



TRANSIT TIDBITS

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October 2020

Randy Hartman Retires from Sioux Area Metro, Sioux Falls, SD

Terry Hoffman, Director

Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton Inc.
Watertown, SD

Like many administrators in public transit, Randy Hartman began his transit career as a driver. Nearly three decades later, the soft-spoken Hartman is retiring as General Manager at Sioux Area Metro in Sioux Falls. Hartman's career in public transit included time spent as a part-time driver, a trainer, a union leader, a safety director and finally the manager position.

He has also served as president and vice-president during his eight years on the Dakota Transit Association's Board of Directors. "I knew absolutely nothing about the DTA until Karen Walton from our office got involved in the organization," said Hartman. "Apparently it just wasn't important enough to my predecessors. When Karen left, I was approached about filling her board position and I accepted." Hartman leaves public transit and the DTA board with the respect of his peers, a fact he is enormously proud of.

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HARTMAN

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As a union vice-president, he felt he maintained an excellent relationship with the employees which carried over when he became general manager of the transit system. "I always had an open-door policy and was very transparent about everything," said Hartman. During his time on the board, he was often looked to for guidance on policy. His calm demeanor was valued by everyone. "I've had the privilege of working with Randy for the past 8 plus years and his professionalism, caring attitude and kindness have affected all of us," said DTA Executive Director Jacque Senger. "I am a better person for having had the opportunity to work alongside of him."



Brian Horinka, DTA Board President, is congratulating Randy Hartman on a job well done. Randy has served on the DTA Board of Directors for 8 years. We wish him well on his retirement.

"The transit system people in general and specifically the DTA members have been family to me and I will miss them," said Hartman. "The people I have had the opportunity to associate with has been the highlight of my career." Like any family, not everyone is agreeable to every situation and those differences often lead to lively discussion and debate.

There have been many strong personalities on the DTA board during his tenure and Hartman said there were tough decisions to be made at times, but all have had the best interests of public transit at heart, "We have all had differing opinions at time, but we all need each other," said Hartman. "The board is always open to listening to new ideas.

We need to get membership more involved, be more active." One constant in Hartman's career in public transit, has been the difficulty of securing enough funding to operate a transit system which meets the needs of the people. There have never been enough funds to meet those needs and he does not see that changing

anytime soon. "Times are tough in the transit world, but we need to keep trying to find new funding sources," said Hartman. "We need to find ways to pay drivers what they deserve to be paid."

Anyone who knows Hartman understands he will not be sitting still for long. In fact, he says there have already been offers made to entice him back into the profession as a driver, a trainer and more. Eventually, yes, we may see him in public transit again, but for the moment he intends to kick back and enjoy his retirement. "Doors have opened, but for now I just want to relax, take a deep breath and see what happens."

Training Update

Linda Freeman (701) 848-6480

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Devils Lake – Devils Lake has requested a class there. The plan is to wait until COVID in ND settles down some before we schedule this class.

Aberdeen – Monday, December 28 through Tuesday, December 29, 2020 with 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 classes besides those scheduled and proposed can be arranged by contacting Linda by phone or e-mail.

Really enjoyed seeing those of you who attended the DTA Conference in Watertown! Stay well and be safe!

Aberdeen - South Dakota's First Dementia Friendly Community

Tom Wanttie - Aberdeen, SD

Jessica Rehder and Charity Pionk discussed how dementia is affecting our riders and what we could do to possibly assist them more than our regular passengers. They talked about the use of the Reasonable Modification to provide this higher service.

The presenters were able to bring a different perspective on an ever-increasing disease that affects many of our passengers and brought out many stories from the participants and what they have been through with loved ones. They talked about how Aberdeen has been named the first city in South Dakota to be a Dementia Friendly Community and what can be done to do the same for your community.

Overall, I thought the session brought out some emotions from participants and got many of us thinking about what we can do to help those with dementia.

