

# Nebraska Transit Trends

January 2006



Drivers completing in Orlando June 3rd and 4th are Barb Hull, Hall Co. Public Transit; Ardis Niederklein, Saline Co. Area Transit; Bobbi Lechner and Carol Graham, Blue Rivers Public Transit. The four managers attending are Jill Cammack, Scott Bartels, Cindy Sanders, and DeAnn Doetker. Cindy and DeAnn received the manager at large scholarships to attend the CTAA EXPO.

*"WE WILL EITHER FIND A WAY OR MAKE ONE."  
~HANNIBAL*

## Calendar of Events 2006

- March 22 NATP Legislative Day - Meet at the Capitol 12:00 p.m. Dutch Treat Luncheon, Snow date March 29.
- April 2006 NATP Driver's Training Sessions
  - April 11 - Gering Civic Center (1050 M. St.)
  - April 12 - Ogallala City Council Chambers
  - April 13 - Holdrege Sr. Center (416 Garfield)
  - April 25 - Beatrice Holiday Inn (N Hwy 77)
  - April 26 - Grand Island, Howard Johnson Hotel
  - April 27 - Norfolk Sr. Center (307 Prospect)
- June 3-4 CTAA National Roadeo - Orlando
- June 6-9 CTAA EXPO & Tradeshow - Orlando
- June 19-20 NATP Managers' Workshop - Columbus
- Sept. 19-20 NATP Driver Training & Statewide Roadeo
- Oct. 22-25 TRB Rural and Intercity Conference - Stevenson, Washington held at the Skamania Lodge
- Dec. 6-8 NACO Annual Conference - Omaha

## *From Georgia's Desk!*

Looking at the 2006 calendar, transit managers and drivers have a full schedule!



Four drivers will be competing in the CTAA National Roadeo in Orlando. Congratulations to Bard Carol, Ardis, and Bobbi on your scholarships! We know you will do your best and hope you bring home the "gold". Four managers will also be attending on scholarships. The two transit managers that will accompany their drivers to the Roadeo/Expo are Jill Cammack (Blue Rivers Public Transit) and Scott Bartels (Saline Co. Area Transit). Recipients of the Manager at Large scholarships are DeAnn Doetker (Chase Co. Public Transit) and Cindy Sanders (City of Guide Rock).

The NATP Legislative Day will be held March 22. I do encourage you to attend. This gives you an opportunity to contact your Senator while at the Capitol. We usually meet for lunch at the Capital cafeteria, information will be mailed later to all.

Just a reminder, the annual April driver's training is approaching. We again will be in six locations. Each day will begin with a session on first aid. Followed by several informational speakers. I look forward to seeing the drivers, they have the most interesting (and fun) stories. Yearly, I have the pleasure of working with the nicest people. Transit personnel relate to their passengers and appreciate the unique experiences! They give as much as they receive.

Transit is the future for our state. We have lots of work ahead for the 2006 year. Nebraskans deserve a great transit system. Working together, we can provide a more professional team.

Georgia Janssen  
NATP executive Director.





Columbus Area Transit Manager, Jean Sharman, with Drivers Rich Pehrson and Celeste Tworek.

Columbus Area Transit (C.A.T.) is based out of Columbus Senior Center located at 2518 14 St. in Columbus, Nebraska. Services is available seven days per week: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday 8-4 ride reservations are encouraged at least day in advance as rides are dispatched and scheduled for drivers. Weekday rides after 4 p.m. and Weekend rides are on-call demand, with pick-up arrangements made directly with the driver. CAT serves all citizens of Columbus, especially seniors (60+), providing transportation within the City Limits. Each of the vehicles, two vans and one bus are equipped with wheelchair lifts and specially trained drivers to meet citizens' need and service. CAT staff includes manager Jean Sharman, dispatcher, a full-time driver and four part-time drivers who share shifts.

