



TRANSIT TIDBITS

Issue 136 JUNE 2023

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2023

**“The expert in everything was
once a beginner”**

TRAINING UPDATE

Contact Information

Rod Grafin 701-840-1405

rod@southcentralseniors.org

“Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so that they don’t want to.” - Richard Branson

We are looking at holding PASS training classes in Aberdeen SD. within the first two weeks of August 2023. No actual dates have been set yet. If you have drivers in need in training/recertification and this timeframe and location works for you, please contact Rod at the above email. More information regarding this class will be posted on the DTA website as it becomes available.

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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.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (CTAA) EXPO

Terry Hoffman, Community Transit of
Watertown-Sisseton, Inc.

Every time I’m less than excited about attending the annual Community Transit Association of America’s Conference, I return home with fond memories of the week that was CTAA.

My perception of what I thought the host Oklahoma City would provide could not have been further from reality. A great venue, excellent restaurants, very informative sessions, and speakers, mixed with the usual plethora of outside events made the 2023 conference a success in my eyes.

Oklahoma City was just the sixth CTAA conference I have attended, but it ranks near the top of the standings for me. Part of the reason was we drove instead of flew, something I prefer simply for the new country discovered along the way. Louisville in 2022 and Detroit were also navigated by car and both are among my favorites.

The selection of topics at Oklahoma City was varied and timely for me. I attended sessions on recruiting employees and inventive ways to attract the younger crowd. As discussions on retirement and succession plans become more frequent, the desire to hire with an eye to the future is increasingly important.

Sessions on alternative fuels and the push for electric vehicles were on the docket along with classes pertinent to Tribal and rural transit providers. The length of the sessions was limited to 45 minutes, an idea I could totally embrace at future Dakota Transit Association meetings. Realizing shorter presentations translates to additional presenters and the probability of increased costs to the DTA, I also think our sessions can become too long and lose the interest of the attendees. Food for thought for future conferences.



The “Big Night Out” was a hit among attendees as usual featuring live entertainment, an overabundance of food, and the opportunity to test your skills on the mechanical bull. The highlight of the night for



me was watching our compadres from Pierre try on western wear in a shop in the Stockyards District earlier in the day. Party goers were encouraged to dress the part, and some took it very seriously.

Taking in the local sites and history of the host city is part of any conference. Despite the fact I could not find a “live” ballgame that week anywhere, I still enjoyed the best Oklahoma City had to offer. I made it to the Bricktown stadium (home of the AAA Dodgers) and gift shop twice securing souvenirs for myself and family members. The Dodgers may have been on the road all week, but we took plenty of pictures inside the facility. Photo ops with Mickey Mantle and Johnny Bench were not wasted either. The “Water Taxi” was a 45-minute trip through time and the history of the city. Once an extremely high crime area, the abandoned warehouses were refurbished with businesses, nightclubs, and modern apartments all lining a man-made canal winding through the area. One of the better-known watering holes in the city – Toby Keith’s “I love this Bar” saloon – was located on the tour.

No trip to the area would be complete without touring the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. The site honors the victims, survivors, rescuers, and all who were affected by the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995. The museum featured a walk-through time on that awful day beginning around 6 a.m. until the time of the blast at 9:02 a.m. The display continues through the aftermath of the bombing, the search for those

responsible and their eventual trial and sentencings.

The outdoor tour starts with a walk through the symbolic Gates of Time; the East Gate marks 9:01am, while the West Gate marks 9:03am, framing the 9:02am bomb detonation. The “Field of Chairs” - a space where 168 symbolic chairs sit representing each of the victims – had most in tears.

The DTA was well represented at the conference with Barb Cline (Spearfish) and Andy sharp (Pierre) in attendance as CTAA board members and Gail Kludt (Huron) was a delegate.

Others from South Dakota included Kathy Holman (Sisseton), Donald Sharkey and Dustin Hernandez (Pierre), Megan Gould-Stabile (Rapid City), Brenda Schweitzer (Sioux Falls), Terry Hoffman (Watertown), Travis Bortnem (Brookings), Renee Anderson (Eagle Butte) and Lisa Johnson (Spearfish). Wambli Meter and Max Voller (Pierre) participated in the Bus Roadeo. Dale Bergman (Grand Forks) and Carleen Schill (Langdon) were conference attendees from North Dakota.

