

# Nebraska Transit Trends

## 2018 LEGISLATIVE EVENT

NATP held its annual Legislative Event on March 5-6 in Lincoln. The event kicked off on the morning of Monday, March 5 as the group witnessed Lt. Governor Mike Foley sign a proclamation declaring the second week of April as Public Transit Week in Nebraska.

The event then featured training and updates at the Courtyard by Marriott in downtown Lincoln.



*Lt. Governor Foley presents a proclamation for Public Transit Week.*

The training started off with a presentation from Kaitlyn Richardson titled, "Safety: It's Not Just Once a Year." Richardson encouraged managers to develop a culture of safety within their transit systems by involving every employee, leading by example, and by defining safety expectations.



Next, Heidi Uhing from the Unicameral Information Office provided a legislative update. Uhing described how the Nebraska Legislature came to be the only one-house, nonpartisan legislature in the country. She also discussed political, behind-the-scenes aspects of how a bill becomes a law as well as the top current issues that Senators are working on.

After a short break, Anna Brewer, human trafficking investigator for the Attorney Generals office, spoke on human trafficking in Nebraska. The facts and figures were startling, but attendees walked away with information on how to spot clues of human trafficking and who to contact. Visit <http://www.omahawomensfund.org/> for more information.

Following the training, attendees enjoyed an evening in the historic Haymarket District.



The next morning, attendees were invited to a complimentary breakfast at the State Capitol. Invitations were sent to the Senators and many managers personally reached out to their Senators and encouraged them to attend. Due to the inclement weather, many had to head home early.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event!

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# NATP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It was a pleasure to once again meet with so many of Nebraska's finest public servants during NATP's Legislative Event last week. I apologize for not interacting with attendees as much this year. While I wasn't sick, I didn't quite feel up to par and certainly didn't want to chance spreading any type of illness.

We kicked off the event Monday morning with a proclamation recognizing the second week in April as Public Transit Week in Nebraska. The proclamation was presented by Lt. Gov. Mike Foley. After lunch, we participated in an afternoon of training which included a safety presentation by Kaitlyn Richardson, a legislative update from Heidi Uhing, and some startling facts concerning human trafficking in Nebraska brought to us by former FBI agent Anna Brewer.

Kaitlyn's safety training centered on the five progressive levels of safety culture and the stages of behavior and behavior modification. If you need assistance or advice on how to engage your staff in creating a safety culture, I recommend contacting Kaitlyn Richardson or Bill Bivin at the UNK Safety Center and inquire as to how you can apply the "near miss" system to your operation.

Heidi Uhing's legislative update included a great review of Nebraska's unique Unicameral and the life cycle of a legislative bill.

We ended the training session on a bit of a sad note. Brewer's presentation pointed out that human trafficking is the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, only behind drug trafficking. It is considered a "safe" industry by perpetrators because people don't realize it is happening. Unaware and untrained people don't recognize the signs, and traffickers can look like anyone. These are crimes taking place in plain sight. One study found that 900 people are sold for sex in Nebraska each month. These ARE NOT willing victims. Through lies and coercion, a relationship that begins friendly becomes a trap, forcing victims to continue in the face of threats of violence and abuse and never being left alone with an opportunity to escape. About half of these victims are children. Today's technology creates the opportunity to sell someone for sex in a matter of minutes from anywhere. A few ways to stop or reduce these crimes are through public education and awareness and stiffer penalties for those convicted of trafficking.

The Senator's breakfast held in the Capitol Tuesday morning gave opportunity to visit with many Senators and staff members – learning their views and advocating the needs and benefits of public transportation to them. Of special interest is LB 989 that authorizes the City of Lincoln to conduct a pilot project to study autonomous vehicles. This legislation is needed to help secure grants that would help fund the project. You can find more information about this project by going to [startran.lincoln.ne.gov](http://startran.lincoln.ne.gov) and clicking on "Lincoln Multimodal Technology Vision."

By the way, breakfast was awesome! Far better than the traveling conditions!

Until next time, safe travels everyone.

