

# Nebraska Transit Trends

## 2017 NATP DRIVERS TRAINING & ROADEO

The Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers held its Annual Statewide Roadeo at the Nebraska Safety Center in Kearney on September 27. Drivers, volunteers and staff participated in the event. Jeff Baker of Seward County Public Transit and Cindy Sanders of Guide Rock Public Transit were once again co-chairs of the event.

Following the Roadeo competition, all attendees gathered for an awards banquet. Drivers who had been accident free for the past twelve months received a Safe Driver notepad. Drivers from both divisions were introduced and presented with certificates for their participation.

The event could not have occurred without the planning of the Roadeo Committee members including Jeff Baker, Cindy Sanders, Scott Bartels, Denise Smith, Corrina Duckworth, Bill Bivin and Beth Siegfried. The Nebraska



Carol Graham and Larry Vortherms received the traveling trophies for the small bus and mini-van divisions respectively.

Safety Center donated the use of the driving range, garage and tent, and also provided volunteers for the event.



The Roadeo competition consists of a written test, pre-trip inspection, wheelchair securement, and a driving skills course. The theme was "Celebrating Nebraska" in honor of Nebraska's 150th Anniversary. The first place drivers from each division and their managers are eligible to attend and compete in the CTAA National Roadeo in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in June 2018.

First place winners of both divisions took home a \$250 check and an engraved clock.

The second place winners received a \$150 check along with an engraved key ring. Third place winners were presented with a \$100 check.



Bobbie Lechner received the Spirit Award from Denise Smith.

Winners of the small bus division were Carol Graham, Blue Rivers Area Agency of Aging, first place; David Fowler, Ogallala Public Transit, second place; and Marvin Baden, Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, third place.

Mini-van division winners included Larry Vortherms, Avera Creighton Hospital, first place; Mindy Manning, Florence Home, second place; and Ramona Daniels of Saline County Area Transit, third place.

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# NATP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



What is wrong with me? I am broken.

Do you feel it? That sense of doubt...maybe even a sense of worthlessness? Billy Mills felt it. He gave a very stirring speech at the RTAP Conference in Omaha about how discrimination affects the individual and the difficulty of overcoming bias and prejudice even when it has been ingrained to our personal beliefs, often by those closest to us. You see, Billy Mills is mixed race (Oglala Lakota and white), and at one time didn't feel accepted by either ethnic group. He stood alone. He felt alone. And at one point he could have ended his story there, at too early of an age. Instead, he found a purpose. He set goals. He worked hard. He kept his dream alive. Eventually Billy Mills became the first (and only) American 10K Gold Medalist in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.

OK, I admit it. I hate writing these newsletter messages. I never feel that I have wise words to share. Each quarter I sit down thinking, "What do I know about transit that my peers don't? Hmm... probably nothing." None-the-less, I need to write something. It is part of the position that I have been placed in. And I do believe that each of us has been placed in our respective positions for a purpose, though it may not be evident to us at the time. But once placed, opportunities arise that we just couldn't have anticipated. And when they do, we need to take those opportunities and run with them. Run the race with all our heart. To WIN, not place second! If we run each race to the best of our ability, great things will happen all along the way. We will accomplish things that we didn't realize were possible. We will meet new people and make new friends who will help carry us even further than we dreamed.

So, I haven't shared any profound transit news, but hopefully, like Billy Mills, I will inspire you to continue moving forward in your position. Accomplish great things. Provide transportation to the very best of your ability. Be considerate and respectful to those you serve and work with. And remember, whatever you do, whatever you accomplish, it is not enough. You are not finished. You can do more. Set new goals and keep running. Had Billy Mills reached Olympic status and quit, none of us would likely know of him. I am confident that Billy would tell you his most important work is being accomplished long after winning the Gold Medal.



Footnote: Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota) grew up on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, SD, was orphaned at age 12, graduated from the University of Kansas, was commissioned as an officer in the United States Marine Corp, and went on to win the 10K Gold Medal in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. He has since received numerous accolades and awards, including the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Obama.

