“United We Travel”
DTA Transportation Coordination Summit

AmeriCInn Lodge & Suites and
Teton Island Conference Center
Fort Pierre, South Dakota

Phone: (800) 396-5007 for reservations
(605) 223-2358 front desk

Alternate hotel for sleeping rooms:
Holiday Inn Express
Phone: (800) 586-9061 or (605) 223-9045

April 21 & 22, 2009
Fort Pierre, South Dakota
The 5311c tribal transit program was created as part of the current federal highway bill, SAFETEA-LU. The initial funding for the program began in FY 2006 with an appropriation of $8 million. In FY 2008, 89 tribes submitted applications for 5311c grant funds totaling $24 million in requests for a program budgeted at $12 million.

Several tribal programs from North and South Dakota were fortunate to be successful in obtaining a portion of that funding. In FY 2009, the final year of the program under SAFETEA-LU, $15 million will be available.

The North and South Dakota tribes who received FY 2008 funding included:
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe ($157,500);
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe ($150,00);
- Rosebud Sioux Tribe ($100,000);
- Spirit Lake Tribe ($250,000);
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe ($225,000); and
- Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa ($225,000).

This funding will be used to expand services and meet other transit-related needs in each of the tribal areas. Following are articles on grant monies received by various local tribal entities.

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**Tribal Grants Awarded in the Dakotas**

**Tribal transit program funding to benefit six tribes in Dakotas**

The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe plans to expand services on the reservation.

In December 2008, the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe received word that it had been awarded a second grant under the new 5311c tribal transit program. The grants, each for $150,000, were for FY 2007 and FY 2008 and are to be used to expand transit services on the reservation and between the reservation and nearby Pierre, SD.

Lower Brule Reservation covers more than 132,000 acres in Lyman and Stanley counties along the Missouri River in central South Dakota. The tribe has been providing limited transit services to area residents since 2004 via a contract with River Cities Public Transit of Pierre, which is located approximately 65 miles northwest of the reservation.

According to the 2000 census, the reservation had a population of about 1,350. Approximately 600 of these residents live in the community of Lower Brule. Major employers include the Golden Buffalo Casino, Lower Brule Employment Enterprise (road construction), Lakota Foods (food distribution), and Sung Maka Ska (gift manufacturing). These companies are owned by the tribe and employ about 100 people.

According to Toni Wells, tribal planning officer and transit coordinator, transit services began in 2004 when River Cities Public Transit (RCPT) began providing employment shuttle service from Pierre to Lower Brule. Services have since been expanded to provide daily demand-response services on the reservation. Future plans call for expanded services on the reservation plus connector services from the reservation to other area communities for medical, shopping, and employment purposes. Ridership has grown to approximately 200 rides per day.

Ron Baumgart of RCPT stated, "Our partnership with Lower Brule Sioux Tribes has created a responsive and reliable public transit program for the Lower Brule area. The award of the 5311c grant will allow expanded services for medical transportation and the extension of the hours of transit service in the Lower Brule area."

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**Turtle Mountain part of coordination plan**

Turtle Mountain Reservation is a small, densely populated reservation located in Rolette County in far north central North Dakota. With only 72 square miles, the reservation is relatively small, but it also has a considerable amount of tribal trust land elsewhere in the county.

Census data from 2007 place the county’s population at 13,665, nearly 71 percent of which is native.

There are three transit services operating in Rolette County. One of these services is run by the Turtle Moun-
South Dakota’s Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe received a $157,500 transit grant as part of the 5311c awards announced by the FTA in late December 2008. These funds will be used to initiate transit services on the reservation and if possible between the reservation and regional medical and shopping centers. According to Zane Arpan, tribal transit coordinator, in 2004, the tribe contracted for the preparation of a transit development plan. That same year, the tribe also received a Section 5309 grant for the construction of a transit facility which is located in Eagle Butte and will be used for bus storage, maintenance, and office space.

The Cheyenne River Reservation encompasses more than 3 million acres in Ziebach and Dewey counties in north central South Dakota. According to the 2000 census, the reservation has a total population of nearly 8,500. Approximately 2,800 of these residents live in and around Eagle Butte, where the tribal headquarters are located. Eagle Butte is located approximately 115 miles northwest of Pierre and 170 miles northeast of Rapid City.

According to Arpan, the tribe contracted with River Cities Public Transit of Pierre to prepare its grant application for the 5311c funds. Now that it has received notification that it has been funded, the tribe intends to contract with River Cities Public Transit to prepare a final implementation plan and to operate its new services.

