed or paid by a transit agency; may be an individual, agency or organization; and must have done an outstanding job supporting transit in the community or state by promoting coordination, cooperation or assisting with raising local financial share or transit awareness.

Fall River County Commissioner Joe Falkenburg was named the 2007 South Dakota Friend of Transit. Falkenburg was cited for going to bat for the local community of Edgemont to assure its fair share of county funds for transit service. The nomination read, “Joe’s commitment to transit was apparent when he attended meetings to set up the new system in Edgemont. For him it wasn’t because he was an elected official—it was because he truly believed that public transportation was essential to keeping the Edgemont community thriving and growing.”

North Dakota Adjutant General, Major General David Sprynczynatyk, was selected as the 2007 North Dakota Friend of Transit. He was chosen for his support of public transit while serving as Director of the North Dakota Department of Transportation. Specifically, Sprynczynatyk provided unprecedented testimony on behalf of legislation to increase the contribution to North Dakota’s State Aid for Public Transit program from Motor Vehicle Registration by 50 percent; encouraged the NDDOT public transit program manager to become involved on national committees, helping to shape the future of public transit at a national level; and fully supported the increase in NDDOT Transit Office personnel by an additional person, effectively doubling the full-time transit staff.
Dispatcher of the Year

Introduced in 2007, the Dispatcher of the Year Award recognizes an outstanding dispatcher from each member state whose service has enhanced the quality of public transportation in his or her community. To qualify, nominees must have demonstrated professionalism in their duties and displayed a positive image for public transit.

Betty Starkey of James River Transit in Jamestown was named the 2007 North Dakota Dispatcher of the Year. Her nomination letter reads, Betty “has excellent communication skills which are essential when working as a dispatcher. She not only interprets the passengers’ needs and desires, but also passes that information on to drivers in a concise, clear and easily understood manner. Her professionalism is demonstrated on a daily basis. Her good-natured camaraderie with drivers and the mutual respect generated has helped to create a congenial team atmosphere.”

Nicole Kuper of River Cities Public Transit in Pierre has been named the 2007 South Dakota Dispatcher of the Year. According to the nomination letter, “Nicole’s ability to use and understand our new scheduling and dispatch system has even the vendors of the system impressed. She went above and beyond her responsibilities at River Cities Public Transit to provide training for other transit agencies in the state that have purchased the same system, and she also provides technical support to those agencies. Nicole has traveled to several other South Dakota transit agencies to help train new dispatchers and help with problems.”

Above & Beyond Award
Sponsored by Sure-Lok

Sure-Lok sponsors the “Above & Beyond” award for North and South Dakota. This award was created to honor a staff person or system that has exhibited extraordinary dedication and devotion to transporting people with special needs. The purpose is to honor a driver who has performed in an outstanding manner (Above & Beyond) and has shown care and concern for passengers with special needs.

Paul Norgaard, Fargo Senior Commission’s bus driver from Steele County, was named the 2007 Sure-Lok “Above & Beyond” recipient for North Dakota. Paul has been driving for Fargo Senior Commission for nine years. His nomination states, “While all of our drivers do a great job, Paul has the ability and desire to provide that extra measure of care when serving those with special needs. For the past nine years, Paul has demonstrated over and over again a desire to make our transit service one that meets as many client needs as possible. Whether suggesting new routes or stops, time changes or adding
days of service, Paul has always listened to his riders and has been very persuasive in implementing changes. Truthfully, I have never had a client call to complain about Paul; on the contrary, many have commented that he is so kind and helpful, and he makes his passengers feel comfortable and safe while they ride his bus."

One rider in particular credits Paul’s service as the main reason she is able to stay in her own home in rural Grand Forks County. This person has many health challenges and has to visit doctors and therapists many times a month. Paul has arranged the bus schedule to accommodate her needs and has even gone grocery shopping for her, so she and his other passengers could all make their appointments on time.