In September NATP once again hosted a successful two days of driver training and "Rodeo" designed to instruct, challenge and test transit drivers from all across the state. Congratulations to the winning contestants and thank you to all the participants. Thank you to the Rodeo Committee and volunteers for all of your time and effort. Also thanks to the organizations that support the program: NDOT, Advance and the Nebraska Safety Center at UNK.

NATP also assisted with the RTAP Conference in Omaha which was a dynamic opportunity to learn, network, and be inspired. This being only the third biennial conference, it was my first to attend. I found it very informative and useful. As managers, if you are not participating in these events, you are missing some fantastic opportunities.

Congratulations to our Executive Director, Tiffany Fougeron, who was elected to the CTAA State Delegate Council which serves as an advisory body to the CTAA Board of Directors. Our thanks and appreciation go out to Charles McGraw for his past service on the Council.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Safe travels everyone.

Scott Bartels  
NATP President

# NATP DRIVERS TRAINING AND ROADEO (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The Driver of the Year Award went to Larry Vortherms who had the highest score of the day. He earned 876 out of a possible 1000 points. Larry received a \$50 gift card as a prize and took home the traveling trophy for winning the mini-van division.

For the seventh year, the Rodeo committee honored someone who exemplified good sportsmanship and also participated in the theme. This year's recipient of the Spirit Award was Bobbie Lechner of Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging.

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

Thank you to everyone who participated.



Gary Hegland provided hands-on wheelchair securement training on Tuesday.



A Rodeo participant completes the wheelchair securement segment of the Rodeo.

**Save the date for next year's training and Rodeo: September 18-20, 2018.**



Mini-van participants: Eldon Parde, Ramona Daniels, Tony Rohan, Ronald Munyon, Barb Green, Mindy Manning and Larry Vortherms.



Scott Bartels and Cindy Sanders judged the serpentine obstacle.



Small Bus participants: Jim Richards, Jon Kruse, David Fowler, Ken Baldinger, Wayne Foreman, Marvin Baden, Mike Wenz and Carol Graham.



The Rodeo concluded with an awards banquet at the Nebraska Safety Center.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Corrina Duckworth, Linda Niemann and Lawanna Subbert.

The member spotlight for this issue is Saunders County Public Transportation. Corrina Duckworth is the manager at this transit facility and graciously answered questions about their system for the NATP newsletter.

### **Tell us a little of your transit system's background and history. How did the system start and where is it today?**

Saunders County Public Transportation began as the Saunders County Handi-Van. It began operation on October 2, 1978, with formal dedication services on the Courthouse lawn October 6, 1978.

The 1978 Ford Van was purchased by the County Board of Supervisors in cooperation with the Saunders County Senior Advisory Board and a transportation committee.

The Handi-Van program was set up through cooperation of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging, and its representative, with a Driver/Manager, and a Dispatcher/Secretary. The Handi-Van was equipped with a wheel-chair lift and tie-

downs which enable it to serve handicapped individuals. All areas of the county were served at least every other week within Saunders County and trips are made to Lincoln, Omaha, and Fremont on designated days, as it still is today. The service was open to all residents of Saunders County with priority given to senior citizens and handicapped persons.

A new Dodge Van was acquired, to replace the original vehicle, in March 1982 and Laura Lindgren was hired January 1, 1982, as the Driver/Manager. Laura remained the Driver/Manager until 2012. Today we have a 2011 small bus and a 2014 LF minivan we use for services. We continue to follow the route schedule that was previously established.

### **How long have you served as the manager?**

I became the manager of Saunders County Public Transportation in 2012. Prior to taking the manager position, I worked as a sub driver for a few months.

### **How does your transit system serve the local community?**

We serve our community by providing rides locally in each of the towns within Saunders County. By doing this, riders can make trips to their family doctor, local shopping center, or visit friends and families. Without our service, some riders would have no other means of transportation. We also provide transportation to Omaha, Lincoln, and Fremont, which helps riders to go to specialist appointments or shop at the larger stores.

### **What are some highlights of serving your community?**

We have people from an assisted living facility that use our services to go to the senior center in town to join in the monthly birthday party. For most of these riders, this is the only time they leave the facility besides medical visits.



