



## TRANSIT TIDBITS

Issue 139 OCTOBER 2023

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH OCTOBER 2023

--BELIEVE IN YOURSELF--

### DTA Transit Articles

Jacque Senger, DTA Director

In this addition you will find some articles about the 2023 DTA Conference held in Minot, ND. I think the writers deserve a big “Thank You” for taking the extra time to write about the speakers and their topics. In the November Tidbit we will include the remaining articles from the conference.

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### South Central Transit Driver Praised

Pat Hansen, Director  
South Central Transit

I received the following letter from one of our clients in Nelson County and wanted to share it:

“Hats off to one of South Central Transit’s drivers, Larry Hoyt. Last week at Sam’s Club a man was choking. While many people did nothing, Larry stepped up and performed the Heimlich numerous times until breathing was restored and a life was saved. You employ some of the best. Just ask you clients!”

We are so blessed to have drivers like Larry operating our buses!!!

## Highly Rural Transportation Grant

16,714 Awarded to American Legion Post 20  
Stanley County  
For Highly Rural Transportation Grant

Gary Hegland, River Cities Public Transit

For almost a decade, Ron Baumgart, Executive Director of River Cities Public Transit, and Eugene Collett from the American Legion Post 20 of Stanley County have worked collectively to provide free transportation for military veterans living in highly rural counties in South Dakota. The project has seen steady growth since its inception. This year, the Veterans Administration has awarded \$616,714 to fund medical transportation once again for veterans in South Dakota and Wyoming.

This program began with a grant submitted by the American Legion Post 20 Stanley County to the Veterans Administration. The grant requirements necessitated that a *veteran service organization* within a state government or like the American Legion or VFW, be the contract holder/administrator of the program. Once awarded, Stanley County Post 20 needed a transit partner to fulfill the rides. They entered into a contract with River Cities Public Transit to provide free transportation for veterans and a caregiver to any VA-authorized appointment in South Dakota.

The initial grant request was only for veterans residing in Stanley County, and it received very little attention when it started. In fact, there were discussions about returning the money to the Veterans Administration during that initial contract period because there didn't seem to be any interest in using the service. With the help of Daren Wallace from the Veterans Administration, the program started to grow and expand to other highly rural counties in South Dakota.

Eventually, Stanley County Post 20 entered into an additional contract with Barb Cline, Executive Director of Prairie Hills Transit in Spearfish, to provide services in western South Dakota and Eastern Wyoming.

To date, the project continues to grow each year. Because of that success, Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. Peoples Transit, and ROCS Transit have joined the coordinated effort. As stated in the grant award announcement this year, the grant funds will provide free rides for medical purposes to Veterans in the following counties of South Dakota and Wyoming:

“American Legion Stanley Post 20 will utilize the Grant proceeds for transportation of Veterans in Highly Rural Areas to transport Veterans from South Dakota counties of Aurora, Bennett, Brule, Buffalo, Butte, Campbell, Clark, Corson, Custer, Day, Dewey, Douglas, Edmunds, Fall River, Faulk, Gregory, Harding, Hand, Hyde, Haakon, Jackson, Jerauld, Jones, Kingsbury, Lyman, Marshall, McPherson, Mellette, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Perkins, Pooter, Sanburn, Spink, Stanley, Sully, Todd, Trip, Ziebach and Wyoming Counties of Fremont, Goshen, Hot Springs, Johnson, Niobrara, and Washakie to VA facilities and approved non-VA care.”

This is the largest grant awarded for this project. All involved with this coordination effort remain enthusiastic about providing this service to the veterans residing in these qualifying counties within South Dakota and Wyoming. Thank you, Ron Baumgart of River Cities Public Transit, for spearheading and growing this project.

### Disclaimer:

“This project was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.”

## **A Walk Through the Digital Marketing World with Collette Thomas From HIBU**

Rose Drake, Operations Manager  
Elder Care/Dickinson Public Transit

Collette Thomas took the time to explain how digital marketing would have an impact on our organizations. Collette explained her background in marketing and that she thrives with local businesses and is an advocate for supporting them. She wants to make the first impression of your business the best and the most lasting. Collette explained that she does this by making sure your business can be located on Google and your website is updated with your unique style and information. Collette showcased the tools available to see how the marketing she provides would save your business money as well as how we are reaching our potential customers. We learned about the “how to’s” of the digital marketing world such as how to build your website online, how to respond to reviews, and market those reviews. Collette also shared her passion for social media campaigns, the ease of use of getting her the information that she would handle it from there. Daryl Francis from Souris Basin provided a testimonial on the services he has been provided by Collette. Daryl said that his driver’s applications have increased exponentially, updates to the website that are required from the state or closures are easily updated by Collette. Excellent presentation from Collette Thomas showcasing her skills and ability to get your business in the forefront of your riders!

Thank you!

