

Nebraska Transit Trends

2016 ROADEO AND DRIVERS TRAINING

The Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers held their Annual Statewide Roadeo at the Nebraska Safety Center in Kearney on September 21. A total of twenty drivers competed in the small bus and mini-van divisions. Thirty volunteers, made up of transit managers and staff, Nebraska Safety Center staff, and others served as judges for the event. Jeff Baker of Seward County Public Transit and Cindy Sanders of Guide Rock Public Transit were once again co-chairs of the Roadeo.

After the Roadeo, everyone who participated attended the awards banquet. Drivers who had been accident-free for the past 12 months received a "Safe Driver" water bottle. Drivers from both divisions were announced and presented with certificates for their participation. Judges were thanked for their participation in making the event run smoothly. Roadeo committee members were also announced and recognized for their hard work.



Clay Hagman and Ron Linke received first place for the small bus and mini-van divisions respectively.



The Roadeo concluded with an Awards Banquet at the Nebraska Safety Center.

Committee members include Jeff Baker, Scott Bartels, Wayne Masek, Cindy Sanders, Denise Smith, Corrina Duckworth, William Bivin and Tiffany Fougeron. The committee met numerous times prior to the Roadeo to ensure a successful event.

The Roadeo competition consists of a written test, pre-trip inspection, wheelchair securement, and a driving skills course. This year's theme was the 1970's. The first place drivers from each division and their managers are eligible to attend and compete in the CTAA National Roadeo in Detroit, Michigan, in June of 2017.

First place winners of both divisions won \$250 and an engraved clock. The second place winners received a \$150 check along with an engraved key ring that features the state seal. Third place winners received a \$100 check.



Winners of the small bus division were Clay Hagman, Hall County Public Transportation, first place; Charles Bluschke, Hall County Public Transportation, second place; and Ken Baldinger, Seward County Public Transit, third place.

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NATP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings to all,

I hope you all took time this Thanksgiving to reflect on all that is good and right in our society. That is something you don't hear often in the media - even now that election campaigning is over. Newspapers, internet, radio are all headlining negative news, tragic stories and the certainty that doom will be upon us tomorrow. It is no wonder that sometimes a person allows these outside influences to dictate how we feel about our circumstances. When all you hear and read are negative points, thoughts or perspectives, it is easy to become discouraged - even hopeless. But this causes me to reflect on an old adage, "Take care of your own back yard." Meaning that if we see a local problem, we need to find a solution that works for us, for our neighbors, for our community. When that is accomplished, most issues will be more easily resolved to everyone's satisfaction. When each community is successful at resolving problems, the county becomes successful. When the counties are successful, the state is successful... and it continues to spread across the country, and yes, even the world. So give thanks for all that is good and lend a hand to fixing what is

not. And thank you for making a positive difference in your community.

The NATP board of directors have been working diligently on recommended bylaws revisions. Much progress was made at our most recent meeting, and I believe that we will have a quality finished product to present for adoption at our next Association meeting. With assistance from parliamentarian Lynna Gene Cook, we were able to navigate through proper procedures on conducting association business when time and distance prevent many members from being able to attend association meetings. This led to our request for a vote on the association's definition of quorum. Thank you to all who voted.

Also, thank you to all the drivers, staff and volunteers who participated in the September drivers training and Roadeo. Once again, it was a great success: providing continuing education to meet training requirements; testing driver knowledge of state law, vehicle inspection, and serving and securing wheelchair passengers; and enabling drivers to hone their driving skills. Congratulations not only to the Roadeo winners, but to all who came to learn, network and exchange ideas.

Public transportation provides Nebraskans thousands of rides each day for work, medical appointments, shopping, social events, and much more. For some of our patrons, public transportation is their lifeline to receiving necessary medical and financial services. It is great to know how dedicated public transit drivers, managers and NATP members are to making sure

that passenger rides equate to an enjoyable experience.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Safe travels everyone.

Scott Bartels
NATP President

PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK

Mark your calendars for the 2017 Public Transit Week which will take place April 9-15.

Order forms for giveaway items will soon be available.

We look forward to seeing what ideas you have for this year. If you need some suggestions, visit <http://nebraskatransit.com/activities.php> for ideas from other transit systems.

NATP BYLAW CHANGE

Thank you to those who voted regarding the NATP bylaw change. 37 people voted: 36 yes, 1 no. The proposed amendment was adopted. The following change was made:

"A quorum for a meeting of the membership shall be 20 members."