Scott Bartels  
NATP President

## PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Public Transit Week which will take place April 8-14.

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

## 2018 PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK

The second week in April (8-14) is Public Transit Week in Nebraska. This is a great opportunity for public transit systems to raise awareness of public transportation in Nebraska communities, diminish any misconceptions about public transit (i.e. "it's only for the elderly, disabled, or poor"), and provide an opportunity to celebrate your system and your community.



Draft press releases, flyers and other marketing items are available that you can easily adjust to fit your transit system's events. Visit <https://nebraskatransit.com/NPTW18INFO.php> to view all of the available materials.

During Public Transit Week, systems are encouraged to develop daily events that would encourage the public to utilize public transportation or thank current riders for their continued support. Some ideas include: Buddy Days, Dump the Pump, passenger appreciation, staff appreciation, travel training, veterans appreciation, Stuff the Bus, discounted/free rides on a certain day, hosting an open house, and much more.

Visit [www.nebraskatransit.com](http://www.nebraskatransit.com) for ideas from previous years. We welcome any ideas that you may have so we can share with other members. You do not need to do something every day to participate. We encourage you to choose events that are achievable for your system.

We look forward to seeing what your system does for Public Transit Week. Send photos and "Save the Dates" to the NATP office to share on social media.

Agencies are also requested to send their list of events and activities to Tara Grell, the new graphic designer for the University of Nebraska - Omaha. The deadline to submit your activities is March 19, but Tara will also add late submissions to the website. The list of activities will help staff determine which events they can attend.



*Incorporate all ages into your activities!*



*Bring your community together for a great cause!*

 The poster is titled "STUFF THE BUS" in large black letters at the top. To the right is a red icon of a bus with a heart inside. Below the title is a wavy line representing a road. The text "NEBRASKA PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK 2018" is in red. Below that, it says "Join in the fun and help celebrate Nebraska's 4th Annual Public Transit Week April 8-14!". Then, "We'll be 'stuffing the bus' on (date) between (time) to (end hunger in our community or help keep the animals fed and happy).". A line for details: "(Transit Agency) will be at (place & address) and will accept donations of (list items needed) for (name of charity).". A line: "Stuff our bus, it's all for a good cause!". A yellow box says "Visit [nebraskatransit.com](http://nebraskatransit.com) to learn more about all of the events happening in your area." Contact info: "Contact: Nebraska Department of Transportation 1400 Nebraska Hwy 2, Lincoln, NE 68502 • 402.479.4694 • [kari.ruse@nebraska.gov](mailto:kari.ruse@nebraska.gov)". At the bottom, the "Go NE Where" logo is on the left, and on the right, it says "Follow us on Facebook: Nebraska Transit" and "#NPTW18 on Twitter or Instagram".

*Managers can download and customize poster templates.*



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



The member spotlight for this issue is Kimball County Transit. Christy Warner is the transit manager for the agency and provided the following information.

**Tell us a little about your transit system's background and history.**

**How did the system start and where is it today?** The Handi-bus as it used to be known started in February of 1975. It was one bus and driver taking elderly and disabled folks around locally. Historically, the driver took the calls, drove and did a decent amount of the paperwork. Our current driver has been driving for 19

years and has watched things change. Today we are an on-demand public transportation system and in the middle of our biggest transformation yet. We have expanded on all fronts from the service area, staff and vehicles to crossing multiple state lines and accepting Medicaid.

**How long have you served as the manager?** I just came on board in March 2017 as Transit Administrator. While I don't have a background in transit, my experiences as a business administrator have crossed over to transit. I'm very familiar with having to run complete projects on multiple grants and the compliance that goes with it. I have also been blessed enough to have experience riding public transportation both in large U.S. cities as well as Europe where it's very popular and used as a main type of transportation.

**How does your transit system serve the local community?** With the recent expansion of service areas, we think of our community on a regional level. Our neighbors might be 20 to 30 minutes away, but we count on them shopping locally and they count on us to provide services they need. We connect the people to the services, allowing them to stay in this less populated area which is a true economic benefit to everyone.

We provide services to a wide range of riders from preschoolers to hospital patients. Our drivers are all local, long-time residents which give the riders a personal touch. The riders love to update the drivers with what's new in their life. It's a place for some who don't make it out as much to socialize. They love to sit on the bus for a few extra stops and talk amongst one another. Even the kids enjoy having the familiar drivers, proudly showing off their projects from school.