2020 DTA Roadeo

Tom Wanttie, Roadeo Marshall - Aberdeen, SD

The 2020 DTA Roadeo started out with driver training on wheelchair securement with Adam Sharkey and Andy Sharp River Cities Public Transit as the instructors. There were 12 first time drivers at the Roadeo, so again the training was well received. We had 33 drivers, of which, four were from North Dakota. We changed things up a bit this year by adding a 30-minute training session for the drivers on Human Trafficking. The flow of the Roadeo seemed to run even smoother than in past years, due to smaller groups and the additional session. Being able to have the Roadeo on the grounds of the convention site certainly helped with the ease of things. COVID may have hurt our number of participants, but those that were present certainly had a good time and hopefully sharpened their daily skills. Thank you to everyone that volunteered to judge the Roadeo, we could not do it without you. Congratulations to the winners:

North Dakota

- 1st – Terry Holland, West River Transit
- 2nd – Dustin Limburg, South Central Adult Service Council
- 3rd – Stevenson St. Louis, South Central Service Council
- 4th – Larry Moser, James River Transit



South Dakota

- 1st – Lee Moseley, River Cities Public Transit
- 2nd – Kristine Madsen, Brookings Area Transit Authority
- 3rd – Jeff Howen, River Cities Public Transit
- 4th – Wambli Meeter, River Cities Public Transit
- 5th – Joe Malmassari, River Cities Public Transit



Dakota Transit Association Fall Rodeo & Conference was a Huge Success

Jacque Senger, Executive Director DTA

Our DTA Rodeo began on Saturday morning with a cloud covered sky and a few sprinkles. Nothing that our rodeo drivers and judges could not work with. We had 33 drivers and 40 judges. Our rodeo ran very smoothly. We added another segment this year, “Human Trafficking Awareness 101: Basic Training.” This course was offered to the rodeo drivers. This training session was incorporated into the rodeo competition as a part of the rotation of driver’s groups. The Board of Director’s received positive feedback on this addition.

The Rodeo Banquet was very nicely done. Tom Wanttie, Rodeo Marshall, was the MC for the awards. Tom Wanttie has the award winners listed in his article.

Sunday morning began with the Hallelujah Hooligans for a delightful start of the day. Awards were presented as follows:

- ND Driver of the Year: Terry Holland - West River Transit, Bismarck
- ND Outstanding Support Staff: Glen Peterson - James River Transit, Jamestown
- SD Driver of the Year: Dave Gabel - River Cities Public Transit, Pierre
- SD Outstanding Support Staff: Kelvin Boschee - Aberdeen Ride Line, Aberdeen
- SD Friend of Transit: Randy Tupper - Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc., Watertown
- SD Above and Beyond: Brian Nye - Prairie Hills Transit, Spearfish
- SD Agency of the Year: Community Transit of Watertown-Sisseton, Inc.

We had a session Sunday morning on “Difficult Decisions: Policies vs. Day-to-Day Practices.”

After an afternoon of leisure, we headed into the Dakota Dome for our Dakota Transit Association Welcome Reception. Rick Senger provided easy listening music while we sat around and visited and of course, had munchies.



Monday, we began with a DTA Welcome and General Membership Meeting. Minutes of the meeting are on the DTA Website. We had three great sessions; “Human Trafficking Awareness”, “Succession Planning and Mentoring” and “Communication Strategies for Managers”.

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CONFERENCE

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Tuesday our sessions topics were “Managing the New Workforce”, “Aberdeen - South Dakotas First Dementia Friendly Community” and a virtual presentation “Ask the Experts”. We appreciated all our speakers/presenters as they gave our membership new ideas to take home and incorporate in their transit projects.

We had a very well represented vendor show. There were 24 vendors from all parts of our country. The vendors brought with them new products and ideas to share with all the transit agencies. Most of our vendors have been supporting DTA for many years and look forward to seeing their transit friends in the Dakotas.

We will continue with articles from our DTA Conference in our November Tidbit.

A Big Thank You to all Vendors

Barb Cline - Spearfish, SD

The 2020 Trade Show was well attended by eighteen vendors despite travel restrictions from many companies. I was respectful of each company’s inability to travel due to their corporate policy, stated Barb Cline, Tradeshow Coordinator.

All in all, the vendor support was amazing and both sponsorships and advertising were the best they have been in years. Ecolane sponsored the Trade Show social and Q’Straint/Sure-Lok sponsored securement training with pizza and soda. Rodeo box lunches were provided for drivers and judges by Safe Fleet during the Rodeo. Our special evening event for drivers was sponsored by LiquidSpring, LLC on Saturday evening.

Lunches were sponsored on Monday and Tuesday by Cobbs Allen and North Central Bus & Equipment, Inc., with breaks on those days sponsored by other vendors.