JONNIE KUSEK RECEIVES 2016 RURAL MOBILITY CHAMPION AWARD

Jonnie Kusek, Transit Director for Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit, was honored as the first ever recipient of the Rural Mobility Champion Award by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) at the 22nd National Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Conference, held in Asheville, NC, October 2-5, 2016.



The TRB's Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Committee established the "Rural Mobility Champion Award" to honor individuals who have made significant achievements in improving transportation services in rural communities.

Nominees must be involved in improving transportation services in rural communities through activities such as service provision, advocacy, planning, administration, education and training, or research and demonstrations. Involvement can be at the local, state, or federal/national level in public or private sectors. The focus of this award is on significant and measurable improvements in transportation services now being offered to people in rural communities.

The following qualifications demonstrated by nominees must include the following:

- A passionate commitment to improving rural transportation opportunities and operations for people in rural communities.
- The ability to recognize needs and problems in their community and to implement workable ideas and solutions that contribute to improved or expanded rural mobility services or programs.
- Being able to positively influence local and/or state leaders to support local rural mobility programs through advice, advocacy, agreements, education, legislation, or training.
- A record of championing rural mobility causes without the necessity of receiving personal recognition or gain.

The 2016 Nomination and Award Process was open to any person or group involved in any way in rural public, intercity bus, or human services transportation. Nominations were required

to include at a minimum, a description of how the nominee met or exceeded each of the qualifications mentioned previously. Additional consideration was given to persons who are recognized as someone whose contributions were so significant that local rural mobility improvements might not have been possible without their efforts.

Ms. Kusek is employed by Senior Services, Inc. d/b/a Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit, a nonprofit organization based in Alliance, NE, who has envisioned for over 25 years and worked tirelessly for the past 6 years in the rural public transit sector, to see regional bus transportation services come to be for western Nebraska. She is devoted to linking Nebraska citizens and visitors to our state through intermodal means of public transportation. She is determined that those in need will have a means to access vital services such as; physical, mental and preventive health care, veteran services, education, access to food and social interaction and various elements that impact social determinants of health in addressing the needs for overall healthier communities in our region.

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT

NATP sponsored another member appreciation event on September 2. Tickets were provided to ten NATP members (managers, drivers and other transit staff) for the Rodney Atkins concert which took place during the Old West Balloon Fest in Mitchell.

If you have suggestions for future appreciation events, please contact the NATP office.



NATP OFFICE HOURS

The NATP office will be closed on the following days for the holidays.

The NATP staff and board send best wishes to you & your families during the holidays!

December 23 & 26
January 2

2016 ROADEO & DRIVERS TRAINING (CONTINUED)



Mini-van division winners included Ron Linke, Norfolk Public Transportation, first place; Mindy Manning, Florence Home, second place; and Ramona Daniels of Saline County Area Transit, third place.

The Driver of the Year Award went to Ron Linke who had the highest score of the day. He earned 768 out of a possible 1000 points. Ron received a \$50 gift card as a prize and also took home the traveling trophy for winning the mini-van division.



Gwen Maxwell took home the Spirit Award.

For the sixth year, the Rodeo Committee honored someone who exemplified good sportsmanship and also participated in the theme. This year the committee chose Gwen Maxwell of Avera St. Anthony's Hospital as the winner of the Spirit Award.

On Tuesday, the Nebraska Safety Center provided numerous educational sessions which allowed attendees to fulfil some or all of their requirements for the year. The training took place at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney.

Thank you everyone for your participation!



Attendees received hands-on wheelchair securement training.



Course Marshal Jeff Baker leads a walk-through of the course.

2017 CTAA EXPO

Save the Date for the CTAA Expo and Rodeo on June 11-18 in Detroit. Detroit is America's great comeback city. Downtown has been revitalized and the city is buzzing with an infectious new optimism and entrepreneurial spirit. Join us in this great American Renaissance city for the annual Community Transportation EXPO, your chance to collaborate with colleagues from around the nation and across the full spectrum of transportation service providers in a setting dedicated to fresh ideas, innovative products and services, networking and learning. From traditional transit systems to NEMT providers, mobility managers to volunteer operators, EXPO is the confluence of the community transportation field. In addition to important legislative discussions, there will be dozens of training sessions, workshops and networking events that will allow you to advance your understanding of issues, and develop fresh solutions and new approaches.