**What are some highlights of serving your community?** We started an expansion of the transit system back in April. The out-of-town destinations such as Sidney, Scottsbluff, Cheyenne, WY, and Fort Collins, CO, started a little over six months ago. Like any new service it took a month or two to get the services underway and in full operation, and then it exploded. There are days when we don't have enough vehicles (but they should be here shortly). The community residents love the freedom it gives. It has also given us a chance to be better partners with our local hospital and nursing home. We just recently took our first joint transit system ride and are hoping to be able to take more in the future.

**What are some challenges you see facing both your transit system and the industry as a whole?** In our highly rural area of Nebraska the challenge is getting the word out to those areas where there were no previous transportation services. We are talking about almost 3,000 square miles, with only two towns and four villages. It takes a lot of time with word of mouth vs the more technically savvy website and social media.

The second challenge which includes many other transit systems, is building the partnerships to be efficient in transporting the riders. Making connections with neighboring transportation systems and familiarizing riders on being able to use those connections to make the longer trips.

I have been fortunate to come on board in a time when transportation is higher on the priority list than it once was. I hope that it can continue to be a priority and change the way our rural culture views public transportation.

*Continued on pg 5*

**How does being a member of the Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers benefit your system?** The Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers is a good resource for us. I have learned so much more from the information we receive than I would have sitting in the panhandle trying to learn it myself. The Managers Workshop is a great place to meet others from around Nebraska and learn what's working or what might be a similar struggle.

**What do your riders think of your transit system?**

We have received so many compliments about the expanded service area and extended service time. They are quick to remind me how much they love the drivers.

## 2018 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Just a reminder, renewals for the 2018-2019 NATP membership year will be mailed in May. NATP works hard to promote professionalism in public transportation operators through research, advocacy and educational opportunities. The association also works to educate the public about the importance of public transportation in Nebraska.

**Outreach - Promotion - Information - Networking - Education**

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Hello everyone!

It's starting to feel like spring around here - time to open the windows, shake out the dust and feel reenergized! Spring is a great time to reenergize your staff and transit system by participating in Public Transit Week! This is your time to shine and show your community what you offer. It's about showing appreciation for your staff, your passengers and your supporters. It's also a great time to show your stakeholders and elected officials how important public transit is to your community. Don't be afraid to brag about the services you offer and explain the impact you have on the lives of your passengers.

If you haven't participated in Public Transit Week before or you would like to add more activities, NDOT and University staff are extremely helpful resources. Press releases, scripts for speaking with news reporters, promotional items and much more are available to managers. If you haven't already, please email Tara Grell a list of the events you have planned. Her email is [tgrell@unomaha.edu](mailto:tgrell@unomaha.edu).

I can't wait to see what events our members have planned! Be sure to share photos with me during the week, and I'll get them posted on the Facebook page and in the next newsletter.

Save the date for the Managers Workshop which will be held on June 19-21 in Grand Island. More information is on page 7. A full schedule and session information will be emailed soon.

Tiffany Fougeron

## DIAL-A-RIDE HOSTS BOOTH

Dana Klaben, transit manager at the City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transportation and her staff hosted a booth at their local expo in early March.

Their booth featured a "Transit Toss" where attendees could participate to receive either a jumbo magnetic clip, a Dial-A-Ride fan (in the shape of their van), or a piece of candy.



**WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR TRANSIT SYSTEM? SEND PHOTOS AND INFORMATION TO THE NATP OFFICE BY EMAILING [TFOUGERON@YOURAAM.COM](mailto:TFOUGERON@YOURAAM.COM) FOR INCLUSION ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE AND NEWSLETTER**

## SMALL BUS ASSEMBLY

Kari Ruse and Wayne Masek from the NDOT Transit Section toured the REV Group assembly plant in Salina, Kansas, where the small buses are manufactured. Kari and Wayne inspected vehicles in various stages of assembly and discussed available options.

When inspecting NDOT buses on the assembly line, Wayne identified some issues with the vehicle specifications which were corrected prior to final assembly.