Thank you to National RTAP, Freedman Seating and Harlow’s Bus Sales. Inc, for sending materials because you were unable to attend. Freedman gave two \$50.00 gift cards and Altro USA offered a drawing remotely because they were unable to attend. National RTAP, Altro USA, GMV Syncromatics, and Rocky Mountain ADA Center all purchased ads because they were unable to attend.

Several TV’s and door prizes were given because of the generosity of our vendors. Thank you all for another successful event. I hope you enjoyed attending as much as I enjoyed working with the vendors to get their participation. With vendor booths, ads, and sponsorships we received over \$15,000.00 for DTA which is a significant amount.

Difficult Decisions

Presented by
Carol Wright Kenderdine,
**Assistant Vice President of Transportation &
Mobility - Easterseals, Inc.**
Terry Hoffman - Watertown, SD

Writing effective and sensible policy for any organization is one thing. Enforcing those policies as part of your day-to-day practice has led many to perform some vigorous head scratching exercises.

No matter how much thought and debate is put into the policy making process, in the end, very little is black and white. In fact, one quote I heard when I first began working is transit was “there is no black and white in transit, everything is gray.”

Ten years of management as an assistant director and director have done nothing to change my thoughts on such statements. Carol Wight Kenderdine shared her thoughts and experiences with those gathered at the 2020 Dakota Transit Association’s annual fall conference in Watertown last month.

“Policies and procedures are the backbone of your agency’s operations,” Kenderdine told the crowd of driver, dispatchers and administrators gathered in the Heritage Theater on Sunday morning. “They will help determine appropriate actions and reactions, establish a consistent level of service and protect your staff and riders.”

Kenderdine is certainly no secret to the Dakota Transit Association and its membership. The North Dakota native currently serves as the Director of Easterseals Transportation Group, serves as the Director of the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center and is a nationally recognized speaker and trainer on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

During her time in the Midwest, she was the Associate Director of the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center (SURTC) and Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University and holds multiple degrees from NDSU.

Consistency with policies and the way they are communicated and enforced are critical she said. Perhaps the most important factor in your consistency is for defense in case of lawsuits. Your policies should also provide for equal treatment with staff members as well as customers. Be sure to establish and communicate policies through riders’ guides, dispatcher instructions, your website and social media outlets and through driver discretion. Ask yourself if there are ways to improve these communications.

She discussed rider policies which cause conflict, many of which have been encountered by those in attendance.

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DECISIONS

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“Refusal of service, number of packages and assistance provided, fare payment, strollers, door-to-door versus curb-to-curb service are just a few of the policy issues you have likely dealt with,” said Kenderdine. “Poor hygiene, intoxicated passengers, foul language and wait time are also common issues which you want to have policy on.”



Keeping abreast of issues and complaints from the drivers regarding passengers is a classic indicator of needing to review and possibly revise current policy. Monitoring customer feedback can be a valuable tool when determining policy. Policy work is never done.... ever!

“Engage your employees by focusing on the company vision,” she said. “Every employee must be able to see how they fit into the big picture. How does their role contribute to the mission and the vision of the agency?”

Kenderdine also talked of the importance of customer service to transit projects. Making a first impression can last a lifetime with passengers. She stressed the importance of hiring the right people for the profession. When hiring begin with the premise of attitudes matter the most.

Other questions all transit employees should ask themselves include, what do my riders worry about? What don't they know about using the bus? How can I alleviate their concerns? What can we do about our service to improve their ride? Perhaps the biggest question should be - do the rules change driver to driver?

“Customer service and policies and procedure have everything to do with each other,” said Kenderdine. “You are responsible for knowing the policy and procedure and implementing them consistently. What one does for a customer everyone should be doing.”

The number one area where conflicts tend to occur involves *ADA Reasonable Modification*. Reasonable modification rules and regulations state transit systems must modify their policies to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. As always there are exceptions to every rule. Variations from this policy are accepted if the modified policy results in an undue burden or a fundamental alteration put on the transit system or a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

“You need to educate everyone at your agency about Reasonable Modification,” said Kenderdine. “When everyone is well trained and operating on the same page, they can be confident in the decisions they make in the field.”

Tidbit Articles

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Address

Directors, please check with your bookkeepers as well as the rest of your staff to assure they have the correct DTA mailing address.

Thanks to all!

- Jacque

www.dakotatransit.org

Thought for the month of October 2020

“Be kind, everyone is fighting a battle of some kind.”



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DTA Executive Director

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