

ISSUE

101

May
2020

DTA
Dakota Transit
Association

Transit Tidbits



this issue

Passport **P.1**

DTA Conference **P.2**

Updates **P.3**

Training **P.4**

**Dakota Transit
Association's
Fall Rodeo
and Conference**

Watertown, SD

September 12
through
September 15, 2020

Ramkota Hotel
and
Watertown Event
Center

605-886-8011

Welcome to the Pandemic World A totally new experience for all of us!

Susan Fossen, Director

Benson County Transportation - Maddock, ND

At Benson County Transportation we began safety measures immediately. After considering all options, we felt it was the wisest decision to suspend scheduled trips further than a 60-mile radius, unless for a very necessary medical appointment.

Considering the time spent in the vehicle together (up to possibly 7 hours driving time), having no place at the destinations to eat or have passengers wait for return trip, it was in our best interest.

We began screening passengers by asking if they're not feeling well not to ride. We also asked each of them to wear a mask. Drivers began wearing masks also. At the end of trip, we wipe down the bus with sanitizer. We currently are still implementing these measures and will re-address these issues as time passes.

See PANDEMIC, page 2

Pandemic

Continued from Page 1

We continue to provide necessary medical, shopping trips and have done a few grocery deliveries. Otherwise passengers are playing it safe by staying home. Our trips are reduced but we are glad people are listening to the guidance provided by professionals.

We hope everyone is safe and well! So long from Maddock, ND.

DTA Board of Directors

Jacque Senger, DTA Executive Director

Your DTA Board met and has agreed to continue preparations for the DTA Conference entitled “Navigating the Future”. The registration forms will be placed on the DTA website prior to the end of May.

We will continue to monitor COVID-19 and reserve the right to cancel the meeting if necessary. If the conference is cancelled, all registration fees paid will be refunded in full. We appreciate everyone’s understanding in this matter.

COVID-19

What have you done to our world?

Terry Hoffman, DTA Board Member

Friday the 13th took on an entirely different meaning in my world this past March. Already reeling from the realization, the pandemic, I had tried so diligently to ignore was staring me in the face, my wife and I were waiting to board a fully-loaded plane headed back to South Dakota from Arizona. What on earth is happening in our slightly less than perfect little world?

Our flight to the desert a week prior had been filled with college aged students heading for warmer climates and an unfilled spring break. The trip home was eerily silent. At some point, I had the audacity to cough into my sleeve and instantly felt the disgust – or was it fear – in the eyes of everyone near me.

Instead of returning rested and tanned from our week basking in the Arizona sun while cheering for our daughter’s college softball team, the wife and I were deep in thought, wondering just where this was all going and how our lives were about to change.

See COVID, page 3

COVID

Continued from Page 2

The weeks following our return were just as uneasy, pondering daily whether I had been in contact with anyone infected and if we had in fact brought the virus home to our families or co-workers. Many of you likely experienced similar situations prior to our states feeling the full impact of COVID-19.

In South Dakota, transit providers were affected in phases – first feeling the affects of losing the ridership of our youth when schools were temporarily closed. I continued to be in denial, scoffing at my staff when one suggested school was likely done for the year. No way is this thing going to win. Shortly after, my daughter informed us they were going to on-line classes and were being forced to leave campus for at least three weeks.

In South Dakota, transit providers were asked to submit situational reports three times per week for two weeks before changing to weekly submittals. In hind-sight, the reports were actually very helpful when assessing our situation and what other methods of safety could we incorporate to protect our riders and our drivers.

“North Dakota has been about the same with relatively the same numbers,” said Minot City Transportation Director and current DTA President Brian Horinka. “In the beginning I was limited in my travel by the city of Minot, but those restrictions have been loosened in the last few weeks.”

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. took the same precautions as most – practicing social distancing, screening passengers on their current health conditions, making masks mandatory for drivers and passengers alike, daily health checks of all employees prior to signing in, regular cleaning of all transit vehicles and the facility and limiting the number of vehicles being used in the rotation. Most if not all projects have been transporting for “essential purposes” only. This refers to medical, nutrition and employment related trips and does not include a quick trip to the local convenience store as some were inclined to schedule. We recently finished installing hand sanitizer dispensers on all of our buses and barriers between van drivers and passengers.

All administrators have been inundated with information from a plethora of sources on how to combat the virus and keep your business and patrons safe from its affects. We chose to take our information from the FTA, CDC and state and local government issued rulings and put our own additional touches to the list. We literally have binders full of information on how to protect ourselves and our riders, information regarding financial issues such as lost revenue (current and projected), daily health check charts of employees, documentation on the health of employees prior to and during the pandemic and more. We jokingly talk about adding a COVID-19 wing to our new office space in our Watertown facility just for storage of documents.

See COVID, page 4

COVID

Continued from Page 3

Northeast South Dakota have been relatively quiet as far as positive COVID-19 cases. Codington County (Watertown area) had 14 cases with only one still active. Roberts (Sisseton) and Day (Webster area) counties have just recently seen an uptick in positive cases of the virus.

The latest stats from the Dakota's show South Dakota with similar numbers. South Dakota has had 3,663 positive cases, 1,315 active cases, 74 currently hospitalized and 39 deaths. North Dakota has logged 1,464 positive tests, with 34 currently in the hospital and 35 deaths. Sioux Falls has been the hot spot in South Dakota and Fargo/Moorhead are in North Dakota.

