



## TRANSIT TIDBITS

Issue 132

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### THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2023

....The Expert at Anything was  
once a Beginner....

### DTA MEMBERSHIP FORM Jacque Senger, Executive Director

Just a Reminder----Your 2023 Dakota Transit Association Membership Form has been sent out. As of February 15<sup>th</sup>, I have received 13 membership renewals.



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### Making Connections 2022 in Washington DC

Adam Sharkey, Deputy Director  
River Cities Public Transit

In December, Mallory, Ron, and I went to the Making Connections conference in DC. We were one of the few Rural transits that joined. While several workplace safety topics were structured around large urban areas, the recruitment and networking side was beneficial information. It's a sad day when people are terrified to work because operators are beaten and left for dead.

I sat in several classes, some being Transit Instructor Boot Camp, Hands-on Instructional Training for Transit Trainers, and Designing Safety: Busses of the Future. These classes were led by many excellent speakers who did their best to help us understand unique new training techniques, approaches, and equipment to better our agencies' training. Mallory & Ron also attended different sessions, so we made sure to take the most out of the conference.

It was a wonderful trip with lots of learning at the conference and wandering in DC.

## 2023 Transit Day at the Capital



Terry Hoffman  
Co-Executive Director  
Community Transit of  
Watertown/Sisseton, Inc.

Lower attendance was countered by increased involvement from legislators in attendance, making the 2023 Transit Day at the Capital activities a success in the eyes of the South Dakota Transit Providers Association.

The annual get together consisted of a Wednesday night “meet and greet” with legislators followed by a Thursday morning display of transit services in the halls of the capital.

The meet and greet was held in the Community Room at River Cities Public Transit. The number of legislators in attendance was lower than past years, but those present were more engaged than past groups. Transit providers all had a story to tell about their prospective agencies, but the lawmakers reciprocated with personal tales of their own involvement with public transit services.

“This was a smaller group, but they were much more engaged. It was great to hear of their experiences with transit,” said SDPTA president and Peoples Transit Director Gayle Kludt. “Hearing how transit has affected their lives and the advice they offered was very encouraging.”

Holding events like the meet and greet and the day at the capital are effective ways to reach the legislators, but providers were encouraged to go the extra mile. Engage local legislators, invite them to ride your system and experience public transit first hand will be more beneficial in the long run.

“You provide a wonderful service to the people of this state and everyone here supports you and understands your needs and concerns,” said Sen. Al Novstrup of Aberdeen. “Look around the room. You have people here with a lot of clout and that’s great, but you need to attack this in a different manner.”

Novstrup is considered a strong supporter of public transit as were the other lawmakers in the room. Among the attendees were Speaker of the House Hugh Bartels from Watertown, Rep. Roger Chase of Huron, Rep. Carl Perry of Aberdeen, Rep. Mike Weisgram of Ft. Pierre. South Dakota Transportation Secretary Joel Jundt was also in attendance.

“Holding this event and talking to lawmakers at the capital tomorrow is great, take it to the next level,” said Novstrup. “Go home, contact all of your public officials and get them on the bus. Take them for a ride, let them see firsthand what you do and the obstacles you face daily. That will get their attention.”

Those ideas are not foreign to transit providers and events promoting such activities are in the planning stages according to Kludt.



South Dakota Transit Provider Association  
and SD DOT Transit Staff

“We feel we are making significant progress every year, but we know we can do more,” she said. “We need to get them on the bus and witness first-hand what we see every day.”

Each transit project in attendance introduced their agency, provided a few pertinent facts and relayed issues they are facing. Driver shortages, vehicle shortages and shortfalls in funding were the main topics on everyone’s agenda. Rep. Bartels, who sits on the board of directors for Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. finished off the night agreeing with his fellow lawmakers on how transit providers should move forward.

“I’ve watched our system grow and I see the struggles,” said Bartels. “We got you an increase a few years ago and we will continue to search for more. Keep getting your story out. You are on the right path.”