*Photo on right: Welded steel bus frame ready for fiberglass body assembly.*



## MOBILITY MANAGER IN THE SOUTHEAST REGION

Smita Sharma from SRF Consulting is the temporary mobility manager in Southeast Nebraska. Smita has been working with Seward County Public Transit on several technology initiatives including scheduling rides via text message and mobile smart pay applications.

She has also assisted Cliff Lindell at Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging expand service to Peru State College.

Contact Smita if you operate in the Southeast Region and she can help you with marketing, coordination, travel training, etc.

For more information visit our mobility management web page <https://www.nebraskatransit.com/mobility-2.php>.

Smita Sharma  
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402-350-0671



## NATP MANAGERS WORKSHOP

Save the date for the 2018 NATP Managers Workshop taking place June 19-21 in Grand Island. The event will take place at the Hotel Grand Conference Center.

Presentations so far include:

- NDOR General Updates
- Mobility Management Updates
- FTA Updates
- Promoting Your Transit Agency
- Roundtable Discussions
- Much more!



The annual banquet and membership meeting will take place on the evening of June 19.



During the banquet we will hold elections for the Western, Eastern and At-Large Director positions.

If you are interested in running for one of these positions, contact Tiffany Fougeron at the NATP office.

Awards will also be presented. Nominations are due on May 22 for the following categories: Rookie Manager of the Year, Public Transit Manager of the Year, Pioneer, Friend of Transit, and Appreciation. View the nomination form on the NATP website.

We will have exhibitor time and prize drawings on June 20. We encourage you to invite vendors that you work with.

The Managers Workshop is a great time for learning, but more importantly, it is a time for networking. Catch up with old friends and meet newer managers.

More information, including the registration brochure, will be sent soon.

See you in Grand Island!



## NATP COLORING BOOKS

NATP coloring books were distributed to members in the fall of 2017. Members were to distribute the books to children in their communities to inform them about public transportation.

The 16-page coloring book included information on public transit, fun games, and plenty of pictures to color.

Members are encouraged to submit photos or information on how the coloring books were distributed in their communities.



## TRI CITY ROADRUNNER HOLDS RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

On January 10 about 40 stakeholders gathered at the Scotts Bluff Public Transit bus barn to help launch their new flex route service, the Tri City Roadrunner.

Attendees included Kari Ruse, George Gallardo and Frank Faughn from NDOT Transit; Tiffany Fougerson from NATP; Mokhtee Ahmad and three of his staff from the FTA Regional Office in Kansas City; partners at the University of Nebraska; and local elected officials.

Congratulations to Shari Hinz, Tri-City Roadrunner Director, for a successful launch!



## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE - RURAL PUBLIC & INTERCITY BUS TRANSPORTATION

Would you like to learn more about public transportation and expand your knowledge as a manager?

NDOT is sponsoring six scholarships for managers to attend the 2018 National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation. The event will take place September 30 - October 3 in Breckenridge, Colorado.

Held once every two years, it offers a valuable experience for rural transit and human service transit providers, tribal transit managers, planners, state agency staff, intercity bus operators, consultants, researchers and trainers; anyone who is interested in learning about the latest in best practice and current research in mobility and access in rural communities. The conference includes multiple routes to

offer learning opportunities throughout the conference for everyone: planning and design; policy, funding and finance; rural transportation in the current operating environment; technology and training solutions; and special topics in rural mobility.

The scholarship deadline is May 1, 2018. The application is available on the NATP website.



## LINCOLN MULTIMODAL TECHNOLOGY VISION

Lincoln is on the move. Understanding the direction and anticipating how new transportation technologies can be utilized, the City is embarking on one of the largest deployments of autonomous microtransit vehicles into a mixed traffic environment anywhere in the United States.

This is an exciting time, with many emerging technologies that are poised to increase mobility options for individuals around the world, and Lincoln will establish itself as a community at the forefront of using those technologies for the good of its people.

