

Nebraska Transit Trends

2018 NATP MANAGERS WORKSHOP

The Ramada Midtown and Conference Center in Grand Island, Nebraska, was the host for the 2018 NATP Managers Workshop. Nearly 60 people participated in the event including transit managers, NDOT & FTA staff members, exhibitors and speakers. Attendees had the opportunity to visit with vendors in the exhibit hall.



Mayor Jeremy Jensen welcomed NATP to Grand Island.

On the first day Mayor Jeremy Jensen welcomed the attendees to Grand Island. Josh Rushmore from RouteMatch then provided a session on Rider Centric Solutions which focused on the forces shaping mobility technology. Kari Ruse, NDOT, then provided attendees with updates and other pertinent information and answered questions. Following a break, FTA staff provided updates on regulations and funding opportunities.



Denise Smith, center, received the Manager of the Year Award, presented by Coletta Clouse, left, and Cindy Sanders, right.

Attendees then enjoyed an evening meal at the hotel. At the conclusion of the meal, President Scott Bartels called the NATP Annual Meeting to order. The agenda was reviewed; minutes from the 2017 meeting were presented and approved; Treasurer Jeff Baker provided a financial report; and elections were held.

Scott Bartels was elected to serve as the Eastern Region representative, Coletta Clouse was elected to serve as the Western Region representative, and Denise Smith was elected to serve as the At-Large Representative.

Following the elections, a few managers were honored for their service and commitment to public transportation.

- Rookie Manager of the Year: Christy Warner, Kimball County Transit
- Manager of the Year: Denise Smith, Phelps County Public Transit



Christy Warner, right, received the Rookie Manager of the Year Award from Beth Siegfried.

FTA staff also presented their awards:

- City of Broken Bow Public Transportation
- City of Neligh Dial-A-Ride Public Transit
- Kimball County Transit Services
- Phelps County Public Transit
- Chase County Transportation System
- North Platte Public Transit System
- RYDE Transit
- Omaha Metro

IN THIS ISSUE

NATP President's Message	2
Meet Jennifer Eurek.....	2
NATP Executive Director Message.....	3
Neligh Dial-A-Ride	4-5
Driver Training Schedule.....	5
CTAA Expo Recaps	6-7
CTAA Delegate Update.....	8
Member Spotlight	9
StarTran News	10
Older Nebraskans Day.....	11
Board Information/Calendar	12

NATP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello Transit Friends,

NATP hosted another successful Managers Workshop that was held in Grand Island this year. Tuesday kicked off with NDOT and FTA Region VII staff presenting updates and awards and the day finished with a banquet and NATP's annual meeting.

On Wednesday, State Trooper Jason Morris taught on recognizing drug impairment and provided tips on how to safely handle various drug impairment issues as a transit manager. There were also sessions on how to positively impact others and how to connect with others using communication skills as presented by Dr. Jill Hough.

Thursday wrapped up with methods to promote your transit agency, how to keep your employees engaged and feeling part of the team, and a report on the highlights of bootcamp driver training.

Congratulations to Coletta Clouse, Denise Smith and myself on being elected to serve on the NATP Board of Directors. I would also like to congratulate all of the FTA Award winners. You are providing meaningful service to your communities.

I hope to see you all at the NATP Rodeo!

Safe travels everyone.

Scott Bartels
NATP President

MEET JENNIFER EUREK



Hello,

I am very excited to join the staff at Advanced Association Management and become your new Executive Director. I know I have much to learn and big shoes to fill. I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Tiffany this last month during the transition.

My background includes medical social work and association management within the healthcare industry, so I am fully aware of the importance of public transportation and have great respect for the service you provide each day.

I currently live in Lincoln but spent many years in central Nebraska so I can relate to the unique challenges both rural and urban programs face. You fill a vital role in your communities and I look forward to learning more about your specific program.

Please reach out to me at Jennifer@youraam.com or the NATP office phone number of 402-761-2216.

I hope to see many of you at the Rodeo!