Dave Chipman is the 2007 Sure-Lok “Above & Beyond” recipient for South Dakota. The nomination letter stated, “Dave is the definition of Above & Beyond. As a driver for Prairie Hills Transit for the last five years, Dave has always been much more to his passengers than the driver who pulls up to give them a ride. Since coming back to work for Prairie Hills Transit (PHT) in 2002, Dave has played a key part in the daily transportation of both Adjustment Training Center passengers and students with disabilities attending the local public schools. Known as ‘Old Dave’

to the ADJ riders, his smiling face, snowy white hair and inexhaustible patience make him their favorite."

The nomination letter provided an example of his dedication. A young lady who started high school this year can attest to how much Dave’s help has meant to her. Each school day morning Dave picks up this new freshman, in her wheelchair, to attend high school. Spearfish’s High School consists of long hallways with many students rushing from one end of the school to the other to make it to class on time. It is no easy task for a student to carry the new required laptop computers, books and personal items needed, even if they are a fully fit ambulatory young person. In this young lady’s case, balancing everything on her lap while she moves the wheels of the chair was very difficult. Dave would always take the time to push her chair into the school, but from there she was on her own, many times late for class or with books falling all around her. After a long month of watching this struggle, Dave felt something had to be done.

Working with PHT dispatcher, Steve Silvernagel and local friend of transit, Bill Ingalls, they decided she needed an electric wheelchair of her own. Because of the cost, this luxury was cost prohibitive for her family. This team of men made numerous calls, but in the end Bill located a used electric wheel chair; Steve found the owner; and the three of them convinced the owner to allow this young lady to use it. On the day they presented the wheelchair, no thanks were needed, but the joy on her face when they surprised her at school with the chair told more than any words.

Congratulations to all 2007 DTA Award Winners.

Conference Entertainment

This year, Rick Senger provided karaoke on Sunday at the Elks. On Monday, we were privileged to have an Elvis Presley impersonator who did a great job entertaining everyone. Elvis sang many of his favorite songs for the crowd to enjoy. The conference attendees admired, laughed and loved Elvis!
DTA 2007 Roadeo

The Dakota Transit Association Roadeo is an opportunity for drivers to gain recognition for their driving skills, to test their talent, to network with other drivers from across the two states, and to socialize. DTA recognizes the top five performers in an awards ceremony at the Roadeo banquet. The drivers with the highest score from North and South Dakota advance to national competition at the 2008 Community Transportation Association of America Roadeo which will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The 2007 Roadeo marshals were Carl Rathbun, River Cities Public Transit, Pierre, South Dakota, and Joe Berger, Elder Care, Dickinson, North Dakota. Their Roadeo responsibilities included monitoring the Roadeo; watching the participants for fair play; making sure the Roadeo course was laid out properly; ensuring there were enough judges to properly score the Roadeo participants and answering questions.

The Roadeo Contest Winners Congratulations to the Winners of the 2007 DTA Bus Roadeo.

South Dakota winners include from left to right: Rob Walsh, River Cities Public Transit, 1st place; Lance Kuper, River Cities Public Transit in Pierre, 2nd place; Dave Chipman, Prairie Hills Transit in Spearfish, 3rd place; Gary Cleland, R.O.C.S. Transit, Lake Andes, 4th place; and Mike Mullaney, Brookings Area Transit Authority in Brookings, 5th place.

North Dakota winners include from left to right: Niela Rae Ludwik, West River Transit in Bismarck, 5th place; Dennis Ulmer, Elder Care in Dickinson, 4th place; Ron Gieser, Elder Care, 3rd place; Dennis Kuehnemund, Souris Basin Transportation in Minot, 2nd place; and Rich Nadvornik, Elder Care in Dickinson, 1st place.
“On call 24-7”

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Thinking beyond safety.
DTA Conference Presentations

North Dakota Public Transit to Adopt a Regional Model
Dave Leftwich
NDDOT Local Government Division Engineer

North Dakota transit projects will become regionalized within the next three to five years. The reasoning behind the move is to make the best use of resources—both financial and physical.

"Funding under the next highway bill is uncertain across the board, not just for transit," said Leftwich. "Regionalizing transit will help to reduce duplication of efforts and free up resources to improve transit opportunities for populations that are underserved."