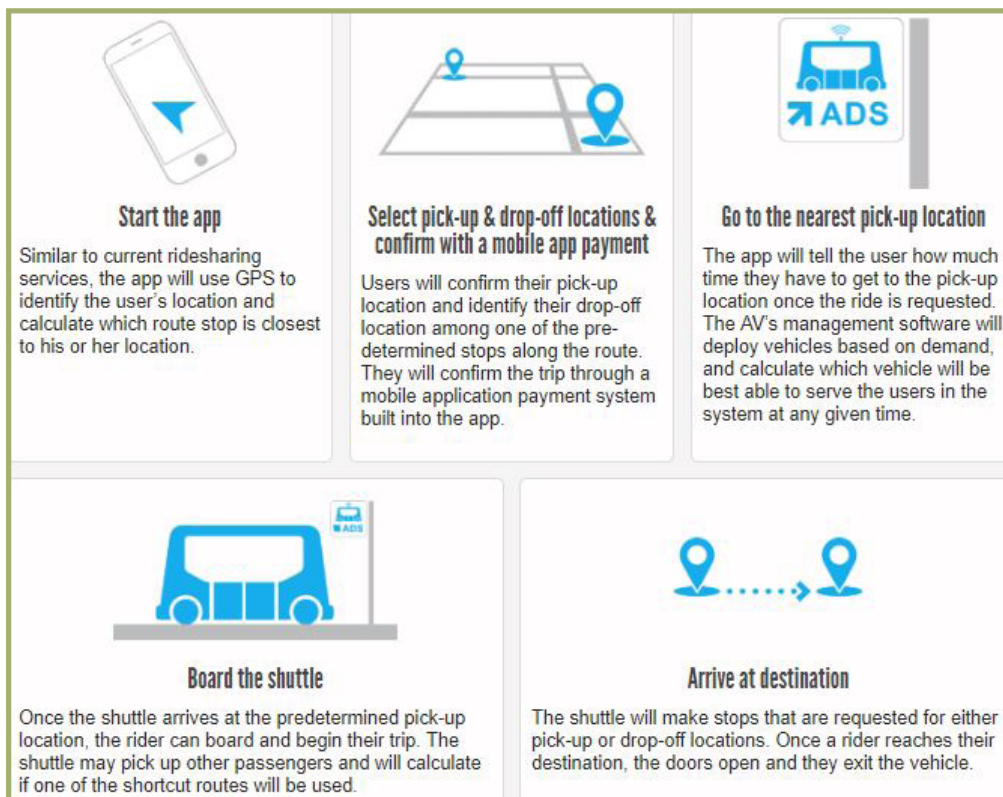
This project will use a relatively new form of transportation: the autonomous microshuttle. Several companies are developing these vehicles and systems, with dozens of deployments in the United States and many more throughout the world.

This will be a demand-responsive system, meaning the shuttles will only operate and make stops if there is a direct request from a rider through a smartphone app or kiosk. Shuttles will travel in open traffic on Lincoln's public roadways along a predefined route, making pick-ups and drop-offs at predefined stops at a user's request. Vehicles typically can carry from 8-16 passengers, and travel at average speeds from 15-20 miles per hour. This initial pilot is intended to last two years, with an operational deployment date by Spring/Summer 2019 pending funding. When deployed, this will be one of the largest single deployment of mixed-traffic microshuttles in the country.

### WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

As this project is developed and is eventually kicked off, it is critical to keep focus on the goals of the project. The overall goals of the project include:

- Safely and efficiently move people between major destinations and landmarks within Downtown Lincoln
- Test an on-demand autonomous service along a fixed route
- Highlight innovative transportation in Lincoln



### HOW WILL RIDERS USE THE SERVICE?

The process for riding the shuttle should be easy and straightforward. Users already familiar with ridesharing apps will be able to quickly use the new app, while new users should find it easy to learn.

### WHERE WILL IT SERVE?

The proposed route is intended to serve the highest concentrations of people and attractions in Downtown. It is intended to be easy to use, easy to understand, and provide enough stops to be easily accessible.

For more information, visit [lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/startran/micro-av/](http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/startran/micro-av/).

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**Next newsletter deadline is  
May 23, 2018**

Please send your articles and pictures for the Nebraska Transit Trends newsletter to the NATP office by **May 23, 2018**.

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 **tfougeron@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](http://www.neatp.org)

**Dates to Remember****April**

8-14 Public Transit Week

23-26 NNFA/NALA Spring Convention  
Kearney, NE

**May**

1 Scholarship Deadline

**June**

10-14 CTAA Expo & Roadeo

19-21 NATP Managers Workshop  
Grand Island, NE