

# Nebraska Transit Trends

## 2018 NATP ROADEO

The Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers held its Annual Statewide Rodeo at the Nebraska Safety Center in Kearney on September 19. 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 Rodeo competition, all attendees gathered for an awards luncheon. Drivers from both divisions were introduced and presented with certificates for their participation.



Drivers competing in the Small Bus Division



Cindy Sanders, Rodeo Committee co-chair; Small Bus Division First Place, Marvin Baden, Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging; Jeff Baker, Rodeo Committee co-chair



Carol Graham, Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging; Diane Schaepe, Seward County Transit; and Marvin Baden, Blue Rivers Area Agency of Aging

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

The Driver of the Year Award went to Mindy Manning who had the highest score of the day. Mindy received a \$50 gift card as a prize and took home the traveling trophy for winning the mini-van division. *Continued on page 3...*

The event could not have occurred without the planning of the Rodeo Committee members including Jeff Baker, Cindy Sanders, Scott Bartels, Denise Smith, Corrina Duckworth, Bill Bivin, Coletta Clouse, Wayne Masek, and Beth Siegfried. The Nebraska Safety Center donated the use of the driving range, garage and tent, and provided volunteers for the event.

The Rodeo competition consists of a written test, pre-trip inspection, wheelchair securement, and a driving skills course. The theme was "Mardi Gras".

This year additional scholarships are available so first, second and third place drivers from each division and their managers are eligible to attend and compete in the CTA National Rodeo in Palm Springs, California, in May 2019.

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.

Winners of the small bus division were Marvin Baden, Blue Rivers Area Agency of Aging, first place; Diane Schaepe, Seward County Transit, second place; and Carol Graham, Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, third place.

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# NATP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings Transit Friends,

It has been an exciting and busy Fall. Several agencies received new vehicles, some of which were promptly recalled. NATP hosted its annual Roadeo along with continuing education core courses. A number of transit managers traveled to Breckenridge, CO for the TRB/RIBTC Conference. You will learn more about that event by reading the comments from attendees in this newsletter. And just last week Jennifer Eurek and I hosted the NATP booth at the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO).

Saline County Area Transit's 2018 Dodge was recalled for a brake issue that was quickly resolved at the dealership, almost in less time than it took us to travel there and back again. However, the BraunAbility recall on the 2014 and 2016 lowered floor models hasn't gone as smoothly. We are still trying to schedule an agreeable time to take them in. Unfortunately, our best options for service are to travel either to Omaha or Kansas City, two plus and three and a half hours one way, and Omaha can't get us scheduled for a couple of weeks. If you are having similar difficulties, please notify me by email or phone.

On September 19th, NATP hosted its 26th annual driver training and statewide Roadeo competition. It was "bookended" by bootcamp PASS and Defensive Driving training coordinated by Kaitlyn Richardson with UNK. Congratulations to all six drivers who earned the opportunity to travel to Palm Springs, CA in May to compete at the national Roadeo. It is so exciting to be able to provide six scholarships this year! Thank you to all who help organize and coordinate the Roadeo and volunteer to serve as judges. Also, a special thank you to all the transit managers who allow their drivers to participate. This has always been a premiere learning experience and we depend on you each year to help make it even better. If you have suggestions on how NATP can improve this event to make it even more beneficial, please contact us.

Jennifer and I hosted the NATP booth at the NACO Conference in Kearney December 12th and 13th. They had approximately 800 attendees from all across the state. It is always interesting how often we hear "Oh, we don't have public transit," only to find out that they do. They just don't recognize it until they associate it with the senior center or the "handibus" service. A quick history lesson on how many rural transit systems were originally created under the Older American Act often resolves their confusion. But it goes to show how much education still needs to be done to advocate for public transit as more than "just for elderly and disabled."

Later this week the NATP board will be meeting to schedule and plan various events for 2019, including Legislative Day, Public Transit Week, the Midwest state managers meeting to be held in Kansas City this year, and, of course, the 27th annual Roadeo. We would love to have input from all of our members. Feel free to contact any board member with your fresh ideas or simple tweaks.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a very prosperous New Year!

