



TRANSIT TIDBITS

Issue
111

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Rabbit Ride Program

Brenda Schweitzer, Executive Director
BATA - Brookings, SD

In 2006 Safe Ride was established in the Brookings area for a “safe ride home” for the University Students and community. This has been a great collaboration with SDSU’s Wellness Center, the Student Association and supported by the local law enforcement and community.

As with most programs, a review and update can help bring new life and focus to it. The Wellness Center and Student Association took this opportunity to change the name to Rabbit Ride and updated the logo.

Attached is a video link you can click on and view the entire broadcast.

<https://www.dakotane.wsnow.com/2021/02/26/ride-service-in-brookings-receives-an-an-update/>

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As of today, we have received a total of 36 Memberships.

4 Associate Memberships

- ◇ 1 SDDOT
- ◇ 1 NDDOT
- ◇ 1 Vendor - Gerflor
- ◇ 1 SURTC

9 SD 2021 Memberships

20 ND 2021 Memberships

3 2022 Paid Memberships

- ◇ Cavalier County, ND
- ◇ Kidder County, ND
- ◇ Walsh County, ND

If you have misplaced your 2021 DTA Membership Form, please contact me. It would be nice to have all our transit agencies support DTA.

Rides

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As with most media reports, some detailed information was not included—this Rabbit Ride program is run only on Friday and Saturday evenings from 9:00 PM to 2:30 AM and is free to passengers. Not all transportation here is free. The Tap Ride App is new to the program as highlighted. Securing the app was a move to draw more interest to the service and work with student’s technology demands. The ridership numbers for this program have ebbed and flowed over the years, with the past few years being low – of course, Covid was the greatest impact over the past year. Many factors come into play with this ridership to include:

- Economy
- Culture of the current student population
- Lyft has played a factor in it to a degree
- Weather!

As mentioned, the collaboration is deeply appreciated. We are also working to secure buses for a campus transit system that has been in the works for 14 years. More to follow on that!

Training Update

Linda Freeman (701) 848-6480

lindaafreeman1@gmail.com

We have PASS, PASS Recertification and Defensive Driving classes set up at Devils Lake. See the information below. You can register for the classes on the DTA web site. PASS, PASS Recertification, and the Defensive Driving classes are all new.

Devils Lake – May 7 & 8, 2021

PASS—Friday, May 7 from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm and Saturday, May 8 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING—Friday, May 7 from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm.

PASS RECERTIFICATION—Saturday, May 8 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Registration Deadline for classes is April 19. All classes will be held at the Devils Lake Senior Center at 202 4th Ave. NE in Devils Lake.

A block of rooms at state rates has been set up under the name Dakota Transit Association for the nights of May 6 and May 7, 2021 at the Fireside Inn & Suites – 215 Hwy 2 East. You will need to call 701-662-6760 before April 30th to make your reservations under the block.

IMPORTANT: Please contact me via phone or email if you would like to host a class during 2021. Thank You!

Keep up the great work you all do so well!

Nutrition United Inc.

Larry Leonard, Director
Nutrition United Inc. - ND

How does a transit organization end up with a corporate name like Nutrition United? Well, it all started a long time ago, in a County far, far up north. In 1973, various organizations in Rolette County began exploring the possibility of having a nutrition program in, which was quite a challenge as it has made the top 50 counties list in the country when it comes to poverty level. Roger Wetzel, who was then the Regional Aging Services Coordinator, shared several specific requirements and questions to think about.

In 1975, this led to the formation of a single organization to develop a nutrition program. The organization that formed as a result was Nutrition United, Inc., incorporated on May 27th, 1975. Nutrition United began services on May 25, 1977 with the Rolette County Meals Program (RCMP). Across the line RCMP meant something else, not that transit would ever want to tangle with the Mounties, those old 440 Dodges were good for a buck forty and change.

The year 1978 brought expansion of services for Nutrition United with the provision of transportation services. Rides started on November 14th, 1978. The first vehicle was a 1973 Ford van that was received by Nutrition United in a transfer of inventory from the Golden Age Mini-Bus Project which was no longer being operated due to the dissolution of the Rolette County Senior Citizens Council, one of the agencies involved with the development of Nutrition services and were already in the transit business before the formation of Nutrition United.

This small (for the time) van was among the 1st handicapped equipped vehicles of this type purchased in the state of North Dakota by an operation such as ours. Funds for this purchase was actually provided thru the Older Americans Act. The idea for a handicapped vehicle came from the old Ironsides TV program (was that Raymond Burr's role before or after Perry Mason?). Expansion of services contributed to evolving Rolette County Meals Program into



the Rolette County Senior Meals and Services programs and the Rolette County Transit program, (had thought about Rolette Area Transit, but wasn't so hip on the acronym).

See VAN, page 5

Van

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In 1979 Nutrition United purchased its second vehicle, a 1979 Dodge van with a grant from the State Highway Department with UMTA funds (remember those), which started us down the path with what is now FTA.

Fast forward to the present and unfortunately, we're still an economically challenged area, far away from many of major centers, but still filled with that same desire to overcome that by getting folks where they need to go, covering a quarter of a million miles a year (and wearing out a vehicle) in the process.

Another challenge in our area is a high rate of Diabetes/Kidney Disease. When we first started transporting to Dialysis, they had four machines operating 3 days a week. Now they have a dozen running six days a week, and there's still a demand. We actually think of this as a local ride even though the clients may be coming from an hour away. We're heading southeast a couple days a week connecting to Grand Forks and Fargo and Southwest a couple more days to Minot and Bismarck. This is just some of the scheduled stuff, still carrying on the mission that began almost 50 years ago with that first van.

Spring Virtual Meeting

Jacque Senger, DTA Executive Director

The Dakota Transit Association has been looking into different ways to get more information about transit issues out to the General Membership. After much discussion and planning, the following is what we have come up with.

April 22, 2021 the Dakota Transit Association is hosting a Spring Virtual Meeting with our host being Scott Bogren. Our moderator will be Tom Wanttie handling all the technical issues that go with the virtual meeting along with introductions. This meeting will commence at 1:00 CST and last approximately 90 minutes.

The topic is "Covid Recovery".

If anyone has any specific questions for Scott, please email him directly, bogren@ctaa.org stating 2021 DTA Spring Virtual Meeting. He would like questions sent to him a week prior to the meeting.

You will receive the information you need to log into the virtual meeting the first part of April along with a reminder a few days prior to the meeting.

Tidbit Articles

Please contact me with articles for your Transit Tidbit.

Recycle

Please share your Transit Tidbit with your staff and any interested person(s).



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 March 2021

*You don't have to be great to start,
but you have to start to be great!*



Jacque Senger
DTA Executive Director

Mailing Address:
PO Box 973
Devils Lake, ND 58301

E-Mail Address:
jacquelinesenger@gondtc.com

Phone Number:
701-662-2465