Warmly,
Jennifer Eurek

FAREWELL, TIFFANY

You know you work in a special place when your co-workers are more than just colleagues they are people you enjoy seeing and will truly miss when they leave. I have been in transit for over 20 years and when I look at old pictures in the office from Rodeos, Expos, and training sessions, I often realize many – sometimes nearly all – of the people in the photo have moved on or retired. And so it is happening again.

As many of you know, Tiffany Fougeron is going to marry Ryan Meints and start an exciting new chapter in her life. Unfortunately for us, she also wants to move to Iowa with Ryan. I didn't want this event to pass by without expressing how important Tiffany has been to NATP these past few years. She has served us well in her efforts to plan, organize, implement and support our many activities and events. She is always willing to help others and is a fun person to be around. I admire how she has shown patience, strength, courage and humor. Tiffany, NATP has benefitted greatly from your service and the world is a better place because of you and the work you have accomplished. Thank you.

Scott Bartels, NATP President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



This message is a bittersweet message to write. I mentioned in August that I will no longer work with NATP after September as I will be moving to Des Moines. I'm excited to be married and even a little excited about moving to Des Moines; however, I'm sad to have to say goodbye to all of you.

When I started at AAM over six years ago, I remember planning the around-the-state drivers training and learning about the "Rodeo." Prior to working with NATP, I didn't really know that public transit existed in the state other than in Lincoln and Omaha. With the help of amazing board and association members, we have worked to educate Nebraskans that there is public transit available across the state and that it is available to EVERYONE. The growth of Public Transit Week is a testament to the board, NDOT and University staff, and all of you who work to not only promote your services, but to keep the wheels turning and get people where they need to go.

Over the years I've heard so many stories of how public transit has changed people's lives. Although managers and drivers face many obstacles, the dedication you all have to your passengers is truly amazing.

I have enjoyed getting to know so many of you over the past years. I loved the opportunities I had to travel with many of you and get to know you on a deeper level. You have become like family to me!

I will try to keep up with what's happening with NATP and would love to hear from you all in the future.

Keep up the great work you all do. I will miss you all, but you will be in great hands with your new Executive Director, Jennifer Eurek. Jennifer will join us at the NATP Rodeo and looks forward to meeting you all!

Wishing you all the best,

Tiffany Fougeron



NELIGH'S DIAL-A-RIDE STILL ROLLING ALONG AFTER 40 YEARS

Diane Becker - League Association of Risk Management

When six-year-old Evelyn Johnson needs a ride from daycare to the Neligh Public Library for story hour, her mom sets up a bus pick up and drop off at the library for her with Neligh's Dial-A-Ride program. The program, which is the oldest public transit program in the state, is celebrating 40 years of helping adults and kids get around town and across Antelope County. A lot of people in Neligh are given rides – about 7,000 just in the last year. The town's population is about 1,500.

Dana Klabenes, City of Neligh Clerk/Treasurer, said the program began in 1978 when a need for public transit services was identified in Neligh. A small bus was subsequently purchased through a grant. At first it was mostly elderly people who used the transportation service.

"There was a misconception that you had to be handicapped to use the Hand-i-bus," Klabenes said, "Through the years, Neligh residents have come to see the Dial-A-Ride as a useful transportation service for all types of needs. It's not uncommon for up to 20 students to be picked up after school and delivered home or to a local restaurant before heading off to a sporting event." A sizeable number of Neligh school students live outside the city limits.

In the summer, teens without drivers' licenses may catch a Dial-A-Ride out to the local golf course or swimming pool. Elderly people use the service to travel to the post office, grocery store, doctor or for physical therapy. The bus has lift capability for those who are in wheelchairs.

In 2004, a mini-van was purchased and in 2006 a 21-passenger bus was added to the fleet. In 1978 there was only one driver. Now there are three who give rides five days a week and then to church on Sundays. To get a ride to church, passengers need to make a reservation on Friday to the Dial-a-Ride dispatcher located in the City offices. For other rides, the drivers like to be notified at least 24 hours in advance.

A Federal Transit program grant pays for 50% or about \$25,000 of the yearly operating costs. State funds and city matches pay \$7,000 each. Program fees bring in another \$7,000 - \$8,000 per year. Cost for a ride is \$1 one way in town or \$1.50 per mile for out of town trips. For longer trips, there is an additional fee of \$10 per hour for the driver.