We used to have a group of ladies that would plan their ride on the same day. They would first go shopping and then go to the same place every time to have lunch. They were such an amazing group of ladies. They would always have everyone on the bus laughing with them.

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### **What are some challenges you see facing both your transit system and the industry as a whole?**

One of the challenges I see are riders needing to schedule their appointments around our schedule. With so many doctors practicing at more than one facility, they may only come to a specific facility once a week. If that day does not fall on a day we go to the area, the rider is unable to schedule a ride to get there. When this happens, they either need to miss a doctor appointment or find another way to get there.

### **How does being a member of the Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers benefit your system?**

NATP has provided a way for us to interact with other transportation agencies, which allows us to get ideas from them on challenges we may be facing. It also provides a way to learn and stay up to date on changes in transportation or topics that may be of interest to us.

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

We have received a lot of positive feedback from our riders regarding our system. Numerous riders express how thankful they are for our services. Many have told us they would not have any other way to get where they need to go without a service like us.

### **Any other thoughts?**

The transportation field has many amazing people. I love the positive and upbeat personality that so many people associated with my field have. It ranges from the Federal, State, and local level to the riders themselves. Everyone is there to help everyone else.



## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE**



Hello everyone!

NATP had another great year. We had our annual events including the Legislative Event, Public Transit Week, Managers Workshop, and the Rodeo & Drivers Training. We also participated in other events including the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska Conference, Nebraska State Fair, Nebraska Municipal Clerk Conference, and the League of Municipalities Conference. We placed an ad in two issues of the Nebraska Health Care Association's Keeping You Connected publication and attended the NDOT/Advance open house in February.

Many members participated in mobility management meetings across the state and continue to work together on pilot strategies and other discussions.

The NATP Board also decided to send a group of six members to Washington, D.C. to advocate on behalf of public transportation. The group also met with CTAA staff.

I enjoyed attending the CTAA Expo and Rodeo in Detroit with Jeanne Doerneman, Sharon Penner, Ron Linke and Chuck Bluschke. We have one scholarship available to attend the 2018 CTAA Expo - apply today!

I know many of you attended the National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference in October. What a great event! Congratulations to NDOT and University staff who made this a possibility. I hope we can host more national events like this in the future. Check out page seven for more details.

This year the board came up with a plan to provide coloring books to members to distribute to children in their communities. We were so excited with how they turned out. I hope you were, too! The board is providing "I Love Public Transit" mugs to members to distribute to transit employees to show appreciation. View the order form at the end of the newsletter.

I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! See you in March!

Tiffany Fougeron

## NATP COLORING BOOKS

The NATP coloring books were a popular product for our members. There are still a few packets left if any members haven't received any.

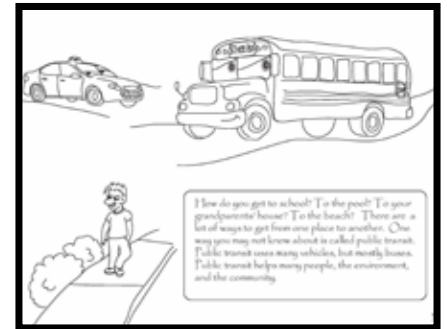


Some books were handed out at various events as well. The board was pleased with the entire design and order process.

Members are asked to submit photos and/or articles to the NATP office about how the coloring books were distributed. The purpose of the books was to reach out to the next generation of passengers.

The NATP Board will decide if they should order more books in the future.

Let us know your thoughts and if you have any other suggestions of how to reach out to children in your communities.



## NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF NEBRASKA CONFERENCE

The NATP hosted a booth and was a sponsor of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska Annual Conference. The event was held October 13 at the Divots Conference Center in Norfolk.

NATP President Scott Bartels and board member Jeanne Doerneman were present

at the event and spoke with attendees about public transportation availability in Nebraska.

An information sheet was also provided in Braille along with other giveaway items.



## STARTRAN HAS TWO NEW TOOLS TO HELP RIDERS

Mayor Chris Beutler and StarTran introduced two new technology tools to help the public get around the Capital City.