It is expected that the new transit service will start with a demand-response program in and around Eagle Butte. Additional options may include daily connector services with other reservation communities and weekly routes from the reservation to Pierre and/or Rapid City. Ron Baumgart of RCPT stated, “We are very excited about the opportunity to work with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in developing their public transit. The 5311c funds received in this round of FTA grants will help fill the gaps in funding to start this much needed service.”

The Rosebud Sioux Reservation is located in Todd County in south central South Dakota. With tribal trust lands that spill over into neighboring Gregory, Mellette, Lyman, and Tripp counties, the tribe’s geographic area covers nearly 2,000 square miles. According to the 2000 census, the population of the reservation and other tribal trust lands was nearly 10,500. Tribal authorities estimate, however, that the actual number of residents may exceed 20,000.

According to Director LeRoy Sleeping Bear, Rosebud Sioux Transportation (RST) has been providing local transit services for the past 26 years. Program funding has come primarily from the state, but the tribe did receive a $25,000 planning grant from the new federal 5311c program in FY 2007. In December 2008, the tribe was awarded a $100,000 5311c enhancement grant from the Federal Transit Administration.

RST operates a demand-response service using eight vehicles which are dispersed across the reservation. Current plans call for adding two lift-equipped vehicles. Most rides involve trips within each community, but services are also provided to Rapid City, the area’s regional medical and shopping center. Rapid City is located approximately 180 miles northwest of the reservation.

The Rosebud Sioux Transportation has been providing local transit services for 26 years. The Turtle Mountain funding continued from previous page

Turtle Mountain funding

continued from previous page

tin Band of Chippewa tribe on the reservation; another one is operated by a private, nonprofit 501(c)3 agency; and the third transit service is owned by a private, for-profit company.

All three operators receive federal 5311 support administered by the N.D. Department of Transportation (NDDOT). The tribe also received 5311c grants for both FY 2007 and FY 2008, each for $225,000.

In 2006, the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center worked with the tribe and the NDDOT to prepare a transit plan for the reservation and Rolette County. According to Jeremy Laducer, the tribe’s transportation director, the plan called for extensive coordination among the existing transit services. It proposed a combination of demand response and fixed routes to provide services within the county and between the county and Minot, the regional shopping and medical center which is located 115 miles away.

The plan also called for phased implementation, depending on the availability of funding.

An advisory board, consisting of the three local operators and the six-county North Central Planning Council, has been meeting monthly to pursue implementation and to promote ongoing coordination.
Cheryl Jongerius, Dickey County

As I write this, we are just a little past crossover in the 2009 North Dakota Legislative Session. Many legislative sessions are marked by a specific issue, theme, or “vibe.” In this session, the transit theme would be “formulas.”

In 2008, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute held a series of regional meetings across North Dakota that brought all parties interested in the whole transportation spectrum (townships, cities, counties, general contractors, transit, etc.) to talk about transportation issues and to look at funding options for the future.

Each entity involved in transportation currently has a funding formula—some that take a Ph.D. to understand! A statewide conference was then held to bring together all the information learned from the regional meetings. A unified statewide plan was put together to present to the governor and North Dakota lawmakers to show transportation needs, current funding paths, and some alternatives for the future.

As a result of this, a major rewrite of all transportation “formulas” was presented in the governor’s budget proposal. The formula proposed for transit would increase the amount available in the State Aid for Public Transportation Fund for the 2009-2011 biennium and would give the fund an opportunity to grow in the future to keep up with inflation (something our current formula does not do).

So far, the formulas have been tweaked a bit by the Legislature, and we expect that process to continue right to the end of the session in late April. We have been very pleased that during legislative hearings on all of these proposed changes for funding formulas, lawmakers have specifically asked, “How does this affect transit?” That is a very positive thing for us to hear!

Other legislative issues affecting transit include: a bill that requires one regional transit project be put in place over the next two years; whether transportation funds should be “general” funds or be funded by an “excise” tax; a study resolution to look at rail, public, and intercity bus transportation; and a bill to add a North Dakota member of the Dakota Transit Association board of directors to the UGPTI Advisory Board.

As always, we will have to wait to the end of the legislative session to see how everything shakes out. In the meantime, transit providers will keep doing what we do best—get our passengers from where they are to where they need to go.
Women’s Transportation Seminar
not just an organization for women

Barb Cline, DTA President

WTS International is the Women’s Transportation Seminar and is an organization that I ran across by accident in an Eno Transportation Foundation publication. The vision of WTS is: Transforming the transportation industry through the advancement of women.

