



TRANSIT TIDBITS

Issue 141 DECEMBER 2023

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH DECEMBER 2023

**MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE
HOLIDAYS FILL YOUR HOME
WITH LOVE AND PEACE.**

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EACH
AND EVERYONE OF YOU.**

TRAINING UPDATE

Contact Information

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PASS and Defensive Driving classes will be held in Watertown, SD, December 27 & 28, 2023. For information or to register for this class, please contact Rod Grafig using the contact info 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.

**NATIONAL RTAP
CONFERENCE & REVIEW
BOARD UPDATE
Fall 2023
Brenda Schweitzer
Transit Program Coordinator
City of Sioux Falls
Sioux Falls, SD**

National RTAP hosts a national technical assistance conference, often held on the off-years of TRB's [Rural Public & Intercity Bus Transportation Conference](#) (RIBTC), and coordinates with partners to provide smaller regional conferences and trainings.

The recent [National RTAP Conference was held in Myrtle Beach on December 3-6, 2023](#). After a five-year span of not being held, this year's conference was well attended and had an incredible list of presentations, training, trade show and networking opportunities.

As a member of the National Rural Transit Assistance Program's Review Board, this conference included my final Review Board meeting after serving on this review board for three years. By becoming involved with NRTAP, I've gained a level of respect and appreciation for what this organization brings to public transit. The greatest challenge of this federally funded program is to bring agencies the awareness of it's infinite list of resources, tools, training and educational programs. From our local DOT offices to each of our projects,

[National RTAP](#) should be the key source when searching for guidance. Share this link with every department within your project.

The National RTAP Review Board includes representation from DOT offices as well as transit program directors. This blend of knowledge allows for the very best in reviewing and creating resources available to provide the best in transit service. From federal regulations to local challenges, setting policies, providing tools, and using the experience of each other benefits all.

The National RTAP Conference is designed around current federal updates, new transit technology, changing modes, etc. This year's conference was attended by a several North Dakota and South Dakota transit providers. If I try to list them all, I'm sure I'll miss someone! Please consider attending the next opportunity you have. Check this [link](#) for this year's agenda to see just how inclusive it was!

Serving on the National Rural Transit Assistance Program's Review Board is a highlight of my career in public transportation. I encourage you to get involved and consider this amazing resource.

**2024 DTA CONFERENCE
RAPID CITY, SD
September 13th - 17th, 2024
Jacque Senger, Executive Director
Dakota Transit Association**

Your Board of Director's are working diligently as we prepare for the 2024 Conference in the beautiful Rapid City, SD, area. We have secured the Holiday Inn Rapid City Downtown – Convention Center. Their phone number is 605-348-4000.

**5th National RTAP Conference
Navigating the Tides of Change
with Rural and Tribal Transit
Myrtle Beach, SC 12-3-6, 2023
Gayle Kludt, Executive Director
People's Transit
Huron, SD**

As we all know, the mission of RTAP (Rural Transit Assistance Program) is to address the training and technical assistance needs of rural and tribal transit operators across the nation, and to support the state RTAP programs. This year RTAP did not disappoint in achieving their mission by hosting sessions at the National RTAP Conference in Myrtle Beach that were relevant, pertinent, and relatable to rural and tribal transit agencies. From my perspective, as a rural transit director, the sessions that I attended were so worth it.

I had the honor of having one of our board members, Andrea, attend the

conference with me. I find value in board member involvement as it helps validate conference attendance as well as letting them see and hear from transit peers from around the country and see the similarities, we have with other transit agencies.

We attended a pre-conference session on Sunday titled "Rural and Tribal Transit System Design Workshop." The premise of this session was to show that theory and practices have changed dramatically since the 1990s and it's time to think in 2023 terms. I have only been in the transit world for six years. But there are many transit directors that have been around much longer than that (bless your hearts). While many transit directors change with the times and embrace that change, there are transit directors who may be stuck still operating in the 1990s services and losing out on potential ridership and improved service. The last 5 years tells us it's time to think in 2023 terms and use the resources available now to enhance customer service and improve ridership. While there was some discussion on distance routing that was not applicable to People's Transit, the concepts were simple that would certainly provide efficiency for agencies who might implement some change.