Clients will also benefit from consistent rules, guidelines and fares, as well as better service not just to larger cities, but also within their own regions.

"We need your help to make this plan work," said Leftwich. "Your input as to how the regions might look, what you see as essential to public transit during this transition, how you feel the new regions should operate, and any other feedback you may have is vital to this process."

North Dakota transit projects are invited to submit their thoughts and recommendations to the Transit Office via email to dottransit@nd.gov, or by phone to (701) 328-2194.

Managing People Effectively: Solving Human Resource Management Problems
Carol Wright & Gary Hegland, Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

"Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible" from the book titled Powell Principles by Oren Harari, attempts to put into word the challenges of managing transit. This session addressed many issues relating to managing employees. Carol Wright covered hiring, firing, and interviewing; Gary Hegland shared an employee handbook template on a CD for transit managers to take home and use to develop or upgrade their own employee handbook.

Securing Community Mobility
Andy Ervin
National Transit Institute

This four-hour training program focused on the specific security concerns of rural transit, human service transit, urban paratransit, resort transit, and other community-based transportation operations. The program addressed threats and vulnerabilities related to workplace violence, dangerous passengers, criminal behavior, and domestic/international terrorism. The seminar also provided practical strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and real-world methodologies for reacting to threats that occur within a community transportation environment.

Community Transportation Mutual Insurance Company (CTMIC)
Walt Diangson
Pacific Shores Insurance

Walt Diangson reviewed some reasons to insure with a captive insurance company like CTMIC rather than the commercial market. The commercial insurance market can be very unstable and availability uncertain at times. The insured has very little control, as the industry understands trucking, but has very little knowledge about transit. The insured is at the mercy of the big insurance company and their desire for profits and covering losses in different markets. CTMIC will be available in all 50 states, will be responsive to the needs of the insured, and truly understands the transit industry. Walt pointed out that CTMIC will provide auto, general liability, and physical damage insurance, and it will have one to five million for liability limits. CTMIC will insure private non-profit, private for-profit, public agencies, tribal and faith-based services. CTMIC's Board of Directors is pictured below.

From left to right: Bill Osborn, Southeast Missouri Transportation Service (SMTS), Fredericktown, MO; Fred Stoffer, Special Mobility Services (SMS), Portland, OR; Donna Kelsay, San Joaquin Regional Transit District (SJRTD), Stockton, CA; Ron Baumgart, River Cities Public Transit (RCPT), Pierre, SD; Ross McLaurin, Shandon Baptist Church, Columbia, SC; Rex Knowlton, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), Cinnaminson, NJ; Walt Diangson, Pacific Shore Insurance Services (PSIS), Costa Mesa, CA

(Presentations continued on page 8)
Linda did a great job using humor and laughter to promote learning and improved effectiveness among teams. She used two exercises that were excellent illustrations of her theme. The first exercise required all conference attendees to divide into groups of nine and form a circle. Linda then provided animals for the group to toss around the circle and challenged each group to discover how well they can work together. The next exercise required group participation to design a straw basket that would keep an egg from breaking when dropped from a six foot height to the floor. Linda emphasized seven elements of effective teamwork:

1. Commitment to a clear mission
2. Mutual support & encouragement
3. Clearly defined roles
4. Win-win cooperation
5. Individual competency
6. Empowering communication
7. Winning attitude

(Real Dream Teams by Bob Fisher & Bo Thomas)
Greetings to all! First, I would like to extend my best wishes to each of you during this holiday season. I wish you health, happiness, and love with your family and friends during these busy days with transit!

I am pleased to be your new Dakota Transit Association President. I would like to introduce our 2007/2008 Board of Directors. They are:

Jacque Senger President
Brenda Paradis Vice-President
Pat Hansen Treasurer
Linda Freeman Secretary
Barb Cline South Dakota Board Member
Carl Rathbun South Dakota Board Member
Joe Berger North Dakota Board Member
Brenda Schweitzer Past President (Ex-Officio)
Gary Hegland Executive Director

I invite anyone with new thoughts, ideas or suggestions to please contact any board member. Their contact information is on the website at http://www.dakotatransit.org/members.php. We are always looking for new and innovative ideas.

