

Nebraska Transit Trends

2019 PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK

Member Activities during Public Transit Week

The Nebraska City office of Blue Rivers Public Transportation observed Nebraska Public Transit Week with several activities. A fundraising raffle is being held to purchase two new buses. Also, residents had an opportunity to vote for their favorite BRPT employee by placing a donation in a box featuring the employee photo.

Other activities planned include:

- a stuff the bus event that will collect food for the Nebraska City Food Pantry
- a student art contest
- a "spot the bus" contest
- and an open house at the BRPT office



Chadron Public Transportation staff



Chadron Public Transportation hosted a luncheon for staff and passed out the NATP member appreciation tumblers.

The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging Rural Transportation Program operates in Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Dodge and Washington Counties. They recognized Public Transit Week by hosting a Driver luncheon, providing Veterans with free rides all week, having small packaged snacks to share with passengers and distributing the pens from the Nebraska Department of Roads to all passengers.

Norfolk Public Transportation celebrated Public Transit Week with activities each day. On Monday, they hosted an employee appreciation lunch and handing out the NATP Appreciation Tumblers. Tuesday, was "dump the pump" day with free rides for new riders. Wednesday was Passenger Appreciation with a radio remote 2-hour live programming with hot dogs, chips, pop. It also included, a Board Member ride along, a drawing for 10 free ride pass, and the pens from NDOT. Free rides on the mini bus from 11:00 to 2:00 were also provided on Wednesday. Thursday was Veterans appreciation day and all Veterans rode free. Buddy days were also encouraged - riders brought a friend and both rode for free.



Valley County Health Systems (Pictured left to right) Driver Wayne Brown, Driver Bill Longo, Transit Manager Stephanie Copp, Dispatcher Shayna Dunbar, Dispatcher Logan Miller, Dispatcher Kaylee Clayton, and Driver Janet Harkness. Missing Driver Chuck Squier.

For Public Transit Week, Valley County Health Systems gave one free in town ride coupon per passenger, lip balm with VCHS Public Transit logo, participated in Party Line Part II radio talk show, and had a press releases in the local newspaper and radio station.

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NATP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Greetings Transit Friends,
Can you believe we are almost half way through the New Year? It has been a rather tumultuous start concerning Nebraska's weather. Record setting snow fall and snow storms have put many Nebraska transit systems to the test, deciding when it is best to cancel service for the sake of safety for passengers, drivers and even vehicles. We don't want to place staff and passengers in jeopardy when it is avoidable, but we also don't take lightly the importance of getting our passengers to dialysis or other medical treatments, or to their place of employment.

I have read that recent flood damage to roads and bridges is causing some Nebraska residents to travel nearly an hour to get to schools, businesses and services that had been only several minutes away. According to the NDOT web site, current estimated damage to the Nebraska state highway system is at one hundred million dollars, while damage to local roads that are on federal aid routes are estimated at 60 million dollars. At the peak of the flooding, over 3300 miles of roads were closed due to blizzard conditions or water on the roads. By March 23rd less than 200 miles remained closed as NDOT strives to restore mobility.

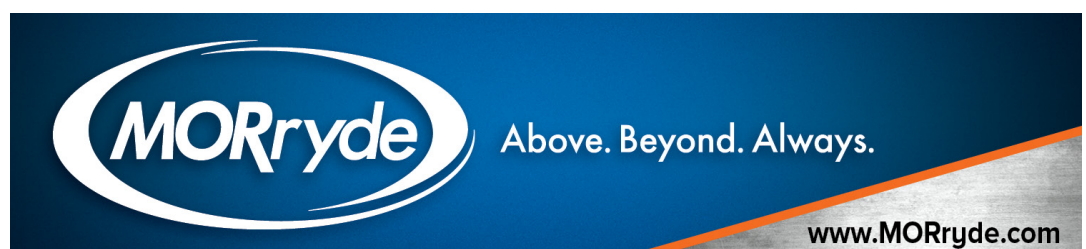
We are extremely fortunate that no losses were reported to 5310 and 5311 facilities and vehicles.

NATP hosted the 2019 Legislative Day March 12th. The event actually began Monday afternoon with a great training session presented by Kelly Rippen on leadership and management and how to build a team for success. Kelly challenged attendees to reflect on their leadership style, assessing where there are strengths and which areas need more attention. She expressed the importance of improving workplace culture to create team success. Kari Ruse then presented updates and provided some clarifications from NDOT before we recessed for the evening.

On Tuesday morning we hosted the legislative breakfast for Senators at the Ferguson House where NATP members were able to meet representatives and advocate for public transportation. This was followed by a stroll to the state capital where Governor Ricketts signed and presented the Proclamation declaring April 7-13 as Public Transit Week.

The NATP board members then regrouped to hold a meeting during which 2020 and 2021 workplans were constructed, and schedules were coordinated for the Nebraska Municipal Clerks Institute, NATP state Roadeo, and the Midwest Transit Conference.

Until we meet again, safe travels everybody.
Scott Bartels



2019 LEGISLATIVE EVENT

NATP held its annual Legislative Event on March 11-12 in Lincoln. The event kicked off the afternoon of Monday, March 11 with featured training and updates at the Courtyard by Marriott in downtown Lincoln.

The training started off with a presentation from Kelly Rippen titled "Leadership and Management-Bring your 'A' game to the workplace and grow your team to it's highest potential!!" This leadership and manager workshop is designed to help build a strong team dynamic, increase productivity, decrease workplace drama, and help employees bring their "A" game to work every day. It also touched on how to create opportunities for meaningful feedback and open strength-based dialog for greater employee accountability.



Kelly provided a high energy, audience involvement session that allowed time to reflect on best practices that work for you and fit with your strengths and leadership style. Ms. Rippen is the Vice President of McCook Community College and Student Affairs.



Next, Kari Ruse provided an NDOT update and had a question and answer session.

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

The next morning, NATP hosted eight Senators for breakfast at the Ferguson House. Attendees were able to visit with Senators about public transportation in their area. The group then headed to the State Capitol to witness Governor Ricketts sign a proclamation declaring the second week of April as Public Transit Week in Nebraska.



Thank you to everyone who attended the event!



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Hall County Public Transportation has re-branded. Going forward Hall County Public Transit will be CRANE (Central Ride Agency of Nebraska). A new logo has been created which we are proud to unveil. The vehicles all have new decals and wraps and are looking sharp. A new sign is installed, and the drivers have new shirts and jackets.

DRIVER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS UPDATED

The Nebraska Rural Public Transportation driver training requirements have been updated as of March