



TRANSIT TIDBITS

Issue 156 APRIL 2025

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH OF
APRIL 2025

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

DRUG & ALCOHOL CONFERENCE IN KANSAS CITY

Natalie Remund, HR Consultant
Community Transit of
Watertown/Sisseton, Inc



**SD Group at Drug Alcohol Conference in
Kansas City – Left to right—Natalie
Remund, Stephany Weed, Barb Cline, Lisa
Johnson and Ryan DeRouchey**



IN THIS ISSUE

Drug & Alcohol	Page 1-4
General Membership Form	Page 4
FYI	Page 4
Training Update	Page 4
Leadership Watertown	Page 4-6
REMINDER	Page 6

The 18th Annual FTA Drug and Alcohol Program Conference was held this year March 18th-20th in Kansas City, Missouri. FTA Drug and Alcohol Program Mangers, FTA Drug and Alcohol Project Office staff, DOT Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance

(ODAPC) staff, and Cahill Swift consulting firm staff (DTA's auditors) presented a variety of information related to FTA's Drug and Alcohol regulatory requirements (49 CFR Part 655), along with the USDOT Drug and Alcohol regulatory requirements (49 CFR Part 40). They shared best practices, general information, guidance, and interpretations. Natalie Remund, Community Transit's Human Resource consultant, attended the conference and gained a broader understanding of all topics related to Drug and Alcohol program administration and compliance.

Day 1:

Day 1 was dedicated to Beginner Drug and Alcohol Program Manager (DAPM) Training. The session was presented by George Gilpatrick and Bryalis Torres-Serrano from Cahill Swift.

Session started out with discussing the history of the program. In 1991, the US Congress recognized the need for a drug and alcohol-free transportation industry and passed the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act which directed the Department of Transportation to implement drug and alcohol testing policies and procedures for safety-sensitive transportation employees. This created 49 CFR Part 655: Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations and 49 CFR Part 40: Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Program.

These two parts guide employers that are covered by regulations in implementing drug and alcohol policies, hiring requirements, testing requirements, handling positive results appropriately, and submitting annual reporting information to the DOT. Community Transit falls into the regulation requirements as they receive FTA funding in the form of 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas. A myriad of information was covered during the day 1 session including: why we test, types of tests, program requirements, prohibited substances: drugs, prohibited substances: alcohol, refusals, pre-employment testing, random testing, post-accident testing, reasonable suspicion testing, records storage and retention, confidentiality, MIS reporting, collection site procedures, etc.



Day 2:

Several breakout sessions were offered during Day 2. Natalie attended The Return-to-Duty Process, How to Become Your Own Collector, DOT Test Refusals, and Non-Negative Test Results and How to Handle them.

DOT allows regulated employers to determine if they will maintain a “Zero Tolerance” policy or a “Second Chance” policy. Note that Community Transit has a Zero Tolerance policy for drugs and alcohol: “Per CTWSI policy, any employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol (BAC at or above 0.04) or refuses to test will be referred to a Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) **and terminated from employment.**” Not also that employees who fail to submit to testing as required by their employer are considered to have refused the test. It should be noted that a refusal is the same as a failed test. In some cases, the employer is responsible for determining if a refusal happened, sometimes the Medical Review Officer (MRO) is responsible for determining, and in other cases, a Physician may be involved to determine if a refusal has taken place.



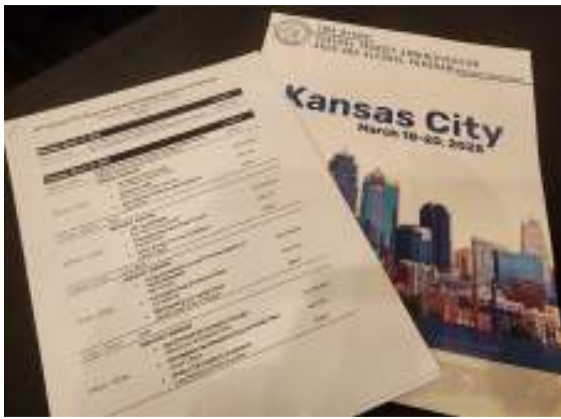
Day 3:

Day 3 started with a morning breakout session on How to Assess Your Own Compliance and then a main stage presentation for ODAPC Updates, Oral Fluid

Testing, and a brief presentation on “One Pill Can Kill”, a partnership effort with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to help spread the word on the dangers of Fentanyl. In 2023, the DEA seized more than 80 million fentanyl-laced fake pills and nearly 12,000 pounds of fentanyl powder. In 2024, the fentanyl seizures represent over 367 million deadly doses. Just 2 mg of fentanyl equates to a potentially deadly dose.