Founded in 1977, the Women’s Transportation Seminar was created through the efforts of 40 women involved in transportation in the Washington, DC, area who recognized that a mechanism was needed to enhance professional and personal advancement and to develop industry and government recognition of the increasing involvement of women in the field of transportation.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, WTS is now an international organization of more than 4,000 transportation professionals - both women and men - with 42 chapters representing cities and states in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the ninth annual Women’s Transportation Seminar (WTS) leadership program held on the Rutgers Campus in New Brunswick, New Jersey. This prestigious opportunity is designed for mid-career transportation professionals who have demonstrated strong leadership potential in both their professional and personal lives.

The WTS program is offered at no cost to the participants for room, board, and tuition. Participants are only responsible for their transportation costs to and from the three-day session.

Like many smaller organizations, WTS is a fairly well-kept secret even though it has international chapters. While the focus of the organization is women in transit, there are many male members in the various national chapters. For those of us in the Dakotas, the nearest chapter is Colorado. There is an opportunity to be a member at large. Or even better, we could organize our own chapter here in the Dakotas.

The group of 14 women was from all over the United States with one attendee from England. The application process was relatively simple, but the competition was intense. We were told that over 60 women had applied for the opportunity to attend.

Application criteria was five years of experience in the transportation industry, with at least two of those years in a management or supervisory position. A required resume, letter of recommendation, and a 500-word personal statement made the application fairly simple. Many of the attendees were from the private sector, so their perception of leadership in a for-profit organization was slightly different than those of us who are in the nonprofit world.

Prior to our travel date, each participant was asked to complete a DISC personality profile. After dinner the night we arrived, the setting was similar to a reality show. We were all asked to assemble and make ourselves comfortable in an elegant sitting room of a beautiful old mansion. The group rules and expectations were laid out for us. We were each given our “DISC profile,” and our homework was to review it before the morning session. I was honestly amazed at the accuracy of the information the profile contained.

During the three-day program, we had an opportunity to explore a variety of transportation policy issues in one-on-one discussion with established industry leaders like Mort Downey, Rosemary Scanlon, Ronnie Hakim, and Marsha Bomar as well as our facilitators Christine Cox and Carmen Clark.

We discussed our biggest challenges, participated in small group activities, had mentoring opportunities, compared leadership styles and competencies, and evaluated our own personal career development plans. Meeting with experts like Mort Downing, who was recently part of President Obama’s transition team, and Marsha Bomar, whose personal challenges in starting up a transportation and planning firm as a single parent of three small children included discrimination as a woman in a male-dominated field, were inspirational.

This has been the second opportunity I’ve had to attend a small select leadership class. As with the first in Denver, I’ve added industry experts to my “KITCHEN CABINET.” (See president’s letter on page 12.)

Don’t miss these types of opportunities. If you are interested in being part of a new chapter in this area, please let me know.

For additional information on WTS, go to www.wtsinternational.org.

“'The Transit Coordination Summit will provide real solutions and a way for forward communities to manage their transportation needs.'
— Jeanne Erickson, conference speaker
CTAA develops vision through transportation policy

Scott Bogren  
CTAA Communications Director

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) has developed a bold and innovative approach to transportation policy with the publication of “A New Surface Mobility Vision for America.”

CTAA’s vision is rooted in the recognition of mobility as a cornerstone of our nation’s prosperity, and that a fundamental restructuring of transportation priorities, investment, and policy is needed to more fully reflect the important work done by community and public transit operators. Moreover, since the most vital issues of national concern – economic development, health care, energy, and environmental protection – are all significantly influenced by transportation decision-making, national priorities must be realigned to match these growing trends.

As a preamble to planning, the association developed a series of principles, which follow:

- We believe that every American must be assured accessible, affordable, convenient, reliable, and safe transportation to the local destinations of their choice, without regard for disability, age, or economic status.
- We believe investment in public and community transportation is a sound investment and that it can have a resoundingly positive impact on the national economy.
- We believe that the federal government must be a guarantor of mobility for all Americans, because freedom in our modern society is defined by mobility.