3rd National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference **TRANSPORTATION AT THE CENTER**

Omaha, Nebraska
October 29-November 1, 2017

Presented by the National Rural Transit Assistance Program

For more information:
nationalrtap.org/conference2017
conference@nationalrtap.org

2016 FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF NEBRASKA CONFERENCE

For the second year, the NATP hosted a booth and was an Empowerment sponsor at the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska Annual Conference. The event was held October 7 at the Ramada Hotel and River's Edge Convention Center in Columbus.

NATP Executive Director, Tiffany Fougeron, attended the event. She was able to provide a short presentation to the group about what NATP members do, what's in store for the future, and how to reach out to our organization.

Fougeron also hosted a booth and provided an informational sheet in Braille along with other giveaway items.

Numerous attendees were thankful for the services that were available in their communities. Many would like to see increased service hours and destinations. Many requested information for transportation systems in their area.



SALINE COUNTY AREA TRANSIT HOLDS HALLOWEEN TRUNK OR TREAT

For the third year since its inception, Saline County Area Transit participated in the Halloween Trunk or Treat held in Western. We helped treat at least 172 trick-or-treaters ranging from Olaf to Frankenstein at one of twenty two trunk or treat stops!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE



Hello everyone!

2016 was a great year for NATP! We had the Legislative Event, Public Transit Week, several Member Appreciation

Events, Transit Midwest Conference and the Rodeo & Drivers Training. NATP also participated in the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska Conference, Nebraska State Fair and the League of Municipalities Midwinter Conference. We will also head to the NACO conference later this month. NATP has also advertised in Nebraska Health Care Association's Keeping You Connected publication and NET radio and sent our brochures to Nebraska DMVs. I look forward to 2017 and what that brings for NATP.

I hope you are enjoying the beginning of the Christmas season – or maybe you started the season in September like some of the stores! Every year I tell myself that I will really slow down and enjoy the season. I dream that I'll volunteer at a local shelter, spend hours baking and delivering perfectly

frosted cookies, drink egg-nog by the fireplace (I don't have a fireplace), go to church more often so I can sing my favorite Christmas carols and the list goes on. Unfortunately, it seems like every year December flies by, and the harsh reality is that I was too busy to enjoy any of it. Does that sound like your December? If you're like me, December turns into a mad rush of trying to get ahead at work (so you don't fall behind after a few days off), madly dashing through the mall to pick up some random, thoughtless gifts for family and friends, baking some Pillsbury cookies at 11:00 p.m. the night before Christmas because you didn't have time to make mom's recipe, running from one family get-together to the next and just feeling exhausted. What I'm challenging myself to do, and encourage you to do the same is the following:

1. Leave work behind! Work ahead as much as you can but don't answer emails while you're with family. No one needs you that badly.
2. Only practice the family traditions that you love. If you're to-do list is way too long, you won't be able to enjoy any of it.
3. Learn to say no. If you don't want to go all of the holiday parties, don't have time to bake

8 dozen cookies for the school program, or can't make it to all of the family get-togethers, just say no!

4. Give less presents and more presence. Your kids and grandkids don't need ALL of the latest and greatest toys. Time spent with you is what they'll remember the most.

5. Give something to someone less fortunate. Whether that be volunteering at a soup kitchen, buying a Christmas present for child in need, or visiting someone at a rest home. There's a certain joy you receive when you give to someone who cannot give anything in return.

6. Eat the dang cookies! Calories, schmalories. Enjoy some indulgence over the holidays. Besides, the calories don't count if they're homemade, right?!? If you're feeling like the Pillsbury Doughboy, download some workouts to do at home. You'll feel a little better!

7. Turn off the TV and play some classic Christmas carols. Added points if the neighbors can hear you sing along!

8. Take a deep breath and remember the reason for the season.

Merry Christmas everyone!

Tiffany Fougeron

NATP MEMBERS ATTEND 22ND NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL PUBLIC & INTERCITY BUS TRANSPORTATION

Asheville, North Carolina, was the setting for this year's 22nd Annual National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation, held October 2-5. The theme for this conference was "Bright Horizons, Rural Innovations, Transportation Solutions." NATP Executive Director Tiffany Fougeron attended the conference along with scholarship winners Brenda Halstead, Cliff Lindell, Janine Iossi, Joyce Deaver, Mitch Sump and Trish Jimenez. Other NATP members Cindy Sanders, Jonnie Kusek and Beth Siegfried were able to make the trip. Kari Ruse and Frank Faughn attended from NDOR.