CAT is funded by NENAAA, DOR, City of Columbus, Columbus Area United Way and client fares.

CAT invites and encourages you to visit Columbus located at the crossroads of highways US 30 and US 81, in June 2005. Plans are underway to provide a valuable and informative NATP State Conference June 19-21.

Don't miss this one! Hope to see you in June.

Jean Sharman, Manager  
Columbus Area Transit.

At the Annual NATP meeting in Gering this summer, a group was formed to research the ongoing issue of insurance for public transportation providers in the State of Nebraska. This group is represented by: Georgia Janssen, NATP; Carol Maxon, City of Ogallala Public Transportation; Scott Bartels, Saline County Public Transportation; Vicky Goeken, City of Norfolk Public Transportation.

Insurance has become one of the largest financial barriers for public transportation providers in the state. During the past six months we worked with law makers in the state to help us define the problem and look at how we should work on solving this pressing issue.

The first step for this group will be to survey the rural public transportation providers in the state to find out how many people are getting their insurance, how much they are spending and what kind of losses we have. Once we are able to collect this information, we will then be better able to look at the possible solutions and be better prepared to speak about this issue to law and policy makers in the state.

Included in this newsletter is the first survey. We need the help of all public transit providers in getting accurate information to help us better work on this issue. Please return the survey as soon as possible. If you have any questions please contact me at: 308-865-5677 or [jrumery@mnca.net](mailto:jrumery@mnca.net).

I look forward to working with all of the members of NATP on this issue and ultimately help all of us to better provide for the people who count on us.

Jeffery Rumery, CCTM  
Chair, NATP Insurance Work Group

*You're Braver than you believe,  
Stronger than you seem, and smarter  
than you think!  
~A. A. Milne*

### **The Power of Feedback**

The Success we have in our interactions with people often centers on the feedback we give them. Everyday we give positive and negative feedback to the people around us, both at work and at home. Here are a few ways you can make sure your message is well-received:

#### **When Giving Positive Feedback:**

*Do it now.* Don't wait until later, say something right away.

*Be specific.* A simple, "Good job, Kathy" isn't nearly as effective as, "Kathy, I really like what you did with the Swanson case. Excellent heads up and great organization of facts."

*Do it evenly.* If you throw a party for every small success, you diminish the effect of a party for big successes.

*Consider the receiver.* If you are giving feedback to a person that is shy, it may be more appropriate to offer positive feedback in front of a smaller group. Outgoing individuals may be more flattered if you express your satisfaction in front of a larger group.

#### **When Giving Negative Feedback:**

*Control your emotions.* When you are angry, you're more likely to say something you regret. Get your emotions under control before you confront the situation.

*Make it private.* There is no need to offer negative feedback in the presence of others. Let the person know you would like to continue the conversation at a later time.

*Focus on actions and not the person.* When you begin to focus on the person, or blame them in any way, you put up a barrier. Focus instead on the person's actions.

*Be timely.* Negative feedback should be given as soon as possible to curb the possibility that the situation might happen again.

*Define the positive.* Agree on the future expectations for the person and identify specific action steps that can be taken.



Members attending the Governor's Transportation Goal Access Working Group: G. Janssen; J. Erst; J. Ropier; M. Hyde; B. Dulas; Jerry Wray, DOR; C. Jeff Rumery; C. Triebisch; and G. Richards.

The Nebraska Governor's Transportation Goal Access Working Group was formed in October 2004. The purpose of the group is to better facilitate coordination and cooperation between the 62 separate government programs which receive funding for transportation. The group's mission statement is:

"To provide leadership in determining the most effective and efficient use of transportation resources, to identify opportunities and barriers for improved transportation, to coordinate transportation services and funding, for all Nebraskans."

The group is represented by individuals from The Nebraska Department of Roads, Labor and Health and Human Services, Community Action Agencies, The Governor's Office, The Nebraska Public Services Commission, the Department of Education, The League of Human Dignity, a non-profit Transportation provider and others interested in the work of the group. Georgia Janssen is an Ex-Officio member.