To achieve this bold, new approach to mobility, CTAA’s vision is based upon the following priorities:

- Streamlining the transit program and its administration
- Increasing investment in all forms of surface mobility
- Diversifying mobility investment sources
- Building on the past to produce a world-class mobility network
- Developing a new approach to connecting urban and rural transit
- Trusting transit operators at the local level to serve all Americans
- Providing greater flexibility for local transit operators to decide how best to meet mobility needs
- Inspiring opportunities for job growth, economic development, and environmental improvements
- Expanding the mobility of all Americans
- Tapping the energy and skill of the American workforce

The association’s plan was developed after much consultation with its members around the country, with its state delegate council, and with its board of directors.

“This document represents our vision of the role and value of transit in communities of all sizes all around our nation,” says CTAA Executive Director Dale J. Marsico, CCTM. “Our members can help the nation address a number of challenges before it — we can help people access health care, jobs, education; we can help rebuild the country and we can help reduce our dependence on foreign oil.”

To view the full content of “A New Surface Mobility Vision for America,” please visit CTAA’s website at www.ctaa.org.

DTA seeking accountant

Our current accounting firm, Services with Integrity, is scaling back its business operations and will no longer be able to continue serving the Dakota Transit Association (DTA).

We are looking for someone to take over the accounting functions. Following is a list of requirements and duties. If you are aware of someone who may be interested in this position or if you have any questions regarding the position, please contact Gary Hegland at (701) 231-6436 or gary.hegland@ndsu.edu.

Requirements:
- Must be bonded for $75,000
- Must use QuickBooks accounting software

Duties:
- Maintain DTA financial ledgers following established accounting procedures
- Responsible for all DTA accounts receivable and accounts payable
- Responsible for tracking deposits
- Provide financial statements to DTA Board on a quarterly basis and as requested
- Provide annual financial statement to DTA membership at annual meeting
- Process vouchers for payment
- Complete any reports and forms as required by IRS
- Maintain membership address labels and an updated membership list
- Additional duties as required by North Dakota, South Dakota, or federal regulations or as requested by the DTA Board of Directors
PURPOSE OF THIS TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION SUMMIT

Bring all interested parties – including transportation providers and transit-dependent individuals as well as policymakers, advocacy groups and agency heads – together in a nonconfrontational setting to develop new and better relationships through communications and interaction.

Background Information

Through this summit, Dakota Transit Association (DTA) is committed to creating an environment for the easy exchange of ideas on coordination to enhance opportunities for improved transportation services throughout North and South Dakota. DTA is assembling vested stakeholders to create a think tank for generating ideas for growing transit services to meet the needs of transit-dependent people within our states.

Human service providers and transit operators have a history of maximizing services with limited resources. Transportation for clients of individual programs and medical services has always been in high demand. Many public transit programs have experienced significant growth and have made major strides in providing transit services for an increased segment of the population. Now, through coordination, the industry is trying to more fully utilize the talents, skills, and resources of existing operations to provide more rides because demand is growing faster than our ability to meet the needs.

To enrich transportation services in your community and make a difference for the people you serve, register now and make attending this conference a priority on your agenda.

SUMMIT GOALS

• Increase awareness of community transit resources among consumers, providers, advocacy groups, policymakers and agency heads.
• Provide a public transit forum where stakeholders can share knowledge about challenges and opportunities.
• Develop relationships which will reduce barriers and increase coordination between stakeholders.

Topics covered at this conference will include:

Successes and Challenges of Medical Transit Needs • New and Creative Uses of Funding
The Role of Transit in Economic Development • Increasing and Improving Access to Transit
Veterans’ Transit Options

Sponsors of this DTA Summit include:

South Dakota Department of Transportation
North Dakota Department of Transportation
Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
Community Transportation Association of America
DTA Transportation Coordination Summit

United We Travel

Tuesday, April 21

11 a.m.-1 p.m. .......................................................... Registration
1 p.m. ........................................................................ Welcome and Opening Remarks, Barb Cline, DTA board president; Darin Berquist, S.D. Secretary of Transportation; Sam Tidball, Fort Pierre Mayor; Laurie Gill, Pierre Mayor
1:45 p.m. .......................................................... Summit Scope, Charles Carr, Public Transit Director, Mississippi Dept. of Transportation
2 p.m. .......................................................... United We Ride - SD, Shelly Pfaff, executive director, SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities

United We Ride - ND, Gary Hegland, Executive Director, DTA

3-3:15 p.m. ................................................................................................................................................................................................................ Break
3:15-5 p.m. ......................................................................................................................................... United We Ride - National Perspective, Dale Marsico, Executive Director, Community Transportation Association of America