The lobbying efforts shifted venues Thursday morning with SDTPA members converging on the capital. Displays were set up again and information for each project was showcased in the lobbies of the House and Senate. The famous transit day cookies and coffee were devoured by legislators while transit providers continued to speak on obstacles they face on a daily basis. SD Dept. of Transportation staff were on hand to support the providers and discuss transportation in general.

SDPTA lobbyist Eric Erickson has been instrumental in headway gained by the providers in their struggle to secure additional funding.

“We feel we are making progress and we continue to be very visible during this event, we just need to continue the push,” said Kludt. “Eric is respected by the lawmakers and has been working very hard for us.”

## 2023 DAKOTA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

FYI---The 2023 DTA Conference will be held in Minot, ND, September 15, 2023, through September 19, 2023. The Sleep Inn & Suites will be the host hotel, phone number 701-837-3100. Mark your calendars.

## CITIES AREA TRANSIT HAPPENINGS

Kristi Slominski  
Paratransit Supervisor/Mobility  
Manager  
Cities Area Transit

Cities Area Transit (CAT) has a couple exciting new projects starting. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, a RFP went out statewide with the NDDOT for new Paratransit Software. The RFP closes on the website March 8<sup>th</sup> with an implementation date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. We are very excited to see what comes out of the RFP and decide what new software will be available and “best fit” for our Paratransit department.

CAT also has a RFB opening on February 16<sup>th</sup> for our building addition which includes adding on to our bus garage, updating our bus wash, and changing our fueling area. CAT plans to start the project in April 2023. We can’t wait to see what the finished project will look like!



with various agencies throughout the community. “These videos will be a valuable tool to help educate new and current CAT bus riders that might have questions about how the fixed route bus system works. In addition to posting them online, we will incorporate them into our travel training, and put them into the hands of various agencies, creating a network that is more comfortable both recommending public transit to its clients and teaching people how to use it,” says Deidre Hughes, Executive Director for Bis-Man Transit.

## TRAINING UPDATE

Contact Information

Rod Grafing 701-840-1405  
rod@southcentralseniors.org

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” – Benjamin Franklin

PASS recertification class will be held Saturday, March 25th in Devils Lake ND. Class time is 8AM to Noon with hands on portion to be held in the afternoon at the Devils Lake Senior Center, 202 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE. This is a recertification class ONLY and seats are limited. Register by emailing Rod at e-mail above. Please include the names of drivers who will be attending. REGISTRATION DEADLINE is Friday March 10<sup>th</sup> 2023.

North Dakota is in need of PASS trainers. If you or someone from your agency is interested in becoming a certified PASS trainer, please contact Rod at 701-840-1405.



### Aerial recording of CAT Bus while filming “How to Video”

### New Instructional Videos

Deidre Hughes, Director  
Bis-Man Transit

Bis-Man Transit has launched a series of new instructional videos aimed at helping the community understand how to use the CAT bus system. The videos are broken up into 9 parts, and cover topics from how to flag down the CAT bus and how to use the bike rack to how to identify the correct bus. Each video is approximately one-minute long. Riders may choose to watch individual chapters that they are interested in or to watch all nine chapters at once. There are also two additional videos that explain how Bis-Man Transit’s paratransit service works.

The videos may be found by clicking “How To Ride” under the “Fixed Route” tab at [bismantransit.com](http://bismantransit.com), or on the CAT bus YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/BismarckCATBus](http://www.youtube.com/BismarckCATBus)).

Bis-Man Transit worked with a professional production company to produce a series of high-quality videos that help answer the most commonly asked public transportation questions. Funding for the videos was provided through an AARP Community Challenge Grant. In addition to having the videos available for online viewing, the videos will be used while hosting travel trainings and shared

## DAKOTA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

The 2023 DTA Awards Nomination forms will be sent out this month. Please feel free to return the nomination forms in early.

**Tidbit Articles:**

Please contact me with articles for your agency.

**Recycle:**

Please share your Transit Tidbit with your staff and any interested persons.

**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!



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