



TRANSIT TIDBITS
Issue 147 JUNE 2024

**THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH
OF JUNE 2024**

**There is *always, always*
something to be grateful
for**

**TENTATIVE BOARD
MEETING DATES**

July 22nd and 23rd ZOOM Meeting

TRAINING UPDATE

Contact Information
Rod Graing 701-845-4300
e-mail:

rod@southcentralseniors.org

Pass training will be held in Fargo ND, July 16th and 17th. Registration deadline for this class is July 8th. Please contact Rod to register or visit the DTA website www.dakotatransit.org for more info on this class.

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Are you or someone from your agency Interested in becoming a PASS trainer? CTAA now offers PASS - Train the Trainer certification 100% online. It's never been easier to become a PASS trainer.

If you have drivers/staff in need of training or re-certification and would like to schedule a class, please contact Rod using the information listed above.

FALL CONFERENCE September 13, 2024, through September 18, 2024

Jacque Senger, Executive Director

REMINDER.....We will be at the Holiday Inn Rapid City Downtown-Convention Center in Rapid City, SD. Phone number **605-348-4000**. Our rooms have been blocked off so please make your reservations now.



PROPANE BUS AND INFRASTRUCTURE RIBBON CUTTING

Barb Cline, Director
Prairie Hills Transit

SD Senator John Thune visited Prairie Hills Transit personally on May 28th, 2024 to meet with transit staff and take the opportunity to see the new propane buses, view the newly installed propane-powered graphics, and see the propane fueling station. He took time to get a good look at the undercarriage of a propane bus, sit in the driver's seat, and experienced starting the newly delivered bus. Senator Thune could not schedule remarks at the ribbon cutting the next day but wanted us to know how important the introduction of low-emission buses is to the State and

how much he appreciated the work of public transit agencies in South Dakota.



SD Senator John Thune

On May 29th Prairie Hills Transit held a ribbon cutting in Spearfish to showcase the first two propane-powered transit buses to the State and demonstrate the on-site propane fueling station. The event was extremely well attended and hosted several prestigious speakers in the hour-long ceremony. South Dakota Department of Transportation Secretary Joel Jundt, Community Transportation Association of American Executive Director Scott Bogren, Spearfish Mayor John Senden and Executive Director of Transit ROUSH Clean-Tech Randy Veenhoven all took the podium.

Secretary Jundt said, "Every bus ride taken represents a journey toward empowerment, independent, and opportunity." Mayor Senden noted "Adding buses reliant on cleaner and potentially renewable energy is important." "This is a good reminder that national leadership happens in places like Spearfish, SD" offered Scott Bogren. Veenhoven concluded the event by applauding the efforts of the PHT team for their innovative processes in bringing propane to their transit system.

About 90 percent of propane used in the US is produced domestically and generally, it is either reclaimed or recovered from production processes for other fuels. As a result, propane prices will often dip below the ones gas vehicle drivers are used to paying at the pump.

The buses were delivered by Davey Coach, vinyl wrap installed by Sierra Design, and a fueling demonstration by Norm Stevens with McGas Propane. Misty Caldwell designed and decorated a beautiful cake and novelty cookies for the event.

The attendance of Derek Whaley, Chelsea Uphaus and Randy Veenhoven with Roush Clean Tec were instrumental in assisting with every aspect of the marketing/advertising process to make this event a success. Executive Director Barb Cline and Deputy Director Lisa Johnson want to thank everyone for the calls and emails of support. It's times like this when we realize how close our transit network is.



Susan Fossen, Director
Benson County Transportation

Hello Everyone from Maddock, ND, home of small town rural public transit.

A brief summary of the transit service we offer is that being highly rural, our residents must travel distances to go anywhere!

Located 40-50 miles minimum from closest health care makes travel hard especially for the elderly who don't care to drive in bigger towns.

We offer weekly trips to larger towns like Devils Lake, Harvey, and Rugby and monthly trips to the 'big' cities of Minot, Grand Forks, Bismarck and Jamestown. We offer other destinations as well.

We also don't transport bus loads. A lot of the time it's just one person. We offer door to door service on demand response. We offer our service to county residents, which is 1439 square miles.

With that said, we like to think we offer a service that is important. We can transport individuals with mobility issues with a ramp van or a wheelchair lift van. For those who are able, and especially for those 200+ mile round trips, we offer transportation in a minivan where comfort in riding is much more enjoyable.

That in a nutshell is Benson County Transportation.