The conference consisted of numerous workshops, breakout sessions, time with exhibitors and different entertainment options and meals. The leaves were just starting to turn which made such a wonderful view.

A few Nebraska attendees took advantage of the pre-conference Appalachian Trail Hike in the morning. The views were well worth the nauseating drive!



The conference started off on Sunday afternoon with an opening reception. This was a great opportunity to meet with other attendees from across the country, planning committee members, and exhibitors.

On Monday morning, conference co-chairs Jacklyn Montgomery and Patricia Monahan thanked attendees

for coming to the event. A welcome was provided by Julie Mayfield, Councilwoman for the Asheville City Council, and Walt Gray, Chief Deputy Secretary for the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The keynote speaker was Ellen Vanderslice who spoke about "active transportation" which refers to walking, taking transit and riding bicycles.



Following the keynote, attendees had the opportunity to attend three educational sessions. For lunch, FTA's Carolyn Flowers presented the "Roger Tate is Smiling" Award and two Rural Mobility Champion Awards. Jonnie Kusek of Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit received the Rural Mobility Champion Award (see page 3).

After the last session for the day, an Expo reception was held with the vendors.

Tuesday featured different roundtable sessions, numerous breakouts, bus show luncheon and a dinner and tour of the Biltmore Estate.



Wednesday morning started off with a presentation from Jim and Fred Lehrer and then

included a "town hall" meeting and update from FTA.

Brenda Halstead

I can honestly say that the National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation in North Carolina was one of the best I have attended during my years as a transit manager. While it was very fast-paced and difficult to get to everything I wanted to attend, it was full of information. The networking with other providers from different areas of the country was invaluable.

One of the big things was getting to listen to and talk with others who have jumped the hurdles in their areas to grow their programs in very innovative ways. It went beyond getting bus or van routes set up and going. We heard about creating walking and bicycle routes and other "active transportation" ideas being used in remote areas.

Some of the speakers talked about aging, workforce development, ADA compliance, civil rights and the highway corridor link giving service to more than only our local community. There was also a lot of information about technology and how it can benefit us in developing and running our day-to-day operations.

We heard about marketing our programs, building useful and user-friendly websites, transit asset management, how we can link up with local emergency preparedness managers, public-private partnerships, demand-responsive versus flexible routing, and how to better raise matching funds for our programs. There was also useful information about how to help our local officials and the whole community see the benefit of rural transportation.

The roundtables were

interesting and were developed based on questions and topics provided by the general attendees of the conference so they were pertinent and timely.

There were fun activities too such as touring the Vanderbilt estate and eating dinner while there. The "house" (if you can call it that) is a 250 room chateau completed in 1895. It is absolutely beautiful. Even the North Carolina weather cooperated with us throughout the stay.

Another great opportunity was hearing Jim and Fred Lehrer talk about their childhood and growing up in the intercity motor coach business. Jim was the host of the Jim Lehrer PBS NewsHour program.

I will definitely attend this conference again if I am able to get my administration to foot the bill next time. Thanks so much to NTAP for the scholarship and a great chance to see another side of rural transportation.

Janine Iossi

I found the conference to be both educational and inspirational. The amount of resources available at the conference was very beneficial and enlightening. Probably my favorite part of the trip to Asheville was the night we went to The Biltmore Estate. What an incredible estate to tour! It was really great meeting people that are involved in the both transit and transportation industry. The atmosphere was friendly and people seemed excited to be together. The committee did a great job organizing the conference; I felt it ran very well. As a first year conference attendee, I thought they did a great job of making you feel welcome. I am grateful to the NATP for the scholarship opportunity! It opened avenues and contacts that I would never have had before this experience. I would recommend this conference to anyone and I look forward

to hopefully getting another chance to attend in the future. Thanks again!



Cliff Lindell

The conference began with a breakfast provided by one of our hosts, the American Bus Association, in the grand ballroom pre-function corridor and then segued into the welcome and the Keynote speaker addresses.

On the first day I attended a session titled, "The Emergence of Regional Rural Transit Services." This presentation covered such things as the best ways that these three providers worked together with their local politicians and other stakeholders to develop system of transportation for folks living along a pre-existing line of inter city transit to the city of Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. The development required the coordination between public and private entities as they connected along the corridor of travel into MSP.