Our 2007 Fall Conference in Dickinson, ND, was great. For those of you who could not attend, you missed a very successful roadeo, excellent vendor show, great speakers, and wonderful entertainment. (I probably am biased about the last one).

Our Spring Conference is in the early planning stages. We have scheduled the conference at the Ramkota in Bismarck (across from the Kirkwood Mall), April 7-8, 2008. We are looking at a business meeting, many different training areas, plus updates on legislative issues. We will be sending you a tentative agenda the first part of February. Please mark the dates on your calendar now so you don’t miss this great opportunity to learn.

I would like to reiterate our new dues structure which was passed by the membership at our last Mid-Year Conference. The motion that was passed by the membership states, “In all cases where the organization has responsibility for, or owns and holds the title for revenue vehicles, they will be assessed $10 fee per vehicle for DTA dues, plus the $100 base fee.” To figure your dues, it is a $100 base membership plus $10 for each vehicle in the system up to a maximum cap of $300.

Our Fall Conference will be in Watertown, SD, September 19-24, 2008. Again, please put the dates on your calendars. We will be planning “the best conference ever!”

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4 consec ad runs are $200 ea.

Full Page Ad = 7.5” x 10”
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Quarter Page Ad = 3.5” x 5”
Area Bus Garages

Just prior to the fall conference an email notice was sent to all DTA members that new (under two years old) bus garages would be featured in the next newsletter. We received responses from five organizations. Here are pictures of their garages and their stories about struggles, rewards, and communities’ efforts that have paid off.

Standing Rock Public Transit Center
Fort Yates, ND

On April 2, 2007, the Standing Rock Public Transportation (SRPT) Program opened a new 5,100 sq. ft. Public Transit Center in Fort Yates, ND. The new building includes five offices, a waiting area for customers, two mechanic bays and a wash bay.

They are now able to purchase and store bulk fuel and service their own vehicles, which is more cost effective, thereby allowing them to continue to improve and expand their services. This also benefits passengers because SRPT can continue to provide affordable transportation.

Pam Ternes, director, stated, “the new facility will help us attract more passengers and offers a larger and safer working environment for our staff. Our customers will also have a warm place to wait for their bus in our new waiting area.”

Community Transit, Inc.
Sisseton, SD

A three stall garage with a meeting room/office has just been completed in Milbank, SD. This project was made possible through the cooperation of the SDDOT, Grant County, and Community Transit, Inc. Grant County donated the property on which the garage was built. The value of this property plus funds inherited from generous people made it possible to raise the local match needed to receive the federal funds. The Milbank Bus service is unique because most of their matching funds for operating and capital have come from benefactor’s estates.

For more information about Standing Rock Public Transportation or the new transit center please contact Pam at (701) 854-8033.
Community Transit, Inc. manages the Milbank project, which operates one 14-passenger mini-bus and a 15-passenger van. The Milbank project travels over 21,000 miles and provides over 13,000 trips each year. The majority of riders are school children, with elderly and people with disabilities also being served as well as the general public. This garage is especially appreciated because the vehicles have been parked outside in the past. In the winter months, it has been necessary to look for heated space to lease, which is not easy to find. The heated garage will also help lower maintenance costs.

Prairie Hills Transit
Spearfish, SD

With communities spread across a 12,000 square mile area, it is no small job to keep the buses on the road and find a place that offers drivers an office to do paperwork and clean the vehicles. For the communities of Belle Fourche, Custer and Sturgis, each garage has its own special and unique features designed to meet the specific needs of that particular community. Signage at each facility and building colors are specific to all the Prairie Hills Transit (PHT) garages.

With both offices and garage stalls, Prairie Hills Transit no longer has the challenge of buses that won’t start because of the cold, blistered paint and employees without a space for paperwork.

