



TRANSIT TIDBITS

Issue 143 FEBRUARY 2024



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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

FEBRUARY 2024

“Without Valentine’s Day, February would be, well, January.”

Jim Gaffigan

FALL CONFERENCE

September 13, 2024, through
September 18, 2024

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

TENTATIVE BOARD MEETING DATES

May 6th and 7th, 2024---Comfort Inn,
Bismarck, ND

July 22nd and 23rd ZOOM Meeting

The Board of Directors is in the process of selecting topics and contacting speakers for the fall conference. Our conference this year will be held in the beautiful city of Rapid City, SD. As we work together and finalize our topics and speakers, we hope to bring together something that will be of interest to everyone.

TRANSIT DAY AT PIERRE A SUCCESS

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

Seeking the ever-elusive constant funding source from legislators, members of the South Dakota Transit Providers Association made their annual trek to Pierre in January.

Congregating in the Senate and the House of Representatives, members set up shops with informational and promotional materials. With no specific bill to present, the contingent spent the morning of January 22nd meeting, greeting, and educating lawmakers and anyone else who may have passed through their area on the virtues of public transit and the daily challenges providers face.



“Transit Day at the Capitol was a huge success,” said SDTP president and Peoples Transit Executive Director Gayle Kludt. “Just being able to mingle and chat with the

legislators in the morning session helps to keep public transit in the forefront of their minds.”

Funding or lack of a constant source is always the main topic of conversation between the providers and the legislators. Sprinkle in the woes of vehicle shortages, over regulation by the federal bodies monitoring transit and discussions take many twists and turns, but it all comes back to funding and what we as providers can do to identify funding sources all can live with.

Following the show outside the Senate and Legislative chambers, the SDTP membership was invited back to sit in the afternoon session. In both instances, a select lawmaker introduced the throng to the members of the two bodies, provided a brief introduction of why we were present and then led the usual standing ovation provided to visitors.

Sen. Randy Deibert and Rep. Roger Chase introduced the transit group to their colleagues. Chase has been an avid supporter of transit in South Dakota for many years and Diebert expressed his support as well. Speaker of the House Hugh Bartles is a board member for Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton, Inc.

“Having the opportunity to be recognized and introduced in the Senate and the House of Representatives was a true highlight for all of us,” said Kludt.

Following the daily activities, the SDTPA invited all legislators from their particular

districts to a social, meal and short program at River Cities Public Transit. The staff at RCPT provided a meal, refreshments and put together a short, but impactful video to complete the night. Several of the lawmakers attending provided remarks as did SD Sec. of Transportation Joel Jundt.



“The dinner and social is just another opportunity to meet the lawmakers, tell our stories and impress on them the importance of the role public transit plays in our communities,” said Kludt.

2024 DTA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

As of today, I have received 23 DTA Membership Forms. Thank you to all who have responded.

TRAINING UPDATE

Contact Information

Rod Graing 701-845-4300

rod@southcentralseniors.org

PASS training classes will be held in Ft. Yates ND, Tuesday and Wednesday March 12th-13th. Registration deadline is March 4, 2024. If you have drivers/staff in need of training or re-certification and would like more information about this class, please contact Rod using the information listed above.

Interested in becoming a PASS trainer? PASS Train the Trainer certification can be done online through CTAA or at this summer's CTAA Expo, June 9th-12th in West Palm Beach, Fla. If you or someone from your agency is interested in becoming a certified PASS trainer, please contact Rod at 701-845-4300.

TRANSIT SAFETY HOW AT RISK ARE WE

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

How safe do you feel as you perform your daily tasks as a transit professional? The Federal Transportation Administration has seen a rise in the number of assaults – especially on drivers since 2008.

This is a subject we should all be discussing whether you are a bus operator in an urban setting in the Dakotas or driving a van across the wide-open country in the least populated rural areas of our states. The threat, while more prevalent in densely populated areas of the country, still exists in our area.

From 2008 to 2021, the National Transit Database documented an average of 241 reportable assault events on transit workers. These include 192 assaults per year occurring in or on transit vehicles, 44 per year in transit facilities, and five per year in other non-public locations, such as maintenance shops and yards.

The number of assaults has certainly risen in the CTWSI area, especially in the last three years. We have been witness to threats of passengers “kicking our drivers butt” to threatening to shoot a driver in the head if he didn’t stop. We had another driver accused of kidnapping a rider because the driver would not drop the rider at a location where he wasn’t supposed to go.

Physical assault on a Transit worker is defined as *“an assault in which the attack involves physical contact with the transit worker. This could include any physical contact with the victim from the attacker's body, a weapon, a projectile, or other item.”*

Non-Physical assaults on a Transit worker are defined as *“An assault in which the attack involves no physical contact with the transit worker. This could include threats or intimidation that did not result in any physical contact with the transit worker.”*



Additional detail should include: the times of day of the assault, if operator compartment barriers were in place on the vehicle where the assault took place, if there was a silent alarm or audio/video surveillance equipment installed on the vehicle or in the facility. The information tracked should also include whether assaults involved physical, verbal harassment, threats of violence, spitting and if the assaults involved weapons and if law enforcement responded to the incidents.

Earlier this month, transit providers were required to fill out reports on assaults using the information mentioned above. The NTD records the financial, operating and asset condition of transit systems and provides public information and statistics. With the rise in assaults, the NTD is now tracking those numbers.

The FTA has been fielding comments on the subject, but that opportunity was slated to close on Feb. 20, 2024. Hopefully all providers are taking these threats seriously and taking necessary precautions to protect employees.

DTA BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 5th and 6th, 2024

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

The DTA Board received a request from two transit individuals asking if they could attend the February Board Meeting. The Board welcomed their interest in DTA.

Here are two quote we received after the meeting from the attendees – “I was impressed with the work you all have put into this and the way you work together and listen to everyone.” 2nd quote- “It was informative to see you all work together and helped to build my interest in working with the board in the future.”

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

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