



IN THIS ISSUE

TRANSIT TIDBITS
Issue 150 OCTOBER 2024

**THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH OF
OCTOBER 2024
KIND WORDS COST NOTHING**

**There is a DTA Board Meeting
Scheduled for November 18th and
19th 2024
At the Baymont Hotel in
Jamestown, ND**

**NATIONAL RTAP – SAVE THE DATE
Neil Rodriguez**



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**FTA: CIVIL RIGHTS TRANSIT
REQUIREMENTS & HOT TOPICS**
Maureen Wegenke, Transit Director
James River Public Transit

Ms. Younger-Riehl delivered a wonderful and insightful talk and discussion regarding new,

and old requirements under Title VI, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program.

An example of some of the reminders:

- Vehicles are not to be reported under the DBE report and only federal funds used are to be reported. (Operating – 50%, Capital – 80%, and Admin – 80%).
- When reporting RTAP, as in other reports, drop the cents. If you do not have enough budgeted in your RTAP, you may put any excess in your 5311. (ex: registration in Operating and travel/meals in Admin.)
- Pre-authorizations are only needed for out-of-state travel/conferences.

This is just a small example of all the helpful information Eboni reported. There was also much discussion on previously reported information on what, we as transit agencies should define as a “Service Animal”. Different government agencies have varying definitions. For transit agencies, any animal that has been trained to perform a task to benefit an individual with a disability is to be considered a service animal. You may ask what task it performs, but you may not ask for training certification. These animals also must be kept under control. You may require a leash, if it doesn’t interfere in the task needed from the animal.

One thought to keep in mind for most A.D.A. questions is that people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else. (i.e. if you require seatbelts for all passengers, that will include clients with wheelchairs and vice versa).

Eboni gave information on the facility Equity Analysis, Public Participation Plan, changes in DBE (new tiered approach, which provides better data) ADA complaint processes, language assistance plans and so much more. She was knowledgeable, yet down-to-earth. I, for one, hope to see her back at the 2025 DTA Conference!

DTA ROADEO 2024

Adam Sharkey, Deputy Director
River Cities Public Transit

Saturday, September 14th, couldn’t have been a better day to have the DTA roadeo. Thirty-four drivers showed up to represent their agencies and show off their skills. They started their day with a written test and a driver’s meeting. Terry Hoffman answered their questions and, once completed, distributed their tests.

When all the were done, the drivers were escorted to the course for their walkthrough. Each driver got the opportunity to walk the course and ask any questions pertaining to the course. The roadeo took off, and the drivers went to their starting stations. Each driver had to complete a driving course, pre-trip inspection, passenger assistance, and a TSA pre-trip. The TSA pre-trip was not judged as part of the roadeo but was a fantastic addition. Drivers were given 5 minutes to find any suspicious packages or items left on the bus and describe them in detail.

1 pm hit, and all contestants were done; the course was being taken down, and buses

were being returned. The day couldn't have been better. Over 40 volunteer judges showed up to help judge and support their drivers. The roadeo couldn't go as smoothly as it does without each one of them. A BIG thank you to everyone who took the time to come out, judge and support their staff!

This year the DTA board introduced a new award, Rookie of the Year. This award was to be presented to the rookie DTA drivers who scored the highest in the roadeo in their state. A fun fact: both rookies who took home the new award also placed in the top 5. Another BIG congrats to the rookie drivers.

I want to personally thank everyone who showed up to help judge and to all the drivers who competed. It was a great day, and it took all of us to make it happen.

Rodeo Winners

South Dakota Awards

- 1) Bryce Lambert (RCPT)
- 2) Chad Simon (ROCS)
- 3) Doug Syman (Prairie Hills Transit)
- 4) Doug Herr (CTWSI)
- 5) Timothy Torres (CTWSI)

Rookie of the Year: Doug Syman
(Prairie Hills Transit)

North Dakota Awards

- 1) Brenda Reed (Souris Basin Transit)
- 2) Terry Holland (West River Transit)
- 3) Ray Adams (Dickinson Public Transit)
- 4) Sheri Harsche (Standing Rock Transit)
- 5) Andrew Almer (MATBUS)

Rookie of the Year: Andrew Almer
(MATBUS)

2024 DTA VENDOR SHOW

Barb Cline, Director
Prairie Hills Transit

Trade Show 2024 was without a doubt one of the best shows in years. Bus dealers showed up in full force and had some great vehicles and products to show. Thanks to both Prairie Hills Transit and River Cities Transit for providing recently purchased vehicles for several of our dealers.

Booth fees of \$13,950.00, advertising of \$1,550.00, sponsors of meals/breaks \$12,500.00 and awards of \$2,000 created over \$30,000.00 in revenue. Thanks to several of our vendors we had an additional seven awards sponsored at no cost to DTA as well as several thousand dollars in sponsorships for the evening event on Tuesday.

Several vendors provided great feedback that is important for everyone to remember so I'd like to share a few of it. "We appreciated dedicated exhibitor time without sessions and during lunch"; "The specification writers were available to discuss bids going out in October"; "Six bus deals brought equipment to show attendees"; "Great to have Caleb Strickland with Diamond (OEM representative) there"; "Great food and social event to network with customers". If you have any comments or ideas for next year, I'm sure it would be appreciated.