Klabenes estimates that up to 40 families regularly use the Dial-A-Ride Services. Another 50 may use it on occasion – while their car is being repaired or by a person whose spouse has the vehicle for the day.

"This is a wonderful service for a small town in rural Nebraska community to be able to offer its citizens," Klabenes said, "In 1978 there were only two other transportation services in the state. Now 84 of the 93 counties have some level of public transit. Sixty of those services are in rural areas."

Dial-A-Ride operates from August to May 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday and Sunday from 8 am to noon. From Memorial Day to August its weekday schedule is 9 am to 4 pm.



1978



2018

Occasionally the Dial-A-Ride will be called in to help the housing authority, nursing home, assisted living complex or the Antelope County Hospital transfer passengers. Dial-A-Ride will also be open for special events like concerts.

Six-year-old Evelyn doesn't care about those events. She just knows that Jack (Conger) is going to pick her up from daycare at 9:00 am every Thursday and take her to the fun summer activity slated that week at the city library. Conger, who has been driving for 15 years said driving the Dial-A-Ride is the best job he's ever had.



Pictured walking off the bus from left to right Evelyn Johnson, Olivia Mortensen, Harloe Kaufman, Lily Mortensen and Cain Mortensen

"I give rides to elderly people to the Senior Citizen Center or to get groceries and to kids who need a ride to swimming lessons. It's one of the greatest services a city can provide. It gives a person a reason to live in a small town," Conger said.

Article courtesy of the League Association of Risk Management (LARM)- an insurance pool that provides insurance for 166 government entities across Nebraska www.larmpool.org

NEBRASKA SAFETY CENTER DRIVER TRAINING

- October 8 PASS – Norfolk
- October 9 Defensive Driving – Norfolk
- October 10 Advanced Wheelchair Securement – Norfolk
- October 10 Refresher Defensive Driving – Norfolk
- October 10 Refresher PASS – Norfolk
- October 17 Advanced Wheelchair Securement – Scottsbluff
- October 17 Refresher PASS – Scottsbluff
- October 17 Refresher Defensive Driving – Scottsbluff
- November 9 Advanced Wheelchair Securement – Omaha
- November 9 Refresher PASS – Omaha
- November 9 Refresher Defensive Driving – Omaha
- December 11 Heartsaver First Aid – Lincoln
- December 11 Refresher PASS – Lincoln
- December 11 Refresher Defensive Driving – Lincoln
- December 12 Heartsaver CPR AED – Lincoln

Visit www.nebraskatransit.com/training.php for more information.

2018 CTAA EXPO & ROADEO



Tammy McConnell: I really enjoyed going to the CTAA Expo and Roadeo in Pittsburgh. Seeing people from all over the U.S. and Canada compete in the Roadeo was a lot of fun. It was interesting to hear from other states on their transportation systems. I came away with a lot of contacts. The Expo had a great variety of vendors and programs. I was shopping for software and came away with many choices. I also got information from some programs that can help with statistics and clean fuel options. Pittsburgh was fantastic. Lots of old and new architecture intermixed in the city with beautiful rivers. There were many museums to choose from and I had the opportunity to visit a couple. I would highly recommend this national conference to managers who have not gone.

Carol Graham: First, I would like to thank NATP, NDOT and CTAA for putting together the Roadeos at both the state and national levels. This year I was able to attend the CTAA National Roadeo in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, held June 9-10. Thanks also to the person who had the foresight to move the competition indoors this year and kept us out of the rain!

Every year I try to learn something new that will improve the rides for my passengers and help me be a better driver. Everyone is happy to share their experiences and how they handle difficult situations. They will even give advice on driving the course!



Thanks again for the opportunity to participate in this international event and represent Nebraska!!



Lori Byers: My impression of Pittsburgh was not what I thought it would be. I expected smog from all the steel mills - which was nowhere to be found. This city has really cleaned up and looks great! As we came into the city we actually drove under the northern edge of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center which is located along the Allegheny River's edge. This was the location of the Roadeo and CTAA Conference.