Until next time, safe travels everybody.

Scott Bartels  
NATP President



*Continued from page 1...*

For the eighth year, the Roadeo committee honored someone who exemplified good sportsmanship and participated in the theme. This year's recipient of the Spirit Award was Janice Hartman of Guide Rock Public Transit.

Thank you to everyone who participated.



*Drivers competing in the Mini Van Division*



*Cindy Sanders, Roadeo Committee co-chair; Mindy Manning, Florence Home; Marvin Baden, Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging; and Jeff Baker, Roadeo Committee co-chair*



*Spirit Award winner Janice Hartman of Guide Rock Public Transit and Jeff Baker, Roadeo Committee co-chair*



*Mini-van division winners Ramona Daniels of Saline County Area Transi; Mindy Manning, Florence Home; and Rod Kinning, Avera Creighton Hospital.*



*Cindy Sanders, Roadeo Committee co-chair; Mini Van Division First Place, Mindy Manning, Florence Home; Jeff Baker, Roadeo Committee co-chair*



*Cindy Sanders, Roadeo Committee co-chair; Mindy Manning, Florence Home; Jeff Baker, Roadeo Committee co-chair*

## 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 5 in Columbus.

NATP Board Member Mike Davis was 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.

## 2 YEAR FUNDING CYCLE FOR OPERATING ASSISTANCE

The funding for Section 5311 operating assistance has changed from a one-year cycle to two years. The next round of funding will cover fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. This will reduce the administrative burden of an annual application cycle.

Applications are now available on your dashboard at [nebraskatransit.com](http://nebraskatransit.com). The deadline for submittal of the application and all supporting documentation is March 1, 2019.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

Hello everyone!

As I continue to learn about NATP, it was great to look back at what was accomplished in 2018.

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, and the Nebraska Association of County Officials Conference. We placed an ad in two issues of the Nebraska Health Care Association's Keeping You Connected publication. NATP continues to provide coloring books to members to distribute to children in their communities.

Tiffany Fougeron attending the CTAA Expo and Rodeo in Pittsburgh with Tammy McConnell, Carol Graham, Lori Byers and Larry Vortherms

I attended the National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Transportation in Breckenridge, Colorado. It was a great event for me to learn and network. I was able to get to know better NATP members in attendance; as well as, colleagues from other states and vendors.

In 2019, NATP will have our Legislative Event in March, Rodeo and Drivers Training in August and mark your calendars for the Midwest Transit Conference to be held September 11-13 in Kansas City.

Hope to see you in March!

Jennifer Eureka  
NATP Executive Director

## CHANGES IN THE NEBRASKA CHILD SAFETY RESTRAINT LAW

Effective January 1, 2019, federally funded vehicles need to be compatible with the new law LB 42, with the exception of the small buses. Because of the shoulder harness configuration, you cannot safely secure a booster seat in the vehicle. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has reviewed the small bus restraints and seats. Since the buses have tether anchor points and lap only belts on the seats, they have suggested a supplemental harness/restraint system that would meet the requirements for the booster seat.

They have even suggested a manufacturer and specific device. The 86Y-Car cam distributed by Ez-On Products converts a lap belt into a 4-point securement suitable for a child restraint.

Product info, instructions and video at this link <https://www.ezonpro.com/our-products/conversion-vests/item-86y-car-cam/>

A list of distributors in the US here <https://www.ezonpro.com/find-a-distributor/>

## NEW LOOK FOR NEBRASKATRANSIT.COM

On January 3, 2019, the website at nebraskatransit.com will have a new layout and look. The team behind this redesign worked to retain all the valuable content while streamlining navigation for the public and improving accessibility. The redesign will not impact availability of the transit manager portal. Your log in address remains the same at <https://invoice.nebraskatransit.com/>.

The new "Find Transportation" page includes a searchable directory of providers and a new intercity bus route map. Be sure to visit the redesigned nebraskatransit.com on the 3rd to see the new layout!

# 2019 PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK

Start planning for the 2019 Nebraska Public Transit Week! Members are encouraged to participate in the statewide event from April 7-13.