(<https://www.dea.gov/onepill>). DEA’s message is “Stand Up. Speak Out. Fight Back.” Oral Fluids Testing has been a potentially exciting development that employers have been watching since the DOT approved oral fluid (saliva) testing in May 2023. On November 5, 2024, the DOT published a final rule which was effective December 5, 2024. Although the final rule was issued and the policies and procedures are in place, the DOT is still waiting for the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to certify the devices that can be used for oral fluid testing, along with certifying a minimum of two laboratories (one to serve as a primary laboratory and a second to serve as a split-specimen laboratory). HHS is responsible, in all cases, for certifying DOT laboratories, verifying the drugs tested and the science behind it, and creating the electronic CCF form which is used by the collection sites. And so, employers wait until the certification process has been completed by HHS and then they will determine whether or not they (and

the collection sites they work with) want to implement oral fluids testing as an addition, or alternative, to traditional urine testing. Overall, the conference provided a lot of information in a short period of time and was well organized. Natalie had the opportunity to connect with other South Dakota transit providers represented at the conference from Ride Line in Aberdeen, People's Transit of Huron, and Prairie Hills Transit in Spearfish.



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP FORMS FOR 2025

REMINDER

To all our members....if you have not sent in your 2025 DTA Membership Form, please do so as soon as possible.

JUST AN FYI

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUBMIT
YOUR DTA AWARD NOMINATIONS.
IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY.

TRAINING UPDATE

Contact Information

Rod Graefing 701-845-4300

e-mail:

rod@southcentralseniors.org

UPDATE: PASS training will be held in Aberdeen SD on Thursday, May 29 and Friday, May 30. The deadline for registration is Wednesday, May 21. PASS training classes will be held in Bowman ND, June 16 & 17. The deadline for registration for this class is Monday, June 2nd. For more information or to register for either of these classes, please contact Rod.

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. Please contact Rod for more info.

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

LEADERSHIP WATERTOWN

Terry Hoffman, Co-Director CTWS

When Community Transit of Watertown/Sisseton became a reality in the fall of 2019, the names and faces of future

leaders wasn't a concern. The current leadership would be there for years to come.



Melisa Bump, Class of 24

Not long after CTWSI began operations, the term succession plan was tossed on the table. Fast forward to 2024 and a new Assistant Director is in place and has graduated from CTAA's Emerging Leaders Academy and the initial piece of that Succession Plan is in place.

Prior to Jennifer Boehm's hire as the AD and her completion of the ELA, other CTWSI employees were taking advantage of the Leadership Watertown program. Tara Mayfield (Watertown lead dispatcher) and Melissa Bump (Milbank project coordinator) completed the eight-week training session provided by the Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce.

"I was never really comfortable leaving my comfort zone, but this experience gave me confidence in myself and the knowledge on how to improve myself and my abilities at the workplace," said Maifield. "Learning from

other business leaders about the importance of leading but also having the ability to work alongside others as a team and build a strong foundation was important."



Tara Manifold, Class of 23

Leadership Watertown is designed to acquaint program participants with the knowledge necessary to effectively participate in community affairs by exposing them to community structure, problems, resources, people and decision makers. Leadership Watertown helps enhance the community's composition with a well-founded base of informed leaders.

"It was a great experience to learn about leadership from active leaders in the area," said Bump. "Knowing that they weren't just giving advice, but actual experience from their own lives made it more interesting and engaging."

Course coverage includes networking activities featuring professional headshots, leadership speaker sessions, social hours, business tours, speakers, fun social activities, entrepreneur panel and more.



Vereena Faehnrich, Class of 26

Vereena Faehnrich (Watertown dispatcher) is the 2025 CTWSI participant in the program. Her initial class was wiped out by the weather. Imagine that.

"I'm very excited to attend the leadership courses," said Faehnrich. "I feel this will be a great opportunity to learn and grow skills that will be beneficial in my everyday life."

Many people are blessed with leadership skills, some realize it and some not so much. These two programs have made a visible difference in the participants at work and in their personal lives.

Each student joining the Leadership Watertown class will receive "The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader" by John C. Maxwell. This book will be the basis of several sessions including "What Do Leaders Look Like: A Lesson in Character Leaders

Who Listen; A Lesson in Communication; The Legacy of Leaders and A Lesson on Relationships and Servanthood.

HR Consultant Natalie Remund has been instrumental in getting CTWSI involved in the program. She has handled the recruiting and registration process as well as seeking scholarships to pay for CTWSI participation.

"I am grateful for the partnership that Community Transit has with the Watertown Chamber of Commerce and their inclusion of our team members to the Leadership Watertown class these past 3 years," said HR Consultant Natalie Remund. "I believe that leaders are made, not born, so everyone has the potential to become a good leader."

REMINDER

Our 2025 DTA CONFERENCE will be held September 12th through September 17th.

Host City – Jamestown, ND

Host Hotel – Gladstone Hotel

Phone - 701-252-0700

Roadeo and Conference will be held at the Jamestown Civic Center
Our TENTATIVE Conference Agenda will be on be on the website soon.

Tidbit Articles:

Please contact me with articles for your agency.

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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
www.dakotatransit.org
jacquiesenger@gondtc.com
cell number 701-740-8894