The other presenters also presented their success in dealing with all levels of participants in order to provide the goal of transportation for everyone. In Oregon it opened up the route from a large city into the rural areas for riding their bikes on National Forest's trails and Recreation Areas in the Cascade Mountains.

That afternoon I went to the Tam rule review from the FTA administrative services of WDC. He reviewed the recent TAM rule implementation date (10/01/2016) and what all it entailed for the monitoring of the vehicles, property and other assets either owned

or leased or even rented in order to maintain the fleet of vehicles used in a state of good repair. The state departments that deal with the local transit providers are responsible for helping them develop the documentation requirements and other facets of the State of Good Repair requirements. (Nebraska DOR is ahead of the game in this area.)

I then went to a roundtable discussion of what is available in the 'toolbox' for monitoring, dispatching, development of bus routes, where the next rider is located and where they want to go on an on-call service provision. Presented by RTAP, they have developed several tools that can use existing technology and how it can help the small provider in the more efficient delivery of services and work towards the reductions of big problems for the vehicles. A wide variety of free GIS tools exist and RTAP also have been developed to help you improve your visibility both online and on the road.

Tuesday dawned cloudy but warm also and the breakfast session I attended was the presentation on how Public Transit is beneficial to the communities. These sessions presented information about how the transit system that was set-up helped employment opportunities for individuals, commerce and personal use for all aspects of living. Research was also reviewed by a presenter from Texas A&M meeting the needs of the elderly and how they are proposing further research into the area through a questionnaire for participants at the conference.

The final session that morning was the presentation for all participants at the Wortham Theatre from a panel of distinguished leaders of the industry including private, public and federal representation. Discussion focused on future possibilities for the industry and a report that the funding had been

secured for a period of time greater than the usual from the Congress.



The last session I attended was the performance and strategic planning series with a presentation that focused on how the State of Maryland had been identifying the relevant population available for providers in a wide variety of smaller communities; then a presentation on the Atlanta-area of interconnecting with and how to survey riders for further indicators for improved performance of the system. The final session was about the dangers of using some of the information that can be discerned from the NTD Database and he presented some ideas in how to filter the information carefully and how to make improvements to the system.

In the afternoon I went to the "Well-Being of Special Populations" session with information from Maryland, Iowa and WDC. The MD presenter reported on how his agency has coordinated and is now providing services for a wide variety of populations that need services, in what in Nebraska would be described as a sub-urban area with not in place due to the wide dispersal of the folks. The Iowa presenter discussed how her company was able to work with the city of Newton, Iowa, after the Maytag plant there closed. They worked with a wide variety of employers and others to set up job fairs and coordinate travel to work sites so that the folks who had worked at Maytag were able to at least have the opportunity for jobs elsewhere in the community and out of the city environs towards Des Moines.

The Washington reporter described how the system was

working in Atlanta and how they had several opportunities for people by using a wireless phone based system (IPAD, I-Phone as well as Android-based phones) for the customers so that they would know when and how long until the driver arrived at their location.

And by the way, the trip to the Biltmore Estate was fabulous, and I would not have missed it for the world.

Joyce Deaver

I would like to thank Nebraska Department of Roads for the generous scholarship which allowed me to travel to Asheville, North Carolina, and participate in the National Conference on Rural Public & Intercity Bus Transportation. This year's theme of "Bright Horizons, Rural Innovations and Transportation Solutions" was evident in many of the breakout sessions.

I started the convention by attending the Appalachian Trail Hike on Sunday which was conducted by Nathan Caldwell from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. Though there were only a handful of us participating in this event at Hot Springs, we were all blessed with great fall weather and beautiful scenery. The hike was 1 ½ miles, but the scenery, lunch and socialization were very enjoyable and relaxing.

The opening reception was very well attended and it was fun helping some of the newcomers with their scavenger hunt questions. I actually learned a lot by helping look up facts on past conventions.



The keynote address on Monday morning by Ellen Vanderslice was a treat. She shared her experience with public transit on her trip to Asheville. She was a joy to listen to because of her positive attitude and great outlook on life and transit.

The wide variety of meeting choices made it hard to pick which meeting to attend, but I was very pleased with most of the speakers and content. Some information did not exactly apply to the little transit service we operate in Cambridge, but it was good to hear other perspectives from larger, rural communities. Mobility management was very interesting to hear about from small to large transit systems.