The Role of Transit In Economic Development Stimulus Package, Dale Marsico, Community Transportation Association of America

New and Creative Uses of Funding, Kelly Shawn, Community Transportation Association of America

Successes and Challenges of Medical Transit Needs, Pat Hansen, Executive Director, South Central Adult Services Council, Valley City

Veterans’ Transit Options, Kelly Kukowski, Veterans Affairs Enrollment Coordinator, Fargo

Increasing and Improving Access to Transit, Shelly Pfaff, Executive Director, SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities

5 p.m. ................................................................................ Networking Reception Featuring the Jim Szana Trio

Wednesday, April 22

7:30-8:30 a.m. ..................................................................................................................................................................................................... Breakfast
8:30 a.m. .......................................................... Recap of Day One Issues and Opportunities, Where Do We Go From Here?, Charles Carr
9 a.m. .......................................................... Updates on Coordination Plans, Bruce Lindholm, S.D. Dept. of Transportation; Bruce Fuchs, N.D. Dept. of Transportation
9:30-9:45 a.m. ........................................................................................................................................................................................................... Break
9:45 a.m. .......................................................... Authorization Bill Process for Transit, Dale Marsico
10:15 a.m. .......................................................... Policymaker Forum, Jeanne Erickson, Region 8 Ambassador, facilitator

Terry Rosapep, FTA Region 8 Administrator, Denver, CO; Darin Berquist, S.D. Secretary of Transportation; Joe Falkenberg, Fall River County Commissioner, South Dakota; Larry Weiss, Pierre City Commissioner, South Dakota; Dale Marsico

11:30 a.m. .......................................................... Recognition Luncheon

Keynote Speaker: Humorist V.J. “The Richest Man in Town”
“United We Travel”
2009 DTA Mid-Year Conference
April 21-22, 2009 • Pierre, SD

Please make your reservations for lodging at the AmericInn Lodge & Suites and Teton Island Conference Center by calling (605) 223-2358 or (800) 396-5007; or the alternate hotel, Holiday Inn Express, at (800) 586-9061 or (605) 223-9045 for reservations. The joint conference will run from 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 21, through noon Wednesday, April 22, 2009. NDDOT and SDDOT transit provider’s breakout sessions will follow the summit Wednesday afternoon.

Send registration and checks to:
DTA, c/o South Central Adult Service Council
PO Box 298
Valley City, ND 58072

Scholarships available for those who are unable to pay registration:
contact Gary Hegland at (701) 231-6436 or e-mail gary.hegland@ndsu.edu.
Conference Speakers

Dale J. Marsico
Dale J. Marsico became executive director of the Community Transportation Association of America in November 1996. The association’s recent legislative efforts have improved community transportation in several important areas like SAFETEA-LU, the Deficit Reduction Act, and in proposed reforms to health and human services programs. During his time at the association, Dale has expanded the services offered by the organization and was the driving force behind the creation of the Community Transportation Development Fund, which finances and invests in community and public transportation.

Prior to coming to the CTA, Dale worked in Texas and helped found the Brazos Transit System, where he played an early and active role in several innovative programs, including partnerships to extend health care and transportation in rural communities.

Terry Rosapep
Terry Rosapep has served as Federal Transit Administration Regional Administrator for Region 8 for one-and-a-half years, providing executive direction to a multidisciplinary staff which delivers FTA’s planning, operating, and capital programs in the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. In his seven years with FTA, he has directed activities in FTA’s headquarters’ offices of Planning and Program Management covering programs that included metropolitan and statewide planning; project management oversight for major transit capital investments; transit safety and security; and United-We-Ride. Overall, Rosapep has over 25 years of transportation-related experience at the local level, including positions with the city of Tucson, city and county of Denver, and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council.

Charles Carr
As director of the Public Transit Division, Charles Carr is responsible for contract management and grants administration activities for all public transit grant programs administered through the Mississippi Department of Transportation. He provides policy guidance to the MDOT executive level staff and also serves as the primary liaison with other state, federal, and local agencies. He has over 20 years of transportation experience; professional affiliations with Community Transportation Association of America’s board of directors; American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials; Standing Committee on Public Transportation; Conference of Minority Transportation Officials; Mississippi Public Transit Association Executive Board; Jackson State University, Technology Transfer Center Advisory Board; National Transportation Consortium of States, as well as several Transportation Cooperative Research Program and National Cooperative Highway Research Program panels.