NATP will again coordinate a proclamation signing with Governor Ricketts. The proclamation will be in March, but the date has not been determined.

A toolkit will be available to assist you in participating. The toolkit will include the ability to order promotional items, how to draft/share press releases and social media posts, provide talking points for interviews, offer a list of suggested activities, and other helpful resources.

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!

Watch for more information coming soon!

The graphic features the text "Go NEwWhere" in a large, stylized font. "Go" is yellow, "NE" is white with a red shadow, and "wWhere" is yellow. Below this, "PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the dates "APRIL 7-13, 2019" are displayed in a large, black, sans-serif font. The background is white with a red, torn-paper-like border on the left and top edges.

## NATP COLORING BOOKS



NATP coloring books were created and distributed to members in 2017 but continue to be available. Members were to distribute the books to children in their communities to inform them about public transportation.

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

Contact the NATP office to order your copies today!

The advertisement includes the logo for Nebraska / Central Equipment, Inc., which consists of stylized icons of a yellow bus and a blue bus. To the right of the logo, the text reads "NEBRASKA / CENTRAL EQUIPMENT, INC." and "bus sales & service". Below this, it says "Contact us for all your bus needs!" followed by the phone number "(308) 381-2473" and the email address "tyler@nebraskacentral.net". On the right side of the advertisement, there is a photograph of a white bus.

## ELMWOOD, NEBRASKA IN THE NEWS

The Village of Elmwood, NE hosted its annual Holiday Extravaganza on Saturday, November 24, 2018. Two of their ENOA drivers, Kevin Engstrom and Bill Connour (who is a resident of Elmwood), participated in some of the day's events, which included the Community Memorial Recognition Ceremony, and the Starry Knight Parade. Kevin and his wife, Dawn, decorated one of the Rural Transportation Program vans, and drove it in the parade, while handing out candy. Bill Connour photo credit

Brian Hatfield



## NELIGH, NEBRASKA IN THE NEWS

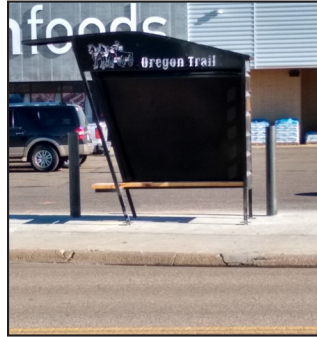
Each year during an on-site training, all the Neligh Dial-A-Ride drivers ride in a wheelchair buckled up in the back of our bus. Another driver will drive the bus and hit the rough roads and smooth roads in town to remind each driver what our wheelchair riders (and non-wheelchair riders) feel and experience during their ride with us on city streets. It's a good reminder of just how rough and bouncy some parts of town are and to slow down and let the ride be more comfortable and enjoyable. picture of all 3 of our drivers in a group picture from an on-site training Neligh Dial-A-Ride also participated in an event hosted by the local Women of Neligh for a Trunk or Treat at a local church parking lot. Our Dial-A-Ride Public Transit shared the "haunted bus" with a few decorations and even had a few dinosaurs check out the haunted bus.

Dana Klabenes



# SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA IN THE NEWS

It's been a busy few months for the staff of Tri-City Roadrunner. On November 10th, we participated in the local Veterans Day Parade where several of our employees who served in the military walked along with one of our buses and handed out candy to the spectators. We also participated in the City of Scottsbluff and the City of Gering's Holiday Parades. Candy canes and lip balm with our logo on them were handed out to those brave enough to come out despite the cold, snowy weather. Scottsbluff's Holiday Parade also featured the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree that passed through our community on its way from Oregon to Washington, D.C.



Our Tri-City Roadrunner team has expanded! The newest member, T.C. Roadrunner, was introduced to the public on November 18th during the City of Scottsbluff's Holiday Parade. T.C. was a huge hit with the children and he's looking forward to participating in future community events!



We continue to work on improving our fixed route service in Scottsbluff, Terrytown, and Gering. In the next few weeks, we will be installing schedule holders at all bus stops that will have the routes and stop times listed. We also have two new shelters that were built and donated by local company, Aulick Industries. They were installed by crews from the City of Scottsbluff and Gering.