I enjoyed visiting with a professor from Texas A&M who was originally from Herndon, Kansas, which is close to Cambridge and only a "little spot in the road" in Kansas. She truly understood what rural means to us. I really enjoyed Wednesday morning with the town hall approach to Hot Topics in Transit. It was followed with an open discussion on USDA Economics & Rural Transportation Research Needs. I liked this open discussion format because there was a lot of good conversation that took place that pertained to me and the transit system we operate in Cambridge.

The vendor expo was very good and the vendors were very generous. I also enjoyed looking at the different options in vehicles. National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) was a source that I feel I may utilize. The information from the speaker as well as their vendor table information will be useful to me. As usual, the National RTAP resource catalog is a great resource to us. It is always helpful to see these folks and be reminded of the resources available to all of us that pertains to what we need.

The Renaissance Asheville Hotel was very nice and the food was delicious. One of the rewarding experiences from the trip was the dinner and tour of the Biltmore Estate. What a magnificent chateau this must have been in the 1890's because it still is today.

I truly appreciated the opportunity to attend this worthwhile convention. I also gain as much information from networking with fellow Nebraska transit managers as I gain from meetings. Everyone is always so helpful to answer my numerous questions. Tiffany Fougeron was such a great help keeping everyone posted on what we needed to get registered and kept us updated during the entire event. What a great state we live in!

Mitch Sump

Overall: Positive Experience-I have attended enough trainings, meetings, and conferences over the years to be somewhat cynical, but I try to gain something from each day. I focused on attending sessions that relate to my area and avoided the ones that had no relevance.

Best: The two sessions I got the most out of were "It's Not That Scary" and "We're Here." They both offered information which I can use immediately or with some tweeking. "Using Websites 101" was also good but as I have little to know control over website content it doesn't rank as high as the others. I also had the opportunity to speak with several folks from Mississippi whose areas are similar to mine. One was kind enough to send me some of their marketing ideas to expand services.

Least Helpful: "National Perspectives," the all group session was of little to no use for me personally.

Trish Jimenez

I'd like to start by thanking NDOR for the opportunity to

attend the TRB Conference in Asheville. I had a wonderful time, met lots of people and learned quite a lot about the different rural transportation systems throughout the US.



The majority of the breakout sessions and the keynotes were extremely interesting. A lot of great information was provided, and I came home with a lot of new ideas for how to promote and improve Perkins County Public Transit. Some of the sessions that really impressed me were:

- The Emergence of Regional Rural Transit Services - I find that like probably much of rural Nebraska, there is the need to get people moved beyond our immediate area. Although we (Perkins County) may not have to deal with getting people to metropolitan areas, we are faced with inquiries about getting riders to more populous areas for medical, legal and other reasons

- We're Here! We're Here! Best Practices in Rural, Regional & Intercity Service Marketing - This session gave me some really good ideas on strategies to market our services throughout Perkins County.

- What's the Payback? Is Public Transportation an Economic Benefit to Rural Communities? - Coming from an Economic Development background, this breakout session really interested me. I have always been aware of transportation being a huge part of successful economic development, but I have never had the opportunity to see the benefit of rural transportation until I relocated to Nebraska.

Currently being a Senior

Center Director in addition to a Transit Manager, I thought the research that Texas A&M is conducting is extremely interesting. I think it's exceptionally important that the senior population has the capacity to access transportation to get them to social and other non-medical gatherings.

- It's Not That Scary: Travel Training Your Community - One of the largest barriers in Perkins County is getting people to understand the what (is), why (should I use it), where (can it take me/pick me up) and who (is it for) of public transit. This session was fabulous. The need to teach people how to use public transportation is definitely there. This is without a doubt something I see us developing for Perkins County.

Once again, I can't thank NDOR enough for the opportunity to attend and learn so many new things about Public Transportation.

Jonnie Kusek

I always find the Transit Research Board's National Conferences the best. They are usually the most informative of any that I have ever attended and I always come away with an expanded awareness of what other systems are doing around the country. The educational experience provides a platform that empowers individuals to take away as much or as little information as they choose.

A couple of sessions that really appealed to me (just to name a few), were; The Emergence of Regional Rural Transit Services - I really enjoyed this session as I feel that it pertains to so many systems. It is more than just making the "first and last mile connections." It offered great insight to "tweener" services in addressing rural regional needs that are between true intercity services and local demand response transit systems. Also, there was Transit Esperanto:

Rural, Regional and Intercity GTFS Implementation – As I am not a “techie” I was surprised that I found this session as enlightening as I did. It was very interesting and informative. I never quite knew what all the buzz was about regarding GTFS, even though it is something many of us are exposed to every day and do not even realize it (or at least what it was called). The speakers were informative, kept things moving and there was a wealth of information. It made me want to come home and learn more about Google Transit and GTFS.