We were welcomed to the hotel with the very colorful Pittsburgh Pride Fest concert right outside our hotel, and we were able to get some really good Greek food at one of the festival's many vendors. This was also the weekend for the Supernatural Convention so we saw more than a few fans.

On Sunday it rained but since the Roadeo was INSIDE the convention center we stayed warm and dry. For some reason I expected the National Roadeo to be a rather uptight and formal event but it was wonderful. Everyone was encouraging and friendly just like at our Nebraska Roadeo. I do believe, however, some states actually train their drivers just to compete in the Roadeo! Our drivers did a great job representing Nebraska!

On Wednesday and Thursday, a number of workshops were available. It was hard to decide which sessions to attend, but the ones I finally settled on were:

- Transit Planning 101: This workshop session focused on the wants, needs, and demand elements of designing an effective transit program.
- A New Approach to Travel Training: This workshop explored efforts to make transit feel more accessible for new users.
- Re-envisioning your Operations and Revamping your Transit System: This workshop looked at

how agencies now have to revamp their transit systems to become more innovative.

- **Communicating Why - Not Just How - To Rides Transit:** This session looked at how to not only be creative in attracting the community to public transportation but how agencies can increase ridership.
- **Assessing Your Demand Response Operations:** This workshop explored how one system assessed their demand-response transportation from start to finish.

I came back with so many ideas and a renewed enthusiasm for public transportation. Also, to the chagrin of my staff, we will be implementing a number of changes (change is hard, I know) over the next year.

Last of all, I had a great time getting to know Tiffany, Larry, Carol and Tammy.

Larry Vortherms: I had the opportunity to attend, participate and compete in the CTAA National Roadeo in Pittsburgh. I competed in the minivan competition. As most of us know from the state roadeo, the competition consists of four parts: written test, pre-trip vehicle inspection, wheelchair securement and the driving portion. All the elements of the national Roadeo and the state Roadeo are the same so there is no difference. The national Roadeo is just on a bigger scale: more drivers, more judges, and more vehicles. Two courses run at once with multiple vehicles on the courses so that the drivers can get done with the course.



The nicest thing about this latest national roadeo was that it was held indoors. That's right, INDOORS. No hot sun, no cold rain, and no porta-potties. It was all inside and climate-controlled. The convention center was big enough to have two courses set up so that the bus and minivan competitions could run simultaneously.

There is a banquet after the Roadeo in the evening where all the winners are announced. The top five places in the bus competition are awarded prizes and trophies. The top three in the minivan competition are recognized. They also recognize Rookie of the Year and Driver of the Year.

These Roadeos give you the opportunity to meet drivers from across the country. You find that the problems drivers deal with are the same no matter where we live and work.

As a manager, I was able to stay for the week and attend different seminars and classes pertaining to public transit: funding, promoting your business, tribal transit opportunities, etc. These seminars and classes are conducted by industry leaders and academics from around the country.



I want to thank Nebraska DOT and NATP for the opportunity to attend the CTAA National Roadeo.

And where did I place in the CTAA National Roadeo you ask? I placed 4th in the minivan competition.



*View more information about the
CTAA Roadeo and Expo at
www.ctaa.org.*

NATP MANAGERS WORKSHOP

The second day of training began with Nebraska State Patrol Trooper Jason Morris who spoke about recognizing drug impairment. Following a break, Dr. Jill Hough, program director of the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center within the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University, spoke on how to positively influence others by becoming a "person of influence." Following lunch, Dr. Hough provided another session titled, "Everyone Communicates, Few Connect."

Attendees then visited with exhibitors in the atrium. Some of the vendors provided prize drawings as well. Thank to our vendors: Advance, Masters Transportation, MORryde International, Nebraska/Central Equipment, Inc., RouteMatch Software and Shah Software. RouteMatch Software was also a Gold Sponsor.

The final day of the workshop started off with a presentation on promoting your transit



agency which was provided by Tara Grell and Matt Harrington from Advance. Tara and Matt provided a recap of the 2018 Nebraska Public Transit Week, discussed brand awareness, and informed attendees of the marketing services they provide.