We are excited for 2019 and all that it has in store for us at Tri-City Roadrunner. With almost a year under belt for our fixed route system, we will be making some adjustments to our routes that will allow us to reach some underserved areas of our community. Additional benches and shelters at our bus stops will also continue to be priority for us as we strive for constant improvement of our services.

# HALL COUNTY NEBRASKA IN THE NEWS

Hall County Public Transportation and Senior Citizen's Industries are going through some exciting changes. They have a new office located at 1016 Diers Avenue, #119, Grand Island. Besides the wonderful amenities, the new office provides plenty of space to grow and provides ease of access to the public.

Trainings are on-going to keep our drivers current and educated on operations. But most exciting is the addition of 360-degree cameras to all of our units. Drivers will be attending training on camera use while administration learns the options and advantages that will be available. We hope to have all of the cameras installed and the system operational by the last week in December. Also, we have a new addition to the SCI family in the way of a Safety & Compliance Manager, Pamela Stanson.

## NATP MEMBERS ATTEND 23RD NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL PUBLIC & INTERCITY BUS TRANSPORTATION

Breckenridge, Colorado, was the setting for this year's 23rd National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation, held September 30 – October 3. The theme for this conference was "Changing Lives. Strengthening Communities." NATP Executive Director Jennifer Eurek attended the conference along with scholarship winners Nikki Pinkelman, Colleen Clayton, Scott Bartels, and Mitch Sump. Other NATP members Cindy Sanders, Denise Smith, and Beth Siegfried were able to make the trip. Kari Ruse and Bill Biven attended from NDOR.



*NATP members attending the Fiesta themed evening event: Nikki Pinkelman, Denise Smith, Colleen Clayton, Cindy Sanders, Scott Bartels, and Beth Siegfried*

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.

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, the keynote speaker was Donna Griggs of Propel Change, who spoke on performance improvement and change management. Her theme was utilizing employees when making changes and teaching them how to maintain those changes. She spoke about minimizing turnover, increasing engagement, accountability, and productivity.

Following the keynote, attendees had the opportunity to attend three educational sessions. During lunch, several national awards and student paper awards were presented. 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, continuation of the vendor show and a special fiesta-themed evening event.

Wednesday morning capped the conference off with a "town hall" meeting and update from FTA.

## STARTRAN NOW USING SIMULATOR FOR DRIVER TRAINING

StarTran is now using a new Bus Operator Simulator System that helps train new employees and strengthen skills for current operators. A grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Ladders of Opportunity Initiative funded 70 percent of the cost.

Transit Director Mike Davis said the system is an accurate representation of what a public transit driver may encounter. The system features a 330-degree virtual display with surround sound that mimics the experiences of operating a StarTran bus. The simulator features 60 driving scenarios that include navigating various types of streets, traffic devices, pedestrians, passenger noise and street conditions such as rain or snow.

"Safety is StarTran's first consideration in everything we do, and we continue to raise the bar on safety with new innovations," Davis said. "We appreciate the FTA's investment in our vision to be one of the safest modes of transportation and for giving us one more way to attract, train and retain best-in-class, professional operators."

For more information on StarTran, visit [startran.lincoln.ne.gov](http://startran.lincoln.ne.gov) or call 402-476-1234. <https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/media/2018/101918b.htm>



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL TRANSPORTATION

Thank you to NATP for the scholarship to attend the National Conference in beautiful Breckenridge, Colorado. The sessions were excellent and the networking with colleagues from across the country was very valuable and useful in the day to day operation of Central City Public Transit system.

The Transit system in Colorado is unique in the way they connect from city to city with no charge to their riders. No charge per boarding because of the tourist trade. I also attended a session on how Public Transit plays a key role in our communities in the event of a disaster.

What should be documented during this time to possibility get reimbursement for the cost? In the state of Vermont because of the environment, they are changing to all electric Transit systems. The speaker shared they would have to recharge once a day and it would take 2 to 4 hours to recharge.