In Belle Fourche, the garage is two-stall and was done as a cooperative effort with the City of Belle Fourche. The land was donated by the city and the Public Works Director supervised the project. The new garage is located next to the police station and currently houses two vehicles that operate in both Belle Fourche and Newell. The agreement for the lease is automatically renewed annually. Driver Gary Stinton, who previously owned the Gregory Livestock Barn, is delighted to have gone from a livestock barn to a bus barn. Scattered throughout his office are sticky notes reminding him we “Haul livestock-Transport people.”

For the residents of Sturgis, a three-stall design serves as bus garage, office, and is located on the campus of the Heritage Acres Housing complex. With land donated by the Heritage Acres Board, this agreement is set up with an automatically renewed annual lease to Prairie Hills Transit. During the open house, visitors enjoyed the carnival style popcorn popper, grilled brats and great hospitality.

Custer has the newest design with a three-stall garage, office area and upstairs meeting room. The biggest challenge in Custer was realized when a streak of granite on the building site needed to be blasted before the building could be built. The City of Custer donated the land to the Custer Area Transportation Board and they have set up a 25-year lease with PHT.

West River Transit
Bismarck, ND

West River Transit now has four new bus buildings. They are located in Carson, Beulah, Center, and Garrison, ND. The process was a long and tedious four years from start to finish, but well worth it. Working with NDDOT along with the engineering firm was very helpful and informative. We learned from each other in every avenue, making the process manageable and in the end, much better buildings. When buildings are not located near the office, it is important to have a good communication system for the engineers to stay in contact with you, the office, and the subcontractors on a regular basis. Our engineers kept in close contact and were very timely in responding to our concerns and questions.

The benefits of these four buildings are endless. Aside from the obvious, protecting the vehicles and their longevity, there is also the availability for the drivers to maintain the vehicles inside and out during winter months, to complete paperwork, to hold local meetings, and to control needs for their routes and riders. The communities have embraced the buildings with great interest and have been more involved due to the physical presence of the buildings. Even though it was a long and time-consuming process, West River Transit is
glimpse the completed and appreciated the opportunity to obtain these buildings. Here are pictures of two of our four garages; they all have the same floor plan.

Metro Area Transit
Fargo, ND

Metro Area Transit (MAT) serves Fargo, Moorhead, and West Fargo. The shared statistics here are not mentioned to be compared with other small communities in the Dakotas, but rather to show the coordinated effort required for this building just like what happens in many smaller communities. This is a joint effort between Fargo and Moorhead and between North Dakota and Minnesota as depicted by these financial arrangements:

Total budget $7M – The 80% ($5.6M) federal funding consists of formula and discretionary money; the 20% ($1.4M) is local share (Fargo owns 2/3 of facility and Moorhead owns 1/3).

Approximately $3.7M in discretionary money for capital improvements was obtained for Fargo in ND Statewide applications over the past few years with support from NDDOT, Senator Dorgan, Senator Conrad, and Congressman Pomeroy. Funds of approximately $2.3M have been obtained with the assistance of MNDOT.

congressional delegation including Senator Norm Coleman and Representative Colin Peterson.

The facility is approximately 50,000 square feet and allows for the storage and maintenance of 45-50 vehicles plus allows for future expansion. The transit administrative, mechanical, and contractors’ staff are housed at the new facility. This beautiful building was constructed over a 14-month period. However, the directors, Julie Bommelman of Fargo and Lori VanBeek of Moorhead, would both agree it took longer for the planning—getting all sides to agree on the procedure for the financial arrangements and ensuring all planned features were included—than completion of the building. The building houses buses from both Fargo and Moorhead with room for expansion.

Minnesota Public Transportation Conference

Barb Cline, Prairie Hills Transit
Brenda Schweitzer, Brookings Area Transit Authority

In the interest of keeping our DTA Conference fresh with ideas and support, the DTA Board of Directors sent two delegates to the annual Minnesota Public Transportation (MPT) Conference, which was held in St. Cloud, MN, October 29-31, 2007. Barb Cline of Prairie Hills Transit and Brenda Schweitzer of Brookings Area Transit were the two delegates that attended.