Following a break, Elizabeth Smith presented a session titled, "Keeping the Good Ones." Attendees discovered what makes an empowered workplace and tips to keep good employees.

Attendees then picked their lunches before the final session. Kaitlyn Richardson, Rural Transit Lead Trainer from the Nebraska Safety Center,

provided information and highlights from the popular Bootcamp Training for drivers.

Thank you to everyone who presented, exhibited, sponsored and attended the workshop. If you have topic suggestions for future training events, please contact the NATP office.

Save the date for the 2019 Transit Midwest Conference, taking place September 11-13 in Kansas City, Missouri.



CTAA DELEGATE UPDATE

I attended the 2018 CTAA Roadeo and Expo in Pittsburgh this year. I represented Nebraska at the State Transit Association meeting as the association's executive director and also attended the CTAA State and Tribal Delegate Meeting as the Nebraska delegate. During these meetings, CTAA provided updates, training information and much more.

Membership in CTAA has grown this past year with much of the growth coming from the rural area. Membership benefits include email updates, list serve contacts, training webinars and discounted

member rates for various products and services.

One of the greatest benefits of being a member of CTAA is their advocacy efforts. CTAA advocates on behalf of its members in Washington, D.C.; works with FTA, DHHS and other federal agencies; and sends key analyses of legislation, appropriations and regulations to members.

If you are not yet a member of CTAA, you can join by visiting www.ctaa.org.

I also enjoyed attending various training sessions, visiting with exhibitors at the

Expo, meeting with other state executives, and judging and cheering on our Nebraska drivers at the Roadeo. I enjoyed getting to know Lori, Larry, Carol and Tammy better as well.

Want to attend CTAA Expo? Register your driver for the Nebraska Roadeo for a chance to win a scholarship or you can apply to have out-of-state expenses included in your monthly invoice. Visit www.neatp.org for more information.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The member spotlight for this issue is Hall County Public Transportation. Charley Falmlen provided the following information.



Tell us a little of your transit system's background and history. How did the system start and where is it today? Hall County Public Transportation has been serving the City of Grand Island and Hall County for over four decades. It was originally a senior only service, but in the 1990's it began offering public transportation for all.

HCPT was a 5311 recipient up until 2013 when Grand Island urbanized and began to receive 5307 funding. At this time, HCPT operates under urban and rural transit funding.

How long have you served as the manager?

The City of Grand Island became a Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2013, at that time we were allocated 5307 funding for the first time. I came onboard with the City of Grand Island in 2017 to manage the 5307 Program in the brand new "Transit Program Manager" role.

How does your transit system serve the local community?

Any way we can! Our community is growing so much. We are doing our best to keep up by expanding our service and attempting to increase the number of rides we offer.

What are some highlights of serving your community?

Despite our service growing so much, many of our drivers and staff have been with us for years. Riders regularly comment on how courteous and friendly our drivers are. Despite growing, we take much pride in being able to maintain our small-town hospitality.

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

There is very low unemployment in Grand Island, and the job market is tough. That means lots of people ride transit to get to work. It also means that it is difficult to find staff here at HCPT. We strive to maintain our values and customer service and keep looking for quality employees who work well with that premise.

Another challenge is most definitely our growth. Increasing service slowly and steadily is the best approach, but sometimes a big change needs to happen all at once, too! It is a bit of juggling act.



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

We can't even begin to put a value on the training and education! We're so thankful for all you do!

What do your riders think of your transit system?

So many of our riders have very personal, first name relationships with our staff. We are growing fast, but we are trying to maintain a system in which riders feel right at home.