Many thanks to all of you for spending time with the vendors in their booths and at the Trade Show. They appreciate your support as

much as we appreciate theirs. Thanks for helping me make Trade Show 2024 one of the best in 40 years.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT EMPLOYEES

Pat Hanson, Director

South Central Adult Service Council

Carol Wright-Kenderdine presented a session on Dealing with Difficult Employees at the Fall Conference. As we all know, we all have someone who is hard to deal with. Often it is behavior that has worked for them in the past and as long as we allow it, it will continue.

Difficult people are usually a result of conflicting personalities not because of intentional behaviors. Carol listed several types of people including Exploders, Aggressive Employees, Complainers and Know-it-Alls. Clear personnel policies can help protect us from these employees. Difficult people can change if they are motivated to work on their behavior. It is important for managers to stay in control of their own emotions, so their attitude doesn't aggravate the situation.

Some suggestions for dealing with problems included not ignoring the problem, remaining calm, listening to what is really going on with the person, evaluating the behavior and provide clear feedback. Develop a plan for dealing with the behaviors and make sure to document everything that is said. If possible, let the employee come up with some solutions for the problem.

People can often forget that kindness is free. Lead by your example!

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND MENTORING: A WIN/WIN FOR EVERYONE

Andrea Irwin, Transit Director

ROCS

During the 2024 fall conference, we had several great speakers, including Carol Wright, who took the time to talk with us about the importance of succession planning and mentoring. Carol has an extensive background in transportation and specializes in transit leadership development, strategic planning, and transit management training. She explained that the key to a good plan is to be prepared. Your leadership teams have worked hard to build your transit programs, but will the program be able to continue forward if you unexpectedly lose key personnel?

She provided us with steps that should be taken in an emergency and a planned succession plan. Your emergency plan should state how the plan is activated. Who is responsible for deciding? It should identify a chain of command and who in the agency is responsible for what, and it should contain a communication strategy to deliver the message. In a planned succession plan the requirements will be different. You will need to determine the amount of notice required, how the agency will fill the position, what

information needs to be shared and if the outgoing director will help train the incoming director. In either case, the board of directors should be involved in the succession planning process and should help create the succession plan.

Carol shared with us the top 5 steps in succession planning.

1. Identify key areas and positions
2. Identify capabilities among staff
3. Identify interested employees and assess them against the capabilities needed
4. Develop and implement succession and knowledge-sharing of key information
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of your plan

By planning ahead, you are preventing disruption of services, stalled projects, decreased employee morale, and a lack of direction in the agency. By following these steps, we are providing the agency with sustainability and opening up the door for mentoring and training of current staff to be ready to take on new roles if the situation arises.

“BATA Bus 40”, wins 2nd Place in National Annual Art Contest

Kristine Madsen, Mobility Manager
Brookings Area Transit Authority



The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) held their annual Art/Photo Contest in August 2024. Winners of the contest were notified on September 5th.

National RTAP 2024 Art/Photo Contest, themed “The Art of Transit”, celebrates the creative side of transit. The annual contest is open nationally to transit staff and riders. The contest asks artists to create a piece that depicts rural or tribal transit that includes an original artistic image of a bus, bus stop, driver, and/or riders.

Kristine’s painting was created with acrylic paint on a 16”x20” black canvas.

Awards were paid to the artist: First Prize: \$400, Second Prize: \$200, Third Prize: \$100. Winners also received plaques, and all entries also received certificates. All entries are showcased on National RTAP social media outlets and will be on display at upcoming conferences throughout the year. View the RTAP [Facebook album](#) showing all the entries.

Judging Criteria

- Photo quality
- Artistic design
- Originality
- Creative depiction of this year's theme:
The Art of Transit

Winners:

1st - "Connecting Community" – Kevin Tafoya,
Assistant Manager, Cherokee Transit,
Cherokee, NC.

2nd - "BATA Bus 40" – Kristine Madsen,
Mobility Manager, Brookings Area Transit
Authority, Brookings, SD.

3rd – "I Love Brazos Transit District" – Sonya
Tijerina, Human Resources, Brazos Transit
District, Bryan, TX.

Honorable Mention – "Bus 66" – John Lobser,
Steamboat Springs Transit, Steamboat, CO.

Honorable Mention – "Sweet Rides and
Cookeville Pride" – Jacklyn Medley, Mobility
Manager, Upper Cumberland Human
Resource Agency, Cookeville, TN.

For more information and to see all the
entries, check out:

<https://www.nationalrtap.org/News/Photo-Contest>

JOB OPENING

Tamara Hofland

Southwest Transportation Services

Southwest Transportation Service, dba SW Public Transit, is a private non-profit agency that provides public transportation to all in four counties of rural southwest N.D. We are beginning the process of looking for a full-time Director-In-Training with strong supervisory and communication skills. This individual should also be very organized. The individual would transition to Director.

Computer skills are necessary with knowledge of QuickBooks and Excel helpful. Duties include monthly billing & invoice payments, deposits, budgeting, compiling statistics, completing State & Federal reports, payroll with taxes & reports.

Position is Monday - Friday with no weekends and no holidays.

Benefits include fringe, vacation pay, paid holidays, sick leave, bereavement leave.

Questions about this position may be directed to the current Director at swtransit@ndtransit.org.

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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