Jeanne Erickson
Jeanne Erickson has over 25 years of experience in the transit industry. Prior to joining the corps of United We Ride Ambassadors in 2007, she was executive director of the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA). Her expertise in working with transit agency managers, state DOT, and elected and administrative officials at all levels has resulted in significant increases in funding. Colorado transit systems obtained state, federal, and local funding for transit, including discretionary funding for rural, specialized and urban systems. She has expertise in many facets of transportation, including planning, system operations, training program planning, and consulting with transit systems. In November 2007, she was appointed by Gov. Bill Ritter to the Colorado Transportation Commission which oversees the Colorado Department of Transportation.
“25 Years and Rolling On”

DTA 25th Anniversary Fall Conference
*Monday-Wednesday, Sept. 21-23, 2009*

The Radisson Hotel in beautiful downtown Fargo, ND
Located at 201 Fifth St. N.
Fargo, North Dakota
Phone (701) 232-7363

Roadeo • Saturday, Sept. 19

Vendor Show • Sunday-Monday, Sept. 20-21

Pre-conference social gathering at the Fargo Air Museum, Sunday night

Joseph Chapman, president of NDSU, keynote speaker • noon Monday

Tentative Conference Agenda:
Transit Operations Training
FTA Sessions on Increasing Ridership
Annual DTA Awards
Above & Beyond Award by Sure-Lok
Metro Transit Garage Tour
What an exciting time to be in transit or to consider a career in transit! The new stimulus package and authorization are the major topic of conversation wherever you go and with whoever you talk to. We’re all gearing up for shovel-ready capital projects, new vehicles, and, of course, helping support our DOTs through a whole new set of reporting challenges.

I promised to follow up on what a kitchen cabinet is and how it pertains to each of you - or at any rate what my perception is. In the days of President Andrew Jackson, it was a small group of close advisers who informally gathered in the White House kitchen to discuss government business. While the old-time cabinet offered tension between members of the cabinet, my version is a little different – especially since I don’t have the kitchen of the White House for my personal use.

For modern-day transit directors, the kitchen cabinet is still a small group of close friends or colleagues who discuss business and help advise each other on matters of importance. The phrase, “if it matters to you, it matters to me,” is one that we should always use with friends, family, and colleagues. Take a minute and think about those people whose opinions and advice you tend to seek when the going gets tough. It’s usually those same people that you share your victories and successes with. Sitting around the table with our colleagues with some good food is certainly an appealing way to get good work done.

DTA Board members are working extremely hard to make our first summit, “United We Travel,” a great one. Mark April 21-22, 2009, on your calendar for this event which you won’t want to miss. The AmericInn is a beautiful facility both for the Conference Center and the sleeping rooms. We encourage you to continue talking to anyone with an interest in transit about this event. We believe our Open Forum and Policymaker Forum with other supporting events are extraordinary. We’ve invited some great leaders from the transit industry to help us, including Dale Marsico, CTAA executive director; Charles Carr, Mississippi director of the Public Transit Division; Terry Rosapep, Region 8 administrator; and Jeanne Erickson Region 8 United We Ride ambassador.

I recently attended the CTAA Board meeting in Jackson, Mississippi. Charles Carr, Mississippi, is the new president, Ann Gilbert, Arkansas, is the vice president and I have the honor of being selected secretary of CTAA. Nationally, there are many things going on with the stimulus act, authorization, the continuing issue of non-emergency medical transportation, and Medicaid Services. As always, I believe that CTAA, along with APTA and ABA, are doing a great job of leading the industry. The membership of CTAA continues to grow and expand the focus to meet the needs of our industry. If you haven’t got your trip to EXPO planned, please get it on your schedule for June 1-5, 2009.

And, of course, mark Sept. 19-23, 2009, down for the annual conference and rodeo. “25 Years and Rolling” marks the 25th anniversary for DTA. We’ve pulled out the stops and are pumping up the speakers, the entertainment and the rodeo event itself. Stay tuned for more about “25 Years and Rolling Over,” a new addition to the rodeo agenda.

I’m looking forward to a great year with opportunities and challenges for all of us. Remember, your input and information is always welcome in the newsletter. There will be several positions open on the board this year. Become someone who takes the challenge to serve the DTA membership. The more information we share, the better we can support each other and be a class act “kitchen cabinet.” If it matters to you, it matters to me. See you soon.

It’s time to pay your DTA dues!

Go online at www.dakotatransit.org to print a membership form.