StarTran patrons can now find transit information in Google Maps for desktop and mobile. The application calculates the most efficient bus route options by analyzing a rider's journey to minimize the amount of walking and transfers. A trip planner is also available on StarTran's website, [startran.lincoln.ne.gov](http://startran.lincoln.ne.gov), which allows users to enter trip details to see a list of transit options for their selected destination in Google Maps. Each option will include directions to and from the

nearest bus stop, applicable route numbers and total travel times.

The Token Transit application allows StarTran riders to purchase bus passes and pay for rides with a smartphone. Riders then present the phone pass to the bus operator. The first purchase with this app will be discounted 50 percent. The Token Transit app is available in the app store and also can be downloaded by visiting [tokentransit.com/app](http://tokentransit.com/app) or by texting "token" to 41411.

"StarTran is very excited to launch these tools, as we are always researching new ways to help make our patrons' experience easier, more

accessible and fun," said Mike Davis, StarTran Transit Manager.

"Riding StarTran has always been a great way for patrons to save money, and these new innovations add even more convenience to our transit system," said Mayor Chris Beutler. "I commend StarTran for continuing to find new ways to improve our transit service. We encourage the public to keep watching and riding as more improvements are in store for the near future."

For more information, visit [startran.lincoln.ne.gov](http://startran.lincoln.ne.gov) or call 402-476-1234.

## NATIONAL RTAP CONFERENCE



Omaha was the host city for the third biennial Technical Assistance Conference which was held October 29 through November 1. Over 300 rural transportation advocates from over 40 states attended the event.

The theme for the conference was "Transportation at the Center," in part because Omaha is right in the center of the country and because transportation is at the center of our lives.

NATP, Omaha Metro, FTA, Advance and the Nebraska Department of Transportation were among the cooperating agencies attending the conference.



Jane Williams, Acting Administrator of FTA, and Billy Mills, Olympic Champion of the Lakota Nation, were the keynote speakers for the event.

Some highlights from the conference include (as reported from FTA's followup email):

- 86 million Americans who live in rural and tribal communities have a critical need to access safe and reliable public transportation.
- An increasing number of rural residents rely solely on public transportation to get them to and from work, school and family.



*A group of Nebraska managers gather for a photo opportunity.*

These stories resonate the importance of transit, especially where you have rural residents who are economically disadvantaged, physically handicapped, and/or isolated.

- RTAP has an online website builder which is a free service that include consulting service for rural and urban transit systems wishing to build a website or improve an existing website.

The conference featured numerous speakers, workshops, panel discussions, vendor exhibits, and other events that offered great opportunities for attendees to learn and network.

Nebraska was able to showcase its partnership with the University in a session titled "Innovative Partnerships for Compliance, Operations and Technology." Kari Ruse and Bill Bivin presented on how they utilize the University's resources to address compliance, develop technologies, improve safety, and streamline operations.

Attendees stayed on schedule, participated in surveys and polls, and participated in games through the conference app.

Attendees traveled offsite for the Halloween Night Out: Masquerade at the Museum. A dinner and dance was held at the Joslyn Art Museum.



Everyone can view and download presentations from the conference here:

[nationalrtap.org/conference2017/2017-Presentations](http://nationalrtap.org/conference2017/2017-Presentations)

Photos from the event are also on the NATP and National RTAP Facebook pages.

Thank you to everyone who attended and assisted with the event. Attendees were pleased with our "Nebraska Nice" hospitality!



## THE NEW WAY TO GET AROUND TOWN - SCOTTS BLUFF CO. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Scottsbluff Public Transit will launch a new flex route service on January 10, 2018. The Tri-City Roadrunner will provide a new transportation option in Scottsbluff, Gering and Terrytown. Currently, Scottsbluff Public Transit provides demand response service within the county. The new service will utilize six buses along two routes to provide scheduled service on a flexible fixed route to connect Walmart, the Community College, Medical Center and several apartment complexes. There will be a total of 132 stops along the routes. Other vehicles will be available to continue demand response, door to door service.