NEW DRIVER
Gayle Kludt, Director
People's Transit

Hello! My name is Simba S'bu, or Simba as my Mom calls me. I have been hired as a new driver for People's Transit in Huron. My qualifications are quite extensive. I excel in meeting and greeting, which is the epitome of traits for customer service. I am alert and attentive. My senses are always on high alert which makes my driving skills second to none. My senses can also get me in trouble. I have exceptional hearing so am easily distracted by passengers, other dogs, birds, the wind, my mom,

potato chip bags, my squeaky toys, and pretty much anything. Oh, and my sense of smell is incomparable which may cause further distractions. I like to smell vanilla, coconut, lavender, dead things, rabbits, and other dog's (you know what I mean). My Mom is glad people don't greet each other that way! I have great vision but not strong in distinguishing colors. This does prove problematic at stop lights. However, my night vision is stellar, so I don't need to use headlights. As an equal opportunity employer, my mom says People's Transit will not discriminate based on breed. So, labs, corgis, dachshunds, poodles (I personally think they are a little hyper), great danes, German shepherds (they can be so strict, again my personal opinion), and even Heinz 57's are welcome. And the benefits are some of the best in the business. I receive annual vet visits, I get my vaccinations, and there was that one time I woke up at the vet and my bark was a much higher pitch! All in all, I love my job!

ATTENTION TRANSIT DIRECTORS TRANSIT TIDBIT'S NEW SECTION

Rod Grafing, Training Coordinator

Would each of the Transit Directors like to offer your drivers a new challenge? Help us out. Share the message below with your drivers. Thank you!

DTA Transit Tidbits is seeking submissions to appear in a NEW section focused on the heart of the transit industry, its drivers. We would love to hear their advice, opinions, tips, humor and stories as they relate to their career as a driver in the public transit sector. We believe the Dakotas have a vast and untapped wealth of information, experience and entertainment amongst the many drivers out on the front lines every day and what better place to share it than the publication dedicated to transit news and information in our region? If you are interested in submitting an article for this NEW section, all you need is a title and 200 words (more or less) on a subject of your choosing. We would love to hear from you! Articles

must be submitted before the 10th of each month via email or US Postal mail to the following addresses:

Email: jacquelinesenger@gondtc.com

Postal Mail: Jacqueline Senger

PO Box 973

Devils Lake, ND 58301

PASS MASTER TRAINER

Barb Cline, Director

Prairie Hills Transit



Many of you will remember the long time PASS Master Trainer Jim Holman. Jim trained thousands of drivers and individuals across the nation for many years. Jim not only trained but served as the expert behind the work that went into the development of the certification course still used by hundreds of individuals who teach the PASS certification course and renewal. The CTAA Rodeo was one of the things that Jim loved and he served as the Course Marshall for over 20 years.

Many of us in North and South Dakota attribute Jim with our skills as PASS trainers. Kathy Holman and Jim had a long standing joke about him being the only "whole man" she'd know when of course she is married to "another" Jim Holman.

Known for his humor and expertise, it was with great joy that Kelly Shawn and I were able to

grab a few minutes with Jim and recognize him for his amazing contribution to the transit world. Jim currently resides in Florida.

PASSING OF THE TORCH Stacy Strickler, ROCS Coordinator

Dear Friends of Transit, we are excited to congratulate Scott Finck and Andrea Irwin on the next chapters in their careers. As of May 31st, 2024, Scott has officially retired as acting Transit Director and has passed the torch to Andrea Irwin. Scott is looking forward to the next chapter in his journey. As for our Transit team, we will continue to move forward and upward.

Scott Finck



Andrea Irwin



COMMUNITY TRANSIT RECEIVES LOW-EMISSION BUSES THROUGH FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAM

The following article was written by Mimi Larsen, Staff Writer for Sisseton Courier Newspaper. We received their approval to print this article in our Transit Tidbit.

Community Transit has taken possession of new propane-fueled buses. The company that says, “We’re

here to get you there,” will be doing just that in Sisseton with one of two company buses funded by a Federal Transportation Administration “Low emission/No emission” bus grant that was part of a pilot program.

Kathy Holman and Terry Hoffman are co-directors of Community Transit, with Holman manning the Sisseton office, and Hoffman the Watertown office. The two worked together to write the FTA grant, and the company was one of five public transit agencies in the state to receive the new propane buses.

The grant involved more than getting quotes of the cost of the new propane buses.

“The tricky thing,” said Holman, “was that we had to make sure we knew propane would be available for the buses and that the fuel source would have the proper coupling adapter to be able to fill them.”

Sisseton’s Lakes Gas and Watertown’s Sioux Valley Coop stepped up and said they’d make it work. A service company in Watertown agreed to have their mechanics certified to service the buses.

The two buses were delivered to Watertown on Friday, May 31, and sent straight in to receive their graphics and telephone number. Watertown’s bus went into service the following Monday, and Sisseton’s the following Wednesday.



The transit bus that people see traveling around Sisseton is merely the tip of the iceberg for Community Transit. The company that started almost 50 years ago in Sisseton now has 80 employees driving 66 vehicles in 12 counties. In 2023, the company logged over 750,000 miles giving 181,000 rides.

As Holman says, “We’re carrying some of the most vulnerable population.”

Community Transit is a non-profit organization and relies on federal, state, tribal, veteran, and city funds to provide those services. In-town service is subsidized with federal funds, making it possible to provide rides for only \$1.00. Out-of-town service costs depend on the number of miles and the number of passengers, though Holman says that no one is denied services due to an inability to pay. Specialized services provided by Community Transit are contracted by other local entities.

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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