The Minnesota Transit Association combined their vendor show and conference with a great agenda and format. It all began on Monday with a noon to 6:00 p.m. registration, as well as a NTI Training on Mobility Management. Their Annual Meeting and Transit Awards Ceremony was held on Monday evening. A separate program included the award honorees as well as a listing of the previous winners. A brief description of the award criteria was also included on this brochure. A welcome reception was held following the annual meeting and awards ceremony. Attendance was impressive, and ideas are already in motion for DTA planning!

Tuesday opened with a breakfast, followed by the General Session, with opening remarks by the Director of the St. Cloud Metro Bus, David Tripp (note: the St.
Cloud Metro Bus was named the Best Transit System of its size in North America by the American Public Transportation Association, APTA, in October), and St. Cloud City Council representative, Carolyn Garven, as well as MPTA President Tony Kellen. Following their opening, a wonderful motivational presentation was provided by Deandra Stanton, reminding us as the pace of change quickens every day, we sometimes end up chasing too many skinny rabbits. Lost energy and focus is the result. Her real-life examples, combined with the quick wit of a working mother, were the perfect way to start this conference. We hope to see her again, next time in the Dakotas!

Five breakout sessions were offered. All had content similar to what we’ve offered, ranging from safety and security to issues relevant to Minnesota transit.

Box lunches were served at the Vendor Expo, which included just fewer than 50 vendors. Many familiar faces and many new ones were seen. Random door prizes were given, and overall attendance was very good.

The evening reception was provided by First Transit/Laidlaw Transit, with an amazing meal and entertainment by Minneapolis’s “Bella Diva.” This live entertainment kept the crowd entertained with a variety of genres. Look them up online: [www.belladivamusic.com](http://www.belladivamusic.com). It was agreed that DTA would’ve kept the dance floor full!

Wednesday morning opened with breakfast and a legislative panel forum. The attendance by their state delegates was very impressive, with two senators and three representatives on the panel. It was also noted that the conference was attended by several other programs, including the Department of Health, inter-agency councils, programs for the elderly, etc. This is an area DTA has wanted to improve on, and we will work on accomplishing this for our future conferences.

The balance of Wednesday included two sets of breakout sessions to choose from, followed by lunch and a final keynote speaker, allowing everyone to leave the conference on an ‘up’ note. A grand prize of a 20” flat-screen TV was the ending door prize, and you were given a ticket for this drawing when your evaluation was turned in! A win-win situation! And, no…it didn’t end up in the Dakotas!

Attending this conference has helped to keep the fires lit with DTA, and we appreciate the opportunity to do so.

**Medicaid Meeting**

**Jacque Senger, DTA President**

On November 7, 2007, a meeting was held with the ND Department of Human Services, Medical Services Division at the State Capitol in Bismarck. Those attending the meeting were:

- LaMae Bergan, Transportation Services, Devils Lake, ND
- Julie Brunette, Handi-Wheels, Fargo, ND
- Gary Hegland, Executive Director of DTA, Fargo, ND
- Midge Kuntz, Elder Care, Dickinson, ND
- Jacque Senger, North Central Planning Council, Devils Lake, ND
- Donna Wahl, Elder Care, Dickinson, ND
- Galen Hanson, Medical Services Division, Bismarck, ND
- Mary Helmers, Medical Services Division, Bismarck, ND
- Dan Johnson, ND Department of Human Services, Bismarck, ND
- Tammy Renner, Medical Services Division, Bismarck, ND

The meeting was called to discuss concerns some agencies were experiencing with Medicaid reimbursements. The purpose was to improve communications between Medicaid representatives and transit providers. This meeting was set up as an informational meeting to educate transit agencies on Medicaid.

Dan Johnson, Administrator of Clinical Services, explained the basics of Medicaid. He went into the history of what Medical Services takes into account (i.e., Aging Services, Medical Services, Children Services, etc). This program began in 1969. Dan explained that the computer system that they use is extremely old, and the department is in the process of updating the system. However, the new system will probably not be available for use until 2009.