Dues are to be sent to DTA, Department 2880, P.O. Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050.
River Cities shares success stories

River Cities Public Transit believes that it is crucial to recognize staff, community members, board members, and other supporters. It uses its annual awards banquet to honor and thank these people for their continued efforts on behalf of RCPT.

Let the Dakota Transit Association (DTA) help you recognize your staff, board members, community leaders, and other supporters. Send us your article sharing how you provide recognition. This allows projects to share ideas with each other while giving your transit agency's award winners an additional opportunity to be publicly recognized. Send your stories to Gary Hegland to be included in future issues of our DTA newsletter.

River Cities Public Transit Awards Banquet

River Cities Public Transit held its annual Christmas party and awards banquet Jan. 17. The decorations and attire for the evening's event followed a Hawaiian theme. River Cities Public Transit (RCPT) took time throughout the evening to recognize board members as well as community leaders in the Pierre and Fort Pierre area.

Laurie Gill, mayor of Pierre, and Sam Tidball, mayor of Fort Pierre, assisted by handing out door prizes throughout the evening.

A prime rib dinner was served to about 150 people attending the evening's event. Ron Baumgart, director of River Cities Public Transit, feels this is a great opportunity for employees and their families to share an evening together and meet board members, community leaders, and supporters of RCPT.

Award winners from the Fall DTA Conference and Roadeo were recognized at the banquet. Lance Kuper took first place, and Walt Haag placed third in the Roadeo. Walt Haag also received the South Dakota Dispatcher of the Year Award.

RCPT also recognizes a Driver of the Year and Office Staff Person of the Year, which are picked by fellow employees, not the management. The Driver of the Year Award went to Dana Hyde, and the Office Staff of the Year was awarded to Kathleen Allison. Both will have the opportunity to attend CTAA's annual conference as part of their award.

Management also recognized Marv Fredericksen with the "I'll Do-er" Award. Marv is one of the RCPT drivers who helps out wherever or whenever needed.

The final award of the evening was to recognize our Friend of River Cities Public Transit. This year's award was presented to SURTC for all of the technical support, training, business plan, and coordination plan development that has provided RCPT with the skills and information to provide public transportation. Gary Hegland accepted the award on SURTC's behalf.
Minot Commission on Aging Transit merges with Souris Basin Transportation

Darrell Francis, Director

As of Jan. 1, the Minot Commission on Aging Transit system merged with Souris Basin Transportation. Souris Basin Transportation covers eight counties in north central North Dakota. The Minot Commission on Aging Transit program provided in-town paratransit service for the city of Minot. Following a March 2007 region-wide transit study, the N.D. Department of Transportation and the local transit providers took the necessary steps to bring about a regionalized transit project.

The initial contacts between the two transit agencies were made in the spring of 2008. After receiving final approval from the board of directors for each of the two organizations, a 90-day window was established to accomplish the merger. We used that time period to implement the necessary transition plans. By unifying the goals and directions of the two transit systems, we were able to effectively merge the two agencies and provide the necessary resources, vehicles, personnel, maintenance, and management under one roof. Overall, the transition went smoothly, with only a few hiccups, and we are now in the process of dealing with our growth and increasing demand for rides.

By combining transit services under one system, we were able to reduce administrative and personnel costs, maintain one office, implement a single dispatch system and operate one maintenance facility. At the same time, we have access to an increased number of vehicles that can be used for new routes and for replacement during vehicle maintenance. Some of the challenges we have experienced have included: employee and driver training; upgrading the phone system; communications; hiring; and dealing with increased ridership.

In 2008, the Minot Commission on Aging Transit system provided approximately 42,000 rides, and Souris Basin Transportation gave approximately 34,000 one-way rides. Our goal for 2009 is 85,000 rides, an increase of 18,000 rides. Through a proposed increased service area and its surrounding housing projects, we will be able to provide more riders with daily service in the near future. However, even without that expansion, during the past 45 days, our ridership has already increased by 15 percent.

The merger would not have been this successful without the support of the community, the employees, and the board of directors of the Minot Commission on Aging and of Souris Basin Transportation, the city of Minot officials, and the N.D. Department of Transportation. We look forward to serving the transit needs of our passengers.