A contest in June allowed the community to vote on the name of the new service. Buses have been wrapped with the new logo and tag line "A NEW Way To Get Around Town". Shari Hinze, Scottsbluff County Public Transit Manager says, "We are all excited about the new Tri-City Roadrunner; it will be up and running January 10, 2018! I'm hoping to see all of you at our Ribbon Cutting!"

**Save the Date - Please Join Us!**  
**Tri-City Roadrunner - Ribbon Cutting**  
**Wednesday, January 10, 2018 • 10:30 am**  
**Scotts Bluff County Transit Bus Barn**  
**755 Rundell Road • Gering, NE**

Scotts Bluff County Public Transportation is pleased to announce a new and improved fixed bus route transportation system is making it's way to the tri-city communities known as the **Tri-City Roadrunner**. The Tri-City Roadrunner will offer two separate routes: the Orange Route and the Blue Route. Approximately 130 designated bus stops will be installed along these routes throughout the three communities in order to accommodate various businesses and residential areas throughout Gering, Terrytown and Scottsbluff. **Beginning January 10th, 2018**, these routes will operate Monday through Friday between the hours of 6:30 am and 6:30 pm.



**Join us in recognizing our partners:**

- Federal Transit Administration
- Nebraska Department of Transportation
- Scotts Bluff County Commissioners
- City of Gering
- City of Scottsbluff
- Village of Terrytown
- Regional West Medical Center
- Walmart
- Western Nebraska Community College

**We could not have done it without you! A short program will be held, followed by refreshments!! More details to follow!**  
**Mark your CALENDARS!! Any questions, please contact Shari Hinze: 308-436-6751 • SHinze@scottsbluffcounty.org**

## 2018 NEBRASKA SAFETY CENTER TRAINING DATES

The Nebraska Safety Center and NDOT have finalized training dates for 2018. Go to [www.NebraskaTransit.com](http://www.NebraskaTransit.com) for driver training bootcamps, refresher courses, and electives. The Driver Training Boot camp is a two-day training event that fulfills both eight-hour PASS and eight-hour Defensive Driving training requirements and

is held in Kearney. One day of boot camp also satisfies annual refresher and elective requirements. We encourage everyone to take this new and improved training (drivers, dispatchers, managers, etc.). New this year will be the option to take Heartsaver elective courses (limited seating in each section). There will be Heartsaver First

Aid, Heartsaver CPR AED, and Heartsaver First Aid CPR AED. These Heartsaver elective courses aim to teach students to provide first aid, CPR, and AED in a safe, timely, and effective manner. We look forward to seeing you at training in 2018!

Kaitlyn Richardson  
Rural Transit Lead Trainer



## 2018 PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK

Start planning for the 2018 Nebraska Public Transit Week! Members are encouraged to participate in the statewide event from April 8-14.



Tara Grell, the new graphic designer at UNO, will work with managers to determine what items to order, how to draft/share social media posts, and provide a list of suggested activities.

The goal of Public Transit Week is to increase ridership, show appreciation for current passengers and employees, and promote that public transit is available to everyone!

University staff also indicated they would be willing to work with managers on press releases, and talking points to use for news interviews.

Watch for more information coming soon!



Happy Holidays from the Advanced Association Management Team: Jodi Roth, Taylor Moore, Kathi Schildt, Kylie Schildt, Danae Plessel and Tiffany Fougeron.  
Our office will be closed December 22 and 25 and January 1.

## CONGRESS LAUNCHES BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL BUS CAUCUS

The Bus Coalition and Community Transportation Association of America are excited to join Co-Chairs Congressmen David Young (R-IA) and Rick Larsen (D-WA) to announce the official launch of the Bipartisan Congressional Bus Caucus (BCBC). The purpose of BCBC is to give a stronger voice to the over 1,100 bus transit systems across the country and highlight the need for adequate federal funding of bus transit programs.