Dan informed the group that there is a “Verify Line” that anyone can use to determine if the client requesting a ride is covered under Medicaid or not. This information would be extremely helpful to all transit providers. The numbers are 701-328-2891 or 800-428-4140. You can also search [www.nd.gov/dhs/providers/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/providers/) for additional information.

Tammy Renner (Administrator & Utilization Review) and Galen Hanson (Administrator Third Party Liabilities, Surveillance Utilization Reviews, Fraud and Abuse) are both new employees to the ND Department of Human Services. Tammy passed out Medicaid Billing Code Instructions for Non-Emergency Transportation that
Many providers are filling out the block correctly; some are not. Hopefully, this will open the door to improved communication between Medicaid administrators and transit providers. As a result of this meeting, Tammy and some of her staff plan on attending the ND state breakout at the DTA spring conference.

**Community Transportation Mutual Insurance Company (CTMIC) Update**

Walt Diangson  
President/CEO Pacific Shore Insurance Services, Inc.  
RSI Managing Broker & Broker of Record for CTMIC

CTMIC is in the midst of the captive application process in South Carolina. CTMIC is pushing hard to get the final application approved for a conditional license and to establish CTMIC as a formal insurance company.

After answering the initial questions posed by the South Carolina Department of Insurance (SCDOI), after submission of the original application, getting all related agreements signed (fronting, reinsurance, escrow, banking and service providers), making adjustments to the actuarial study, and making certain strategic changes to the operating plan, CTMIC has re-submitted the final application.
application for licensing and for approval of a contingent or conditional license. The contingency is collecting a minimum of approximately $1.5 million in capital and surplus from prospective members of the captive and placing the funds in an escrow account in SC. This will be collected as 30% of the first year’s premium for each CTMIC member. The minimum is the required amount that the SCDOI has set, based on the CTMIC actuarial study. After the minimum is raised and deposited, CTMIC will request approval for the final license and be open for business.

One strategic change to the operating plan was the creation and filing for a risk purchasing group (the Community Transportation RPG). This was done to expedite registration and use of established insurance rates in all the states by the fronting company. This is in lieu of having the fronting company file new CTMIC rates in each and every state - a very expensive and time-consuming process. The RPG has been established, and registrations in the first and second phase states are occurring now.

Another strategic change that is being undertaken is designed to get CTMIC into providing insurance to CTAA members before CTMIC is formally licensed and to provide an insurance option for January 1, 2008, renewals. CTMIC is going to set up a CTAA member auto and general liability program, including physical damage coverage, with Nova insurance, the fronting company. CTMIC will be able to write insurance and issue policies based on adopted CTMIC rates through Nova Casualty Company. Nova is licensed in all states. Once CTMIC is licensed, the policies that are written under the program will be ceded (transferred) to CTMIC. In this way, CTMIC will not lose out on renewals that will occur in January or further delay prospective CTMIC members from getting insurance through the CTAA-member program. Each insured will still be required to place 30% of the premium into the CTMIC escrow account. In the event that CTMIC is not approved, the funds deposited in escrow will be returned to the committed and insured members. This approach will allow individual organizations to be insured during the review process and capitalization period at the CTMIC rates and with the proposed risk management support of CTMIC. Once CTMIC is approved with a final license (when the necessary capital and surplus is raised and in escrow [$1.5M]), all policies and funds will be transferred to CTMIC. At that point Nova, CTMIC and MaxRE will all share in the coverage and risk.

What this means is that anyone in either ND or SD should be able to start getting insurance from CTMIC in early Spring 2008.
The **Dakota Transporter** is a North and South Dakota newsletter geared toward the rural, small urban, and specialized transit industry, keeping the DTA's transit providers up-to-date on the news and information from across the nation and the states.

If anyone has any news or items of interest they would like to share with us, please send it to the **Dakota Transporter**, P.O. Box 5074, Fargo, ND 58105. We also welcome your comments about the newsletter.

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