The bottom line for all of us in transit has been to continue providing the safest, most efficient and affordable ride possible for those passengers still needing our service. This activity has put many of our drivers on the "front-lines" of the battle and truly in harm's way.

By following the guidelines suggested by our local, state and federal sources, transit providers have been able to weather the COVID-19 storm. Collectively, we have gained valuable knowledge from the situation – knowledge we can hopefully refer to when the next crises rolls in.

The following is the official protocol adopted by Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc.

These items did not all happen at once, but were compiled as situations changed and new information was gained. Sources include the FTA, SDDOT, CDC, county commissions, city councils, medical facilities and other various resources.

CTWSI—COVID-19 Guidelines

1. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19; if you have a temperature; if you have a cough; if you have shortness of breath – Please notify your physician/health care facility at once. And please seek an alternative mode of transportation.
2. If you ride a Community Transit vehicle, please wear a mask or get one from the driver if you don't have your own.
3. If riding in a bus, please practice "social distancing" and sit at least six feet from the driver or any other passengers who may already be on board.
4. If riding in an ADA van or 7-passenger mini-van, please do not enter the front seat next to the driver. Sit in the back of the van – to the right of the driver if possible.

See COVID, page 5

COVID

Continued from Page 4

Drivers

1. Drivers must wear a mask when transporting passengers – no exceptions.
2. Drivers shall offer masks to anyone who boards a transit vehicle. They must wear one.
3. Practice good hygiene by washing hands often for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
4. Practice social distancing with your passengers to the best of your ability.
5. Clean and disinfect your transit vehicle as often as possible. i.e. in between trips or at the end of your shift.

Dispatchers/Receptionists

1. When taking calls for reservations, we have been cleared by the FTA and DOT to ask the following questions:
 - a. If you are booking a ride for medical purposes, you shall ask what the trip is specifically for.
 - b. Do you have a fever?
 - c. Do you have shortness of breath?
 - d. Do you have a cough?
 - e. If they answer yes to these questions, inform the caller they need to contact their physician/medical facility for instructions and seek an alternate form of transportation.

All Transit Employees

1. All employees are required to fill out a health check list each day before reporting for work. This includes answering the following questions:
 - a. Do you have a temperature?
 - b. Do you have a cough?
 - c. Do you have a sore throat?
 - d. Are you short of breath?
 - e. Have you had contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?
 - f. Take and record your temperature before reporting for duty or when arriving at the transit facility.
2. All employees, no matter what position they occupy, shall practice safe distance procedures, practice good hygiene and clean equipment as often as possible or at least at the end of each shift.
3. If employees are feeling ill or experiencing any of the above symptoms, they shall not report for work.
4. If employees knowingly come in contact with anyone known to have COVID-19 or have any symptoms of the virus, they shall report to administrators and not report for work.
5. Any employees suspected of coming in contact with a COVID-19 carrier or suspected carrier shall be removed from duty and asked to self-quarantine for 14-days (with pay) or until test for COVID-19 on the suspected carrier is tested and the results are negative.

Training Update - Linda Freeman, PASS Coordinator

Phone: 701-848-6480 E-mail: lindaafreeman1@gmail.com

As you are all aware, we have had to postpone the **Spearfish, Valley City** and **Minot** classes because of the Coronavirus. We will be rescheduling these classes when we are able. As of now, the other classes are still on our schedule.

Pierre

Tuesday, June 23, 2020-Thursday, June 25, 2020

Full PASS, PASS Recertification being offered June 23-24

Defensive Driving will be offered on the 25th if needed

Trainers will be Adam Sharkey and Andy Sharp. Hotel information will be on the DTA web site and in the tidbits at a later date.

Dickinson

Thursday, July 23-Saturday, July 25, 2020

Full PASS, PASS Recertification, Defensive Driving, and Maltreatment Awareness being offered.

PASS—July 23 & 24 from 9 am to 5:00 pm

PASS Recertification—July 24 from 9 am to 5:00 pm

Maltreatment Awareness—July 25 from 8am to 11am.

Defensive Driving—July 25 from 11 am to 3pm

Hotel Information: Comfort Inn of Bismarck – 493 Elk Drive. Phone-701-264-7300. You will need to call to make your reservation under the Dakota Transit Association Block to get state rates. Block is set up for nights of July 22, 23 & 24th. Deadline for motel reservation is July 10th.

Aberdeen

Monday, December 28-Tuesday, December 29, 2020

Full PASS and PASS Recertification offered

PASS—December 28 & 29 from 9am to 5pm

PASS Recertification—December 29 from 9am to 5pm

Hotel information and class location to be determined at a later date.

Other Proposed Classes that have not been scheduled for certain yet:

Brookings Late July—PASS & PASS Recertification

Bismarck Early October—All 3 classes

Other classes besides those scheduled and proposed can be arranged by contacting Linda by phone or e-mail.

Keep safe and kudos to you for providing your services during this hard time!

*Thought for the
Month of May...*

*“Do what is RIGHT,
not what is EASY.”*

DTA
Dakota Transit
Association

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Thanks to all!

- Jacque

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