"In Iowa, public transit relies almost entirely on busses. Whether bringing folks to and from their jobs or to visit family and friends, public transit is critical to these folks' lives and helping our rural communities thrive. I recognize bus transit is an asset in my district and across the country with transit systems like DART in the Des Moines area providing a critical service to economy," said Congressman Young. "I am happy to be a co-chair of this caucus and look forward to working with my colleagues to advance important issues related to bus transit." - Congressman David Young

"As someone who uses public transportation every day, I understand just how critical safe and reliable bus systems are for working Americans," said Larsen. "With more than 195 million passenger trips in Washington state annually, I am thrilled to co-chair the Congressional Bus Caucus - robust investment in buses and transportation will keep the economy thriving." - Congressman Rick Larsen

The Caucus seeks to highlight the benefits of investing in bus systems, the challenges accompanying aging bus fleets and facilities, and encourage innovation in a rapidly changing transportation climate. The Caucus will raise awareness on Capitol Hill by holding occasional events to highlight the importance of transit agencies striving to deliver reliable service and meet a state of good repair.

Buses are the unsung hero in our nation's transportation network and provide over 51% of transit trips per year. Every day, 14.9 million passenger trips are made across the country on buses. Added together, 5.44 billion bus transit trips per year provide access for people with disabilities, cost-effective transportation for low income riders and help commuters get to work, students to school and patients to see their doctor. While buses may not get the attention of larger, urban transit modes, they are the backbone of the transit ecosystem and provide critical service in communities of all sizes.

"As President of The Bus Coalition and CEO of Link Transit, I see how funding cuts at the federal, state and local level are impacting bus systems of all sizes. Many agencies are struggling to keep up with aging fleets and crumbling transit facilities. We know when systems age and service is cut, the rider experience suffers and ridership declines. That's why I'm so excited about the formation of a new Congressional Caucus that will shine light on the needs of the bus transit community and give voice to a transportation asset that is so important to our local and national economy." - Richard DeRock, President of The Bus Coalition

"Buses are the work horses of rural and small city transit agencies and we look forward to sharing our experiences and collaborating with Members of Congress." - Scott Bogren, CTAA Executive Director.

## SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

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

NDOT is sponsoring a scholarship for a manager to attend the 2018 CTAA Expo in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from June 10-14.

This is CTAA's premier training, networking and innovation showcase.

The scholarship deadline is January 15, 2018. The application is available on the website.



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

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

10 Tri-City Roadrunner Ribbon Cutting  
Gering, NE

**February**

2 Mug Orders Due

**March**

5 NATP Board Meeting

5-6 Legislative Event  
Lincoln, NE

**April**

8-14 Public Transit Week

23-26 NNFA/NALA Spring Convention  
Kearney, NE

**June**

10-14 CTAA Expo & Rodeo

19-21 NATP Managers Workshop  
Grand Island, NE

# NATP APPRECIATION MUG ORDER FORM

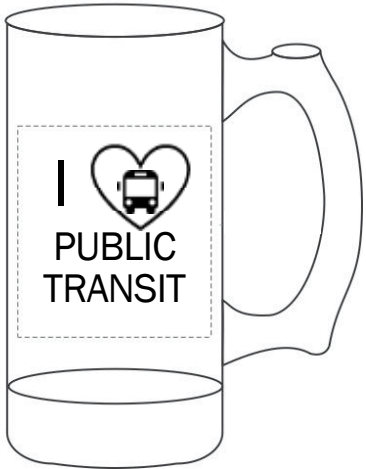
To order mugs, complete the form and mail to NATP, PO Box 10, Milford, NE 68405; fax to 402.761.2224; or email to [tfougeron@youraam.com](mailto:tfougeron@youraam.com)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



**NATP Members**

Employee Appreciation Mugs\*

*\*Limited quantities available. Please provide to public transit employees only.*

# \_\_\_\_\_

- Arrange for pick up at closest board member's system
- Arrange for pick up at NATP event or office
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Managers are encouraged to host an appreciation event for public transit employees during Public Transit Week or during another special event.

Please submit photos to the NATP office of how the mugs were distributed to employees.

Questions? Call (402) 761-2216 or email [tfougeron@youraam.com](mailto:tfougeron@youraam.com)