The 2023 event is slated for sunny West Palm Beach Florida.

DAKOTA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

The Sleep Inn & Suites in Minot, ND, will be hosting our DTA Conference September 15th

through the 19th, 2023. Please remember to mark your calendars for this event. Their phone number is 701-837-3100 – when phoning in to make your reservations, let them know you are a part of DTA.



TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR SAFETY (TRACS)

Adam Sharkey
River Cities Public Transit

On June 7th and 8th, I attended my first in-person meeting with the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety (TRACS). This meeting occurred in Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss subcommittee progress, hear from guest speakers, conduct working sessions, and receive feedback from the entire membership on each Subcommittee's progress.

Each Subcommittee will take on a different safety issue plaguing transportation nationwide. We are working on three areas of concern: **cyber and data security**, **advancing rider and worker safety**, and **reducing bus collisions**. I was selected to be on advancing rider and worker safety, which was the committee I initially wanted to be on. Though I could give input on any of the three topics, my passion for rider and worker safety hits home.

The committee meetings went well, and we all got great feedback from our TRACS program manager Bridget Zamperini. Joe DeLorenzo, Associate Administrator, Office of Transit Safety and Oversight and Chief Safety Officer, and Matt Welbes, FTA Executive Director, gave us all educational speeches and feedback to help us move forward in our committees.

All in all, this was a great opportunity and a good meeting. I am honored and excited to continue the fight for safer transportation.

2023 BRINGS CHANGES TO OUR DTA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORMS

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

The Dakota Transit Association Board of Directors have made some changes to our 2023 Registration Forms. We are sending this out ahead of time so all the agencies are aware of the changes prior to completing the forms.

1st change

In the past we have held an Awards Breakfast on Sunday morning. That has been discontinued. All our awards will be presented on Saturday night at the “DTA Awards Banquet”.

2nd changes

Fees and Charges

Conference fees are now \$400.00 for Members and \$450.00 for Non-Members.

Roдео Driver’s Registration fees are \$350.00.

Sunday Employee Professional Training fees are \$225.00.

Meal Costs for Guests

Saturday’s DTA Awards Banquet \$45.00

Guests’ meals Monday and Tuesday are each \$30.00.

EVOLUTION OF A LEADER

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

Leaders come in all forms with varying degrees of what are considered qualities required to fill that role.

Some are born to lead; others are late bloomers with leadership skills begging to surface. Tara Maifield's emergence as a potential leader has been a combination of

overcoming personal struggles and the realization that she can reach loftier goals.

The Lead Dispatcher at Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc., Maifield reluctantly agreed to join a leadership program run by the local Chamber of Commerce. The self-admitted follower assumed her position a year ago and immediately began displaying signs administrators felt were present.

"We saw potential in Tara giving us the belief she can help guide Community Transit in the future, " said CTWSI Human Resource Consultant Natalie Remund. "She has met the challenge of her position. This class has helped her to realize what she can accomplish if she wants."

The class of 25 potential leaders in the community has had the opportunity to work with community business leaders, listen to individual inspiring tales of rags to riches, failure to success. Three sessions remain in the program, one which Maifield is now grateful for the opportunity to participate.

"It's been inspiring to meet people like myself at the same point in their careers and realize I might have what it takes to be part of something bigger," said Maifield. "I never thought of myself as a leader, but I am excited for the possibilities ahead."

There has been and continues to be obstacles in her path to success, her lack of self-confidence being the toughest to overcome.

"The way we grew up didn't really breed much in the way of self-esteem," said Maifield.

She has the respect of her fellow dispatchers, drivers and administrators. Her ability to juggle schedules, driver routes, work with appreciative and not so happy customers, keep sometimes dis-organized directors on course and take on occasional driving duties is a testament to her many skills.

"Tara is a work in progress, one we believe can be part of the next administration here," said Co-

Executive Director Kathy Holman. "We need to remind her occasionally what she is capable of, but she's made great progress."



DAKOTA TRANSIT AWARDS

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

Just an FYI to all the transit agencies. I have received award nominations from one agency. Can I expect more?

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!



Jacque Senger, Executive Director, DTA

www.dakotatransit.org

jacquelinesenger@gondtc.com

cell number 701-740-8894