I attended a session called National RTAP 101. National RTAP staff used the website to show the FREE resources and services available to rural and tribal stakeholders. The experience of watching the staff dig into the website opened my eyes to the many trainings, technical assistance, technology tools,

and resource library available. I will be utilizing the RTAP website for training for our staff at our monthly meetings.

The Rural Low/No Implementations session was the same we have been hearing about the past couple of years. However, the compelling pieces of the presentation were the agencies who transitioned or are transitioning to propane vehicles. I was encouraged by their experience as we at People's Transit will be doing the same (sooner rather than later, I hope 😊).

Our own Ron Baumgart created quite the conversations during his presentation of the session Meeting Veteran's Transportation Needs. He explained how the HRTG (Highly Rural Transportation Grant) humbly began in Ft. Pierre, Stanley County and has now, with the coordination from River Cities Public Transit (Pierre) and Prairie Hills Transit (Spearfish), provide much needed transportation to veterans across all of South Dakota and into Wyoming. The owner, and a veteran herself, of a startup transit agency in Grenada, MS will be following up with the hopes of incorporating this program in her agency.

Bridging Transit's Digital Divide: The Road to Effective Transit Technology for Small Agencies. One of the biggest takeaways from this session was that the software available does so many things for large agencies that it can be overwhelming for smaller, rural agencies. We don't need ALL that is available. Some agencies have also experienced software companies not listening to the

rural transit agencies and instead telling them what they need instead of listening to what they want.

Innovative uses of funding and increased coordination between rural and urban agencies have helped to improve transportation access for communities. This was the message in the session Strategies to Improve Transportation Access. Our own Bren Schweitzer, Transit Program Coordinator for the City of Sioux Falls, and Barb Cline, Executive Director from Prairie Hills Transit, were speakers for this session.

The National RTAP Convention is a biannual event. This was the first RTAP Convention since the pandemic. I would encourage transit providers from North and South Dakota to make an attempt to attend the conference in 2025. When RTAP says Rural...they mean Rural.

**Sioux Area Metro
Transitioning
Brenda Schweitzer, Transit
Program Coordinator
City of Sioux Falls
Sioux Falls, SD**

Sioux Area Metro is transitioning from the 30-year + management agreement with First Transit/Trans Dev to a turnkey operation under the management of Via. This is the article that was just published in Mass Transit.

[Sioux Falls Management Transition to Via 1/1/2024](#)

NARCAN – SAVING A LIFE **Terry Hoffman, Co-Executive** **Director Community Transit of** **Watertown/Sisseton, Inc.**

Transportation professionals receive an abundance of training in attempts to provide passengers with the ultimate travel experience.

Training often includes the securing of riders and their mobility devices, drug and alcohol related awareness, defensive driving, how to deal with difficult passengers and more. The information received in those training sessions are often employed daily. Some are not so frequent.



Waylon Brown was presented with a cake by CTWSI Staff

Waylon Brown, bus driver for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Transit, recently utilized a training he had received into action. Brown's actions resulted in saving a

neighbor's life. Brown had received Narcan training on September 29, 2023, at the Sisseton Office of Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc. The session taught employees how to administer the Narcan spray to individuals who may be overdosing on opioids. Each participant was issued two cans of the spray.

On the night of November 11, 2023, Brown was relaxing at home when he received a call from neighbors indicating a boy may have overdosed and if he still had Narcan spray.

"I went over to their house and the young man wasn't breathing," said Brown. "I used the training I had gotten from Josie Duetsch's program. I had to use two doses on him, but he started breathing and the ambulance got there soon after. The training saved his life."

Josie Deutsch, CNP for Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate on the Lake Traverse Reservation has worked in the Tribal Opioid Response Project. Most recently, she is establishing a Medication for Addiction Treatment Clinic under the Asniyapi Field Health Clinic.

Naloxone (brand name Narcan) is a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose in an emergency. It is an opioid antagonist and can reverse and block the effects of other opioids. It can very quickly restore normal respiration to a person whose breathing has slowed or stopped because of overdosing on heroin or prescription opioid pain medications.

"We are all very proud of Waylon and for his actions in saving a life," said Kathy Holman, Co-Executive Director of CTWSI. (The SWO Tribal Transit is managed by CTWSI). "The training we received could not have come at

a better time. Thank God Waylon was there to administer the Narcan.”



Part of the team who took the Narcan training. This picture included CTWSI and SWO Tribal employees.



Narcan training comes with a certificate of operation and samples of the lifesaving spray.

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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