The networking that occurs at these types of conferences is such an invaluable resource. Recognizing some

familiar faces and being surrounded by those with such much knowledge of the transportation industry is priceless. I have always felt that if you surround yourself with the “same of everything” every day, that is all you will ever know and experience, is the “same of everything” every day. So coming from a somewhat shy introvert, I would encourage everyone to break out of their comfort zones when attending these types of conferences. Sit by someone you have never met, expand your knowledge and the opportunities that come with meeting new people, share stories and experiences, discover what is going on in the transportation industry across the country and the

hurdles and solutions to issues that we all face, and return home knowing that you are not alone and hopefully you just met someone that is only a phone call away that has an answer to a question you pose.

Oh, by the way, the hotel accommodations were great, Asheville was beautiful and bringing home a national award wasn’t so bad either. Kari Ruse and NDOR, thank you for ensuring I was there to receive it personally.



Alliance Family Establishes Veterans Transportation Memorial Fund



Jonnie Kusek, daughter of the late Keith Herman and Transit Director for Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit, is pleased to announce the collaboration of family support to establish **The Keith Herman Veterans Transportation Memorial Fund**. “We lost our precious Keith this past August to pancreatic cancer and will never forget the kindness and assistance shown by local representatives of the Box Butte County Veterans Services office. Not only did they assist in alleviating additional concerns for us, such as transportation, but he thoroughly appreciated knowing it offered us a little break and him a little independence. He loved his drivers and the social interaction of others and we believe that the change in scenery was just good for his soul. They assisted our family with regional transportation services whenever they could and now we would like to give back to other veteran’s families as long as we are able.”

The fund sponsors boarding passes for Veterans on any of Panhandle Trails regularly scheduled bus routes when transportation services cannot be provided by their local Veterans Service Agency. The boarding passes are valid for connections with other regional intermodal transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation only. All reservations and scheduling of services must be made through the participant’s local Veterans Service Agency.

Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit is the only regional bus transportation serving the general public of all ages in the Nebraska Panhandle. A fund has been established with Senior Services, Inc. d/b/a Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Alliance, NE. One hundred percent (100%) of donated funds will be allocated to the program. Additional bus scheduling options within the region are expected to be implemented by Panhandle Trails by the end of the year. For more information regarding **The Keith Herman Veterans Transportation Memorial Fund**, use of Panhandle Trails Intercity Bus services or to make a donation, please contact Jonnie Kusek at (308) 761-8748.

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**Next newsletter deadline is
February 23, 2017**

Please send your articles and pictures for the Nebraska Transit Trends newsletter to the NATP office by **February 23, 2017**

We want to know what all of our members are doing throughout the state. Also, if you see something newsworthy, be sure to let the office know. Submit your typed articles via email (as a word document) to the NATP office at **tfougerson@youraam.com**. You may include pictures if you like, but be sure to save them as a .jpeg file or they may not be included in the newsletter. Documents received after the deadline will appear in the next newsletter.

Visit Us On The Web!
www.neatp.org

PHOTOS NEEDED

NDOR is putting together a short promo vide for Public Transit Week. Please send pictures of vehicles, drivers, passengers, etc. to Kari Ruse by December 20th.

Dates To Remember**December**

14-16 - NACO Conference
Kearney

March

7-8 - Legislative Event
Lincoln

April

9-15 - Public Transit Week

June

11-16 - CTA Expo & Rodeo
Detroit, MI

20-22 Managers Workshop
Scottsbluff

October

29 - Nov. 1 - Nat'l RTAP Technology Conf.
Omaha, NE

2017 MANAGERS WORKSHOP

Make plans to attend the 2017 NATP Managers Workshop on June 20-22 in Scottsbluff.

We already have a great lineup of speakers with topics on strategic planning, ethics in the workplace, working with local governments, marketing hometown America and making

the most out of your Facebook page. We will also have updates from NDOR and FTA.

The NATP annual meeting will also take place during the workshop.

This is a great way to catch up with old friends, meet some of

the new managers, learn, and refresh!

We hope to see you in Scottsbluff!