



TRANSIT TIDBITS
Issue 140 NOVEMBER 2023

THOUGH FOR THE MONTH
NOVEMBER 2023
“GIVE THANKS”

TRAINING UPDATE

Contact Information
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PASS training was held in Cooperstown ND, Oct. 17th and 18th with 21 drivers in attendance. Thank you to everyone who helped make this class possible.

Currently, there are no PASS training classes scheduled for the remainder of 2023. If you have drivers in need of PASS training or recertification, now would be a good time to inquire about scheduling an upcoming class.

Contact DTA PASS Training Coordinator, Rod Graefing, using the information above.

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 701-845-4300.



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Vendor Show, Minot, ND

Barb Cline, Director

Prairie Hills Transit

I bet many of you thought that the Trade Show was just about the booth on the Trade Show Floor that is manned by our vendors. The fact is that this Trade Show brought in over \$21,000. Every meal,

break, award, and advertisement in the program was paid for by our vendor friends. Thank you to Brian Horinka for including all our vendors on a contact page and artfully placing their ads. Your work is appreciated.

2023 saw another very successful and interesting Trade Show. Thank you to the twenty-six paid vendors and the National



RTAP booth supported by Becky Hanson with NDDOT and Monte Meier with SDDOT. Many of our attendees walked away with bags of "swag", gift cards, and televisions thanks to the generosity of our vendor friends.

Every sponsorship was purchased by this great group of vendors. This included awards, breaks, meals and social events. Q'Straint/Sure-Lok sponsor Lisa Nippolt kicked the Roadeo events off with

wheelchair training, pizza, and sodas on Friday evening. Chuck Nelson and Comer Hobbs with Davey Coach were sponsors for both the Saturday boxed lunch and the Roadeo/awards banquet. The variety band Balderdash providing entertainment after the banquet was sponsored by Paul Watson with Model 1 Commercial Vehicles.

I'd like to thank KU, SRF, Brightline, North Central, Q'Straint/Sure-Lok, and Davey Coach for their part in sponsoring our awards for the Saturday evening event.

Travis Ward with LiquidSpring was the conference meal sponsor on Monday at noon, and Bryan Techel and North Central Bus and Equipment were responsible for the Tuesday Trade Show Luncheon on the Trade Show Floor.



A new evening event on Tuesday included a BBQ food truck, music, and a "Rage Room" all of which were sponsored by TripSpark Technologies representatives Paul Harrison and Debbie Mayfield.

Next year Rapid City promises to be even bigger and better. The Trade Show in the "Black Hills" will be an event you won't want to miss.

**DTA BOOKKEEPER
POSITION OPENING
Jacque Senger**

The position of DTA Bookkeeper will be opening January 1, 2024. If anyone from the General Membership, either ND or SD, is interested in this position, please contact me. Additional information will be sent out to the individuals who respond.

**CTAA Legislative, Resource and
Training Update
Terry Hoffman, Co-Executive Director
Community Transit of
Watertown/Sisseton, Inc.**

Scott Bogren has been a fixture at the Dakota Transit Association annual conference for as long as I can recall. His annual appearance

and presentation to the membership is always a high point of the event for me.

No matter the topics or the questions he fields, the discussion is always thought provoking. brutally honest and always from the heart. The message may not always be uplifting or painting a bright picture for transit providers, but it is delivered with honesty and from the heart.

Bogren is the Executive Director for the Community Transportation Association of America. His passion for transit is evident from the time he arrives at the venue. His work focuses on building and promoting safe, affordable, accessible, and inclusive mobility for all. A graduate of Indiana University, Bogren has been with CTAA since 1989 serving many roles. He became the Executive Director in 2016.

Much of the discussion during his appearance in Minot, ND centered around the push by the federal government to put low emission vehicles on the road across America – a move which most providers in the Dakotas acknowledge is not realistic.

“The push for these vehicles does not make sense here when considering the miles between destinations and the extremes in weather seen in the Dakotas,” said Bogren.

Discussion was held on the potential for changing matching funds for operation expenses from 50/50 to 80/20. The move obviously would benefit all transit providers by freeing up much needed funding for other costs.

The lack of available vehicles continues to be a battle. Delivery of vehicles from the time of order has never been a speedy process, but since the Covid-19 pandemic, the time has increased significantly. The prices of the vehicles when they finally reach the provider also have sky-rocketed and show no sign of slowing. The quality of the vehicles has also suffered.

“The story is always the same, Washington (DC) does not understand the challenges you face every day here in the Dakotas,” said Bogren. “They have no concept of the need for more common-sense regulations for smaller transit operators.”

A Boy, A Bus, and a Story

Maureen Wegenke, Director

James River Transit

How often do you think about what an impact you can make on your riders? Do you go through your day just waiting for your shift to end? Speaker, Mike Bismeyer, challenged us all to take a different look at ourselves, all of our riders, and what a small difference we can make in their lives.

Mike shared a personal story of how he was bullied & had his lunch stolen as a young boy riding the bus each day. An older student came along and had Mike sit with him and share a lunch with him.