This group was formed in response to an Executive Order from the White House and the United We Ride Program, both of which started in February of 2004. It is the intent of both of these actions to break down the barriers between programs providing human service transportation and how we can more effectively and efficiently coordinate transportation.

During the first year, the group had identified barriers in Nebraska and started work on how to reduce the impact these barriers have on people in the state. The Group has also been awarded a grant to help facilitate this process. As public transportation providers we all have a unique perspective on the issues facing individuals in the state who lack transportation. If you have any input for this group, please contact me at: 308-865-5677 or jrumery@mnca.net. Together we will be able to help the work of this group and help our communities, counties and state grow and prosper.

Jeffery Rumery, CCTM

Chair: Nebraska Governor's Transportation Goal Work Group

**"You can do what you have to do,  
and sometimes you can do it even  
better than you think you can."**

**~ Jimmy Carter**

## **Don't be fuelish OR How to Make The Most of Your Fuel \$ Dollar**

Ensure that your vehicle is operating as efficiently as possible - when was your vehicles last scheduled maintenance check?

Check the tires. Properly inflated tires provide less road resistance and can improve fuel efficiency. Also, when was the last wheel alignment?

"Jackrabbit" driving, or abrupt starts and sudden stops can take toll on fuel efficiency. Press down gradually and gently on the pedals, giving your brakes - your passengers - a break. Use your cruise control for highway driving.

Air conditioning may use up to 10% more fuel, more or less depending on the heat. However, opening a window at higher speeds may decrease fuel efficiency because of wind force.

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Congress finally passed, and the President signed, the reauthorization legislation we have all been waiting for. The Section 5311 funding (the rural operating and capital funding) has increased dramatically. The last year of funding prior to the new transportation bill was just over \$2.5 million. The first year's funding under the new bill is just over \$5.5 million. At this time, there are no additional state funds available, so it will require more local matching funds to be able to use more federal funds than you have in the past. The FY 2007 application material will be mailed in the near future, and will not have a limit on the amount of federal funding you can request.

It is nearing the time for NATP Spring Training Sessions, and I would like to encourage our public transportation system's managers to allow their drivers to participate in those sessions. As I said last year, I think it is a very important part of the managers' responsibility to those riding on their vehicles, as well as to the system's sponsoring entity, to have well trained drivers on the road. Throughout the year, when other drivers training is offered, such as the training in conjunction with the annual paratransit rodeo or the driver training offered by the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR). I urge you to have your drivers participate. It is also not too early to begin talking to your drivers and encouraging them to participate in the annual paratransit rodeo.

The rural transit study has been completed, and the final reports are being distributed in January. When you receive them, please review them and be ready to discuss the findings when we gather in Columbus in June for the annual managers conference. We are looking at the possibility of having a mini transit summit with the study being the main topic the afternoon prior to the conference.

Jerry L. Wray  
Transit Liaison Manager  
Rail and Public Transportation Division  
Nebraska Department of Roads

# Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers

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## What is SAFETEA-LU?

SAFETEA-LU is the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equality Act: A Legacy for Users, also known as the new surface transportation reauthorization legislation. President Bush signed the bill into law on August 10, 2005 and it became Public Law 101-59.

The reauthorization of Title 49, Chapter 53, of the United States Code, as amended, provides \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs through FY 2009. These funds include \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs, which represent a 46 percent increase from the funding level in TEA-21 (the previous surface transportation reauthorization law). Transit funding levels will steadily increase over the life of SAFETEA-LU from \$8.6 billion in FY 2006 to \$10.3 billion in FY 2009.