## **DTA Roadeo 2023 Overview**

Adam Sharkey, DTA Roadeo Marshall  
River Cities Public Transit

As you all know, this year's Roadeo took place in Minot. It started with a windy, smoking arrival and ended with clear skies and no wind.

Q-STRAINT/SURE-LOK sponsored Friday night training by Eric Peterson and Aaron Thompson. With over 60 people in attendance, they were taught the dos and don'ts of Wheelchair Securement and how trainers would like them to secure the mobility devices. With Wheelchair securement worth 200 points, this training couldn't be more critical.

Saturday morning hit us with bright blue skies and no wind. I couldn't have asked for a better day. Terry Hoffman gathered the drivers and presented them with their first obstacle driver test while I picked the judges, reviewed the rules, and even followed it up with a course walkthrough. Once the driver and judges meeting had finished, the drivers were introduced to the course for the first time. I did the final course walkthrough with the driver, and we were off to the races. The drivers were split into three groups, each positioned at one of three locations (Wheelchair securement, Pre-Trip, Driving Course).

After roughly 4 hours of competition the drivers were done, and the competition was completed. A funny comment I remember hearing was 6 hours of setup and 30 minutes to tear down. Funny but true. It felt like this was the smoothest competition yet, but that couldn't have happened without the fantastic course setup team, scoring room gals, and OVER 45 judges who came out to support and judge the drivers. This year had many challenges but nothing we couldn't handle. I'm honored to have this opportunity to be the course Marshall, and I look forward to next year in Rapid City.

SD Top 5

- 1<sup>st</sup> Bryce Lambert
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Gary Frederick
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Max Voller
- 4<sup>th</sup> Doug Herr
- 5<sup>th</sup> Noel Cummins

ND Top 5

- 1<sup>st</sup> Dustin Limberg
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Kendall Meyer
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Brenda Reed
- 4<sup>th</sup> Ray Adam
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sheri Harsche

## **Enhancing Security in Public Transit: The Imperative of Counterterrorism Measures**

Lisa Bartlett  
Kenmare Wheels and Meals, Inc.

Keith Turner and Carlos Feigelmuller both Surface Inspectors for the TSA gave an extensive look into the TSA's First Observer Plus Training Module. The prime focus was to "Observe, Assess, and Report." Members were educated on previous attacks to Transit and received information to recognize possible future threats.

In an increasingly interconnected world, public transit systems serve as the lifeblood of urban centers, efficiently transporting millions of passengers each day. While these systems offer convenience and economic benefits, they also present attractive targets for terrorist organizations seeking to sow fear and disrupt societies. Therefore, the implementation of robust counterterrorism measures in public transit is essential to safeguarding both commuters and the functioning of cities.

The Terrorist Threat in Public Transit Public transit systems represent an ideal target for terrorist groups for several reasons:

1- High Ridership: Public transit systems are often densely populated, offering a high concentration of potential victims and opportunities for attackers to inflict maximum damage.

2 - Symbolic Significance: Iconic public transit hubs, such as Grand Central Terminal in New York City or any stop in the District on Washington Metro, hold significant symbolic value, making them attractive targets for terrorists seeking to make a statement.

3 - Ease of Access: Public transit systems are designed to be accessible to large numbers of people, which also makes them accessible to potential attackers.

### Counterterrorism Measures in Public Transit

Public transit authorities, State and Federal Agencies around the world have recognized the need for comprehensive counterterrorism measures to ensure the safety and security of commuters. These measures encompass a range of strategies and technologies designed to prevent, detect, and respond to potential threats.

1 - Surveillance Systems: High-quality video surveillance cameras are deployed in stations, vehicles, and key areas to monitor activities and assist in identifying suspicious behavior. Advanced facial recognition technology can also be integrated to identify known threats.

2 - Explosive Detection: Random bag checks, explosive detection dogs, and high-tech scanners help authorities identify and prevent explosives or dangerous materials from entering the transit system.

3 - Access Control: Controlled access points with turnstiles, barriers, and security personnel ensure that only authorized individuals can enter stations or boarding areas.

4 - Emergency Preparedness: Public transit agencies regularly conduct drills and simulations to prepare for

potential terrorist incidents, ensuring a coordinated response from emergency services and first responders.

5 - Cybersecurity: As public transit systems become more technologically advanced, securing digital infrastructure against cyberattacks is crucial to prevent disruptions or breaches.

6 - Intelligence Sharing: Collaboration between public transit authorities, law enforcement agencies, and intelligence organizations facilitates the sharing of information and helps identify potential threats before they materialize.

Public transit systems are the lifeblood of modern cities, and their security is paramount. Counterterrorism measures play a crucial role in safeguarding commuters and maintaining the integrity of these vital transportation networks. As threats evolve, so too must our approach to counterterrorism in public transit, with innovation and collaboration at the forefront of efforts to keep our cities safe.

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Thanks to all!



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