Welcome, Sandy Bohrer
Newly elected DTA board member

Sandy Bohrer
Hazen Busing Project, Hazen, ND

The DTA board hosted members from across the Dakotas and the conversations were great during the last conference. I appreciated the members who took time to inform me of different challenges in their projects. The opportunity to meet with different directors/state officials, and visit with the many issues that face transit is always a valuable learning experience for me. There is nothing better than having the chance to share with others about their challenges and hearing the innovative ideas projects are using to address issues. I’m currently the Hazen city auditor since 2005. Before being hired by the city of Hazen, I worked 13 years for Mercer County, as deputy auditor and then elected as county auditor. My portfolio consists of many hats — city auditor/administrator, transit director, park district clerk, HR administrator, and many more.

I grew up in Zap, ND, and graduated from North Dakota State College of Science, Wahpeton, ND, were I received an associate degree in computer programming.

I’m married to Dwight and have two children (Tara and Stefanie). Tara will graduate from North Dakota State University this December and Stefanie is a junior in high school. Along with that, we are active cattle ranchers/producers. We run an operation of 100 head of registered Gelbvieh cattle. During the spring, you’ll find me in the barn, helping calve, wean and doing chores. In my free time, you’ll likely see me at livestock shows, state and county fairs, attending the girls’ sporting activities, or volunteering in the community.

As a new member of the DTA board, I hope to bring new ideas, and to be a team player working to improve in the transit in the Dakotas. I believe it’s important for transit projects to provide good customers service. I hope to make a positive difference with DTA and to continue a legacy of great leadership.
Northwest Dakota Public Transportation expands services

A.J. Mock, Director
Northwest Dakota Public Transportation (operated by the Williston Council for the Aging) is making additions to the public transit program within Williams, Divide, and McKenzie counties.

In Williston, we have extended our Monday through Friday operating hours and expanded to include Saturdays to better serve low-income people who are going to and from work. We identified that this was an under-served population, and by extending our hours, we expected to see a slight to moderate increase in rides. However, we were surprised to find out that the demand for public transportation was much higher than we anticipated.

We have more than doubled our daily ridership on average, with some days more than tripling our previous daily one-way rides.

This is a significant jump for an organization of our size. In July, we needed only one bus running in Williston. Now, we need at least two or three buses running. We are seeing more demand and are excited to see public transportation growing in a community of our size.

The cause of the dramatic jump is not only the amount of low-income workers riding with us, but we are also finding that the amount of disabled people riding with us has increased, as well as the people who don’t want to warm up their car and drive to work.

By providing more opportunities for people to ride public transportation, we appealed to a much larger demographic than we originally targeted. We are very pleased that we are continuing to see an increase in the amount of people taking advantage of our transit services.

We approached McKenzie County and asked for help with providing public transportation to small communities which did not have public transportation. Previously, we had been operating only within Watford City, and we were looking to expand transportation options to other towns in the area.

The county was very supportive of the idea, so we extended our service to include the communities of Mandaree, Grassy Butte, Keene, Alexander, Arnegard, Trenton, and Buford as well as Fairview, Mont. In addition, we will also be starting a route to New Town. We are excited to give these communities the opportunity to access public transportation.

Federal stimulus spending discussed

The South Dakota Department of Transportation has undertaken a big job. It intends to make sure that all of the federal stimulus money available for transit programs is put to good use throughout the state of South Dakota.

Early in the process when talks first emerged about potential federal stimulus funding, the SDDOT asked its transit providers to put together a list of needs that up to this point had been unable to be met with existing funds.

They took the list of those requests and evaluated them while still waiting to hear official word about funding. Once it became apparent that the federal funding was going to be released to the states, they were ready to proceed with those requests.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation will be constructing seven new bus barns ranging in size from one stall up to structures that will house multiple vehicles.

It has also approved additions to four previously constructed bus barn facilities. It has been working on getting all of the required environmental documents for building projects to the Federal Transit Administration, so when it is time to obligate the funds, it will be ready to do so.

Fifty vehicles will be purchased for transit systems throughout the state of South Dakota. Some of the vehicles will be purchased through previous bid specifications. The SDDOT is also looking at piggybacking on other state’s existing contracts with bus manufacturers. For any vehicles that they are not able to find a bid specification for, they will do a traditional bid letting.

In order to accomplish these capital purchases, they will have to incorporate some of their existing Section 5309 funds. According to Jackie Mattheis from the SDDOT, “We anticipate having all the stimulus funds under grant by the end of this federal fiscal year.”

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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, NDSU, Dept. 2880, P.O. Box 6050, Fargo ND 58108-6050. We also welcome your comments about the newsletter.

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