The round table sessions opened up my eyes on marketing your program to your community or county and working together with others to accomplish goals. The importance for all transit systems is providing the best and safest service for all of our riders every day.

There was a great representation of Transit managers and Department of Transportation from Nebraska, who all had a great time. On a personal note, I would like to thank Beth from McCook, for teaching me how to drive the mountains.

*Colleen Clayton, Director of Merrick County Senior Services, Central City, NE*

I was asked to write up a small review of what I learned at the national conference. I learned that the difference between 9600 feet of elevation and 8500 feet of elevation (my previous high for an extended stay) doesn't sound like much until you actually experience it! LOL

In all seriousness though I attended a few sessions that I felt were beneficial. Most notable was the Safety for Rural & Tribal Transit Systems, Our Changing Workforce, and Strengthening Rural & Intercity Transit Service through Community Outreach. The first one, Safety, was held on Sunday and the lower number of attendees offered a large amount of discussion opportunities between the moderators and the group. Some concerns I have regarding service during inclement weather and rider

safety during inclement weather were addressed by the moderators and others in the group. I have slowly been trying a few of them with our recent bit of weather. Initial results are too small to project but the one that was well received by our regular riders was contacting them the evening before regarding their status for the next day. The second session regarding the workforce was helpful not so much from a "What Can We Do?" but at least let me know that others in similar transit systems are also experiencing issues that I am. Lancaster County has a very low unemployment rate and the majority of applicants I get are either not interested due to wages, etc. or are not suitable candidates. The final one of the three I felt was the most helpful focused on community outreach and marketing. Lancaster County is a bit different from some other transit areas in that over 90% of residents reside in the city of Lincoln so marketing in the smaller communities has been challenging. Add in the relatively close proximity of the smaller communities to Lincoln and the pool of potential riders is further diluted due to ease of getting rides from family and friends. It was at this session I met a couple of gentleman from Arizona who work with the White Sands Reservation and they offered some interesting ideas about how they marketed to non-native riders in the vicinity of the reservation.

All in all I felt the experience was worthwhile and was pleased I was able to attend, in spite of the altitude sickness!

*Mitch Sump*

# RURAL AND INTERCITY BUS TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE

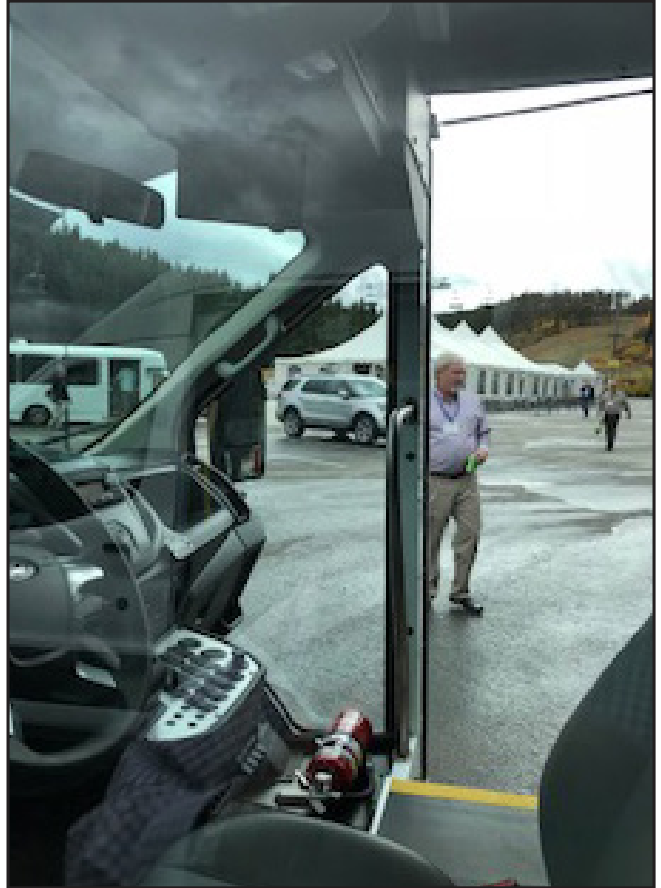
During the preconference on Sunday, I elected to take the tour of the Eisenhower-Johnson Memorial Tunnel. This is the highest vehicle tunnel in the world at an elevation of 11,155 feet on the West end. It took five years to construct and open the Eisenhower Tunnel which opened March 8, 1973. The Johnson Tunnel did not open until December 21, 1979. There are so many fascinating aspects involved in operating the 1.6 mile long tunnels that bore beneath the Continental Divide. Daily operations involve or require back up generators, a security team, surveillance monitors, traffic control communications, ventilation, towing units, and even its own fire department.