This small act of kindness changed his life and he vowed to do the same.

Mike stated that it is up to us to change ourselves and then possibly, we will be able to change others. Don't complain, just to complain. Have and share, a solution. Don't just turn in complaints...turn in compliments where compliments are due. Engage with your riders positively, don't join in their negativity. You may end up turning their day around.

As a transit agency, kindness should be a part of every employee's day; from the administration to the drivers, to support staff and everywhere in between.

Administration should advertise the positive to your ridership as well. Put awards on your website, Facebook, local media, etc. Kindness awards such as, "Rider of the Year" could promote a "snowball" effect of kindness throughout your ridership.

In conclusion, Mike encouraged everyone to go out and thank people that have had a positive impact on your life. Many times, people don't have a clue that the little things they do for others actually do impact lives. Let's all go out and make a difference!

DTA Board Meeting Dates for 2024

Jacque Senger

February 5 & 6 – Bismarck, ND

April 15 & 16 – Bismarck, ND

July 22 – To be determined.

Dates may be subject to change.

PROCUREMENT

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

Understanding the process of procuring vehicles, facilities, equipment, office or shop supplies or any other materials is not easy. Its is however essential to transit administrators.

Greg Harnett of RLS & Associates, Inc. of Dayton, OH, presented a four-hour course on what we all consider a complex process. He is seen as a key contributor to many of the Federal Transportation Administration programs including the Comprehensive Oversight Review and Technical Assistance Program {CORTAP}and conducts Triennial Reviews

Harnett is also a veteran of comprehensive reviews for the Department of Transportation in several states. With more than a decade of regulatory experience in the transit industry, Harnett has delivered technical assistance covering compliance topics. He is considered an expert on the subject of procurement.

Harnett’s presentation focused on the difference between the contrasting procurement thresholds between North and South Dakota and the rest of the country. Independent Cost Analysis’ (ICE) and cost price analysis is an important part of any procurement process.

“The number one finding in state reviews nationwide is mistakes made in the procurement processes,” said Harnett. “Independent cost estimates need to be the first item on your list to consider. Comparable pricing and historical pricing are tools to use.”

Those items need to be attacked prior to the receipt of bids or proposals. Harnett discussed the differences between Requests for Proposals and Invitations for Bids. RFPs are publicly solicited and awarded to the responsive and responsible proposer whose offer is most advantageous to the recipient with price and other factors considered. IFB’s carry a firm fixed price and is awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. IFB’s do not allow for technical evaluation. Non-competitive procurements bring red flags to auditors. Seeking to buy something from a source that is likely only one have it. Sole Source – must include the reason for the sole source. Cost analysis is also needed and must be maintained as part of procurement history.

Single bids – becoming more common since covid. If the reason for receiving one bid back, then the competition can be considered adequate, and the award will be valid.

Proposals need to be properly written. Did you allow enough time, was solicitation adequately disseminated and asking potential bidders why they did not bid. Call or email them and get answers to why. Document this and keep for your records. Make sure your bid wasn't restrictive. Did you advertise enough.

Other items to consider for a strong procurement:

Procurement policy

- Solicitations must be clear and accurate tech descriptions for the material product or service to be procured
- Solicitations must identify all requirements which offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.
- Contract administration
- Written standards of conduct
- Avoidance of unnecessary or duplicative items contracting with responsible contractors' maintenance of written procurement history
- Use of time and materials contracts
- Written protest procedures
- Promotion of full and open competition
- Prohibition on geographic preference
- Prequalification list
- Method of procurement
- Cost and price analysis
- ICE

- Prohibition of cost-plus percentage of cost contracts
- Inclusion of required contract clauses
- Bonding requirements
- Prohibition of exclusionary specifications
- Buy America of what you need.
- Look at the contractor's manual for questions.

FTA Update from Cindy Terwilliger Stacy Strickler, Transit Coordinator Rural Office of Community Transit, Inc.

So, to start the meeting off the FTA announced that they have now increased the Highway Employees funds. Back in June or July they had a meeting with Nuria Fernandez, FTA Administrator, to discuss the redesigning of buses to improve safety.

The next update that was announced pertained to the Bi-Partisan infrastructure Law (BIL): They established a new Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program that received funding of \$1 billion over the next 5 years. The grant was opened to applications for Reconnecting Communities with Neighborhoods and closed back in September 2023.

Cindy has awarded the grants for the Propane buses and a side note, the infrastructure for electric is charging forward as well.

With everything going on in the world today FTA has now put on their website a on demand training for Transit Worker Assault, Train the Trainer Programs and De-escalation Trainings are also now available. [Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators \(Direct Delivery\) | National Transit Institute \(ntionline.com\)](#)

[Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators \(Train the Trainer\) | National Transit Institute \(ntionline.com\)](#)

Cindy also gave advanced notice that there will be a new rule in the making as Transit Directors pertaining to Transit Drivers Physical Fitness.

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!



Jacquie Senger, Executive Director, DTA

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