

# Transit Tidbits



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## Board Members Positions Opening

The Dakota Transit Association has two board positions we will need to fill at the Fall Conference.

Karrie Mikkelsen, North Dakota and Tom Wanttie, South Dakota have filled their first terms with the board.

Both of these two individuals can serve another term.

- Jacque Senger, DTA Executive Director

## See Something Say Something

Brenda Schweitzer, Executive Director

Brookings Area Transit Authority - Brookings, SD

I'm not telling this audience anything you don't know. As transit providers, we have the extra set of eyes, (or 20), that scan a community every minute of whatever timeframe our operation is in service. We have been trained in various opportunities on what to look for, whether it's from the ND Safety Council, SURTC, local law enforcement, etc.

You couple our eyes with the compassion for those we serve, and we will say something when we see something. We know routines, habits and behaviors. If something isn't right, we do say something. Like a few weeks ago, when the safety of one of our passengers who depends on an electric scooter seemed to be increasingly jeopardized. We knew he was falling from the scooter, unable to get back up without help. His trusty furry friend, never leaving his side. See something, say something.

We documented this concern and provided this to Social Services. They listen to us. Confirmation of the report was provided to us. In the days that followed, 'Joe' did check with the local assisted living facility. No vacancy.

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## Reporting

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Perhaps you heard about the devastating loss of an almost three-year-old due to malnutrition, dehydration and neglect. This happened in Brookings. Yes, Brookings. Our compassionate drivers and

dispatchers took requests and stopped to pick up a five-year-old several times a week for pre-school. This little girl always came out to greet the driver without ever raising a concern or flag that something wasn't right in that home.

After this devastating discovery, our drivers tried to conceive how they missed this. "I was halfway up the sidewalk the other day; if only I would've gotten to the door." No, good driver, the police department assured us that we would've never known. Perhaps the five-year old didn't know, as the innocent little one was hidden in a secret room. This situation has prompted many conversations, assurances from law enforcement and given us an opportunity to provide some grief counseling; not the first time.

Back to 'Joe'. Always prompt and dependable, he wasn't ready for his Monday appointment. Door was open. No Joe. He had a 9:00 AM appointment. Driver communication was swift and with concern. Management contacted the clinic to verify no cancellation was made for the appointment. From there we called law enforcement. The search was on for 'Joe'. All day. We are only assuming that some good summer sweet corn sounded good.

Our humble passenger was found, just off his scooter, in a corn field with his trusty furry friend. Most likely this last ride happened on Friday. It was our caring staff of public transit that prompted the original concern for his well-being, only to be the ones to also prompt the search. RIP, 'Joe'.

Just the other day we had the Chief of Police in our office. It was the perfect opportunity to remind his team that we are the extra eyes of the community, and to use us as a resource as possibly needed. Not every report will have a positive outcome, however, we'll continue to advocate for our passengers in the best way possible. See something, say something.

### **Training Update - Linda Freeman, PASS Coordinator**

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A special note regarding PASS Certification.

CTAA has changed the PASS Certification from 3 years to 2 years effective January 1, 2019. This means that you will need to attend recertification classes every 2 years if you attended PASS Class or PASS Recertification Class after January 1, 2019. For now, Defensive Driving and Maltreatment Awareness Classes are still good for 3 years.

As of now, there are no new classes scheduled. I look forward to seeing all of you at the DTA Conference in Dickinson!

# Burgum Appoints Former Wyoming DOT Director Panos to Lead ND Department of Transportation



**BISMARCK, N.D. (AUG. 16, 2019) –**

Gov. Doug Burgum today appointed former Wyoming Department of Transportation director William T. Panos to lead the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT), citing his extensive leadership experience and long history of managing major infrastructure projects and large organizations.

Panos served as Wyoming’s DOT director from 2015 to 2019 under then-Gov. Matt Mead and as director of the Wyoming Department of School Facilities from 2013 to 2015. Prior to that, he served as director for the City and Port of West Sacramento, Calif., for six years and as construction executive for the state of Washington for five years, controlling and managing over 220 large-scale construction projects annually.

“Bill Panos brings a wealth of experience as a transformational leader for large-scale organizations, with a career spanning city, state, university and private-sector roles,” Burgum said. “Under his guidance, the North Dakota Department of Transportation will continue to embrace innovation, enhance services and

provide smart, efficient infrastructure for the traveling public in an environment affected by rapid technological change.”

Panos’ career history includes experience as a state agency director for the William T. Panos Commonwealth of Massachusetts and special advisor to the chancellor for the California State University System. He also worked in the private sector for TRW Inc. for 10 years in its defense and automotive business units. Most recently, he served as county administrator in Lake County, Ill. Panos will assume his duties with the NDDOT by Oct. 21.

“It is an honor to lead the North Dakota Department of Transportation. I appreciate Governor Burgum’s confidence and the opportunity to serve the people of North Dakota,” Panos said. “In this role, I look forward to improving our infrastructure, the use of innovative technology, and improving our state’s economy through enhanced transportation systems.”

Panos earned a bachelor’s degree in forensic science from California State University at Long Beach. He has served as a board member for both the Intelligent Transportation Society of America and the National Operations Center of Excellence, chaired the National Committee on Transportation System Operations, and was a board member of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

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## Panos

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Burgum expressed his gratitude for the excellent leadership provided by NDDOT Deputy Director of Engineering Ron Henke, who has served as the agency's interim director since former director Tom Sorel retired in April.

The NDDOT has 982 employees and a biennial budget of \$1.4 billion to build and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system consisting of approximately 8,622 miles of roadway and 1,722 bridges. It oversees the development of surface transportation including highways, bridges, transit, pedestrian and bicycle paths across the state. Annually, the department processes more than 1 million vehicle registrations and serves over 500,000 licensed drivers at branch offices located throughout North Dakota. The NDDOT is an innovative and progressive organization that has a team of employees working hard across the state to carry out the department's mission to safely move people and goods.



**South Dakota  
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## Hall of Honor Banquet Date Set for Ron Baumgart of Pierre

PIERRE, S.D. – Ron Baumgart of Pierre is being inducted into the South Dakota Transportation Hall of Honor.

A banquet, hosted by the Transportation Hall of Honor Committee, will be held in Ron's honor on Thursday, Sept. 5, 2019, at Drifters Bar and Grill in Fort Pierre. Festivities will begin at 5:30 p.m. CDT with dinner at 6 p.m. followed by a program at 7 p.m.

Cost of the banquet is \$30 with payment requested in advance. Reservations can be made by contacting Kari Kroll at 605.773.5105 no later than Sept. 2.

Ron has spent the past 18 years as the Director of River Cities Public Transit (RCPT) in Pierre. His contribution to the transit industry is unparalleled and he has spent his career looking for new ways to improve the transit systems across the state of South Dakota. As a leader, Ron has received national awards for his success in integrating his business principles into rural public transit. Ron's passion for low-cost, high-value public transit is reflected in the continued success of RCPT. Ron's determination to secure funding from a variety of sources helped him realize his vision of reliable public transit for everyone, but especially veterans and those with disabilities.

*Thought for the  
Month of September...*

*“Sometimes it takes me all day to  
get nothing done.”*

**DTA**  
Dakota Transit  
Association

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Thanks to all!

- Jacque

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