View the executive summary from HCPT's recent Transit Needs Analysis which explains more about the transit system's additions to service in the Implementation Plan Section:

<http://www.grand-island.com/home/showdocument?id=19664>

ELEVEN NEW CNG BUSES START SERVICE THIS WEEK

Mayor Chris Beutler today announced that 11 StarTran buses fueled by compressed natural gas (CNG) are starting service in Lincoln this week. The new buses replace 17-year-old diesel-fueled vehicles and offer these benefits:

- lower operating costs with a more stable fuel supply and cost
- improved mechanical reliability that will improve on-time performance
- upgraded seating for riders and operators
- upgraded camera systems, including back-up cameras
- touch-screen instrumentation and adjustable, automatic pedals for operators



Pictured are Daniel Nguyen and Cathy Monroe, FTA Region 7, Mike Davis, StarTran Transit Manager, and Miki Esposito, Director of Public Works and Utilities.

“Putting these buses on the street takes us significantly closer to the community’s goal of reducing the use of non-renewable fuels in City vehicles,” Beutler said. “Clean, efficient CNG-fueled buses deliver the same number of people to their destinations with 20 percent less tailpipe greenhouse emissions.”

The recently-adopted Lincoln Environmental Action Plan includes a goal to reduce non-renewable fuel usage in City fleet operations by 50 percent by 2030. StarTran’s fleet includes 80 vehicles. By 2019, half of the fleet will use alternative fuel or propulsion. This includes 37 CNG-fueled vehicles—24 buses, 11 HandiVans and two trolleys—and four electric buses scheduled to begin service in mid-2019.



“More riders are turning to StarTran because of its environmental benefits for our community, and we are moving closer to our goal of a 100 percent environmentally friendly system,” Transit Manager Mike Davis said. “These buses promote cleaner air and deliver comfortable passenger seating and a quieter ride.”

The need to replace buses was identified in StarTran’s Transit Development Plan (TDP), which seeks to grow ridership and increase efficiency through route changes, additional service offerings, and better amenities. About \$3.4 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration (FTA) helped fund the replacement program.

“The partnerships that StarTran has been able to leverage to bring greater safety, reliability and efficiency for its riders and grow is a credit to the agency’s leadership” said Cathy Monroe, FTA Region 7 Planning Director. “As a matter of fact, StarTran was recently recognized for its forward-thinking initiative and commitment to not only applying for but securing competitive funding on the national scale.”

StarTran serves an average of 2.5 million riders annually. Since routes were updated in 2017, ridership has grown about 5 percent over the past 18 months. For more information on StarTran, visit startran.lincoln.ne.gov.

BIG RED EXPRESS

Hurry and get your Big Red Express discounted 2018 season tickets from StarTran! Season tickets are only \$50, a \$20 savings as regular price is \$10 roundtrip per person. Ride to and from all UNL Husker home football games from one of six lots. Shuttle service begins two hours prior to kickoff with the last bus leaving the lots 45 minutes prior to kickoff. Stadium unloading and loading location is on “R” Street, between 12th and 14th Streets. Buses return to the lots immediately after the game. Passengers will need exact change when boarding the bus.

Visit <https://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/startran/big-red-express.htm> for more information.

OLDER NEBRASKANS DAY

It was a beautiful day at the Nebraska State Fair when NATP hosted a booth during Older Nebraskans Day on August 29.

Over 600 people came through the Bosselman Conference Center for the wellness festival. Many stopped by the NATP booth to discover more information about public transit in their area. Staff from the University of Nebraska created a one-page Nebraska Public Transit Directory that was handed out to attendees.

Attendees could spin the wheel for a giveaway item. Attendees could also enter their name in a drawing for a chance to win a coffee mug and gourmet coffee grounds. Helen F. from York was the lucky winner.

As it has been for the past few years, this was a great opportunity to reach out to potential riders and emphasize that transit is for everyone!

On hand to help with the booth were Beth Siegfried (McCook Public Transit), Denise Smith (Phelps County Public Transit), and Tiffany Fougeron and Jennifer Eurek (NATP).



HOLIDAY HOURS

The NATP office will be closed Thursday, November 22 and Friday November 23 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

We hope you enjoy this time with family and friends!



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

Please send your articles and pictures for the Nebraska Transit Trends newsletter to the NATP office by **November 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 **Jennifer@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

Dates to Remember

September

18-19 Drivers Training & Rodeo
Kearney

October

5-6 NE Federation of the Blind
Conference
Kearney

December

12-14 NACO Conference
Kearney