There were many great sessions offered at the conference. Some highlight topics for me were:

- How difficult change is and the importance of managing change to create improved performance
- The importance of brand marketing and using it to knock down negative perceptions and stigma associated with riding the bus
- Using website accessibility to enhance your brand and extend agency marketability

I did also come away with a substantial sense that technology is going to drive the opportunity for greatest performance improvement in rural transit.

One more item I would comment on is the terrific improvement that has been made for driver visibility on some twelve passenger model buses. Refer to the attached photo.



## *Public Transit Week*

Mark your calendars for the 2019 Public Transit Week which will take place April 7-13.

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.

Thanks to all of my comrades for helping me celebrate my birthday. Hiring the mariachi band and hosting the Taco 'Bout a Party with pinatas, a salsa bar and photo center was really a little over the top, but everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Congratulations to Nikki Pinkelman for winning the scavenger hunt and securing a free registration for the next conference. We all had a good time assisting you in that effort.

Scott Bartels



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED



I am, Nikki Pinkelman, Manager for the Cedar County Transit out of Hartington, NE. I received a scholarship from RTAP and was able to attend the 23d national Transportation conference in Breckenridge, CO. As a newer manager I was thrilled with this opportunity, my first national conference, a great chance to learn from others from all over the United States!

I attended several interesting seminars, three of my favorites were in regards to marketing, travel training and emergency preparedness. Three marketing secrets I'd like to share are: understand your target market, create a brand with meaning and develop the visual, verbal and experiential components. We are all trying to overcome the stigma "the bus is not for me" so marketing to the right people is key. In travel training we need to promote independent living, greater mobility and

access to our communities. Transits should work with other rural community partners to help educate our public. Working with other agencies go hand in hand for emergency preparations. We need to plan, plan, plan, do mock drills and have emergency items such as flash lights, phone, weather radio, water and food available.

Another highlight of TRB conference was competing in the newbie manager scavenger hunt. I was happy to represent Nebraska and proud to say that I can in 1st place, winning a delicious box of toffee and free admission to the next national conference!! This hunt gave me a great chance to directly network with lots of others, meeting people and collecting the most business cards was one of the tasks. Thanks for the opportunity and I was strongly encourage others managers to attend future conferences.

## NATP HOSTS BOOTH AT NACO CONFERENCE

NATP hosted a booth at the Nebraska Association of County Officials' (NACO) 123rd Annual Conference. The event took place December 12-13 at the Younes Convention Center in Kearney.

Board President, Scott Bartels; Board Treasurer, Jeff Baker and Executive Director, Jennifer Eurek were on hand to talk about the importance of public transit and answer questions from county officials and staff from across the state. We had over 300 people visited the NATP booth.

NATP also provided a giveaway prize at the end of the event.

The next event that NATP will be participating in is the Municipal Clerk Institute and Academy event in Kearney in March.

If you have ideas for events that NATP should be participating in, please contact the office.



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**Next newsletter deadline is  
February 22, 2019**

Please send your articles and pictures for the Nebraska Transit Trends newsletter to the NATP office by *February 22, 2019*.

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](http://www.neatp.org)

***Dates to Remember***

**April 7-13 - Public Transit Week**

**May 19-23 - CTAA Expo & Rodeo, Palm Springs, California**

**August 20-21 - NATP Rodeo and Drivers Training, Kearney**

**September 11-13 - Midwest Transit Conference, Kansas City**