### ***Section 5311 Program***

According to the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), the new authorizing legislation provides rural areas with an increased share of the total federal transit program. The Section 5311 grantees, including total annual revenue, sources of revenue, total annual operating costs, total annual capital costs, fleet size, type and facilities, revenue vehicle miles, and ridership. States will also have to document their contact with the intercity bus industry when certifying that the intercity bus needs in the state are being met. Additional sources of matching funds are permitted under SAFETEA-LU, including direct grants, contracts for service, Federal Lands Highway funds, and Wildlife Refuge funds. There is also a new set-aside for tribal programs.

### ***Section 5310 Program***

The Section 5310 formula program for elderly persons and persons with disabilities will also increase under SAFETEA-LU and there will be a new seven-state pilot project to determine whether expanding eligibility from capitol-only assistance to operating assistance would improve services to elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. Four states have been selected for the pilot (Wisconsin, Alaska, Minnesota, and Oregon), and three more will be selected by the Secretary. Up to 33 percent of each pilot state's apportioned Section 5310 funds may be used for operating expenses (which may not exceed 50% of operating costs less fares).

### ***Job Access and Reverse Commute***

The JARC program will be administered as a formula grant program, rather than a discretionary program, beginning in FY 2006. The formula is based on ratios involving the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in each urbanized area, with 60 percent of funds going to urban areas with more than 200,000 population, 20 percent to urban areas with less than 200,000 population, and 20 percent to rural areas. A local coordination plan is also mandatory for the JARC program. As a formula grant program, the funds will flow directly to the designated recipients in large urban areas and through the states in small urban and rural areas. Up to ten percent of the funds can be set aside for technical assistance. The match requirements for JARC remain at 50 percent.

### ***Small Urban Transit***

While most federal transit funding for small urban areas (those with populations between 50,000 and 200,000) will continue to come from the Section 5307 formula grant program, the method of determining the funding levels has changed. Under SAFETEA-LU, there is a one percent set-aside for transit intensive" small urban areas, and then all small urban areas receive allocations from 9.32 percent of the remaining Section 5307 balance.

# Winter Driving Reminders

Anticipate emergencies and planning a response can greatly lessen injuries and limit property damage.

Beware of icy spots, especially on bridges and in sheltered areas. Icy roads make it difficult to steer or stop. Drive at reduced speeds. Give yourself plenty of time and distance to react to the traffic around you. Slow down gradually when approaching curves and stops.

It is always wise to keep your headlights on, particularly during inclement weather.

**Reminder:** it is unlawful to follow a highway maintenance vehicle (snow plow, trucks, or grader) more closely than 100 feet when it is plowing snow, spreading salt or sand, or displaying a flashing amber or blue light. When conditions permit, drivers may pass a maintenance vehicle.

When following a maintenance vehicle:

- Maintain your distance to avoid collisions and damage from flying sand and salt.
- Move your vehicle to the left of your lane so the equipment operator can see you in the mirror.
- Snowplows cause soft snow to swirl, making it difficult to see the plow and for the plow operator to see you.
- Snowplows usually leave a ridge of snow, making passing hazardous.
- Turn on your headlights and windshield wipers for additional visibility.
- Snow removal equipment may have to slow down, stop or back up. Beware!
- Do not pass until the snowplow reaches a clear area.
- Plowing snow on a multi-lane roadway is often done in tandem (more than one snowplow at a time). Give them plenty of room. Do not pass on the right side and always stay where the operator can see you.

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## 2006 NATP Insurance Survey

The information gained from this survey will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for the survey purposes. None of the responses given will be shared with any agency or office. If you have questions regarding this survey, please contact me at 308-865-5677 or [jrumery@mnca.net](mailto:jrumery@mnca.net)

Please use calendar year 2005 data. Accidents, for our purposes, are the same as those in FTA Drug and Alcohol Guidelines. Please be as specific as you can. Thanks!

- 1) Number of Vehicles: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Number of Boarding: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Number of Miles Driven: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Number of Accidents: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Cost of Vehicle Insurance Policy: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Jeffery Rumery, Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska, PO Box 2288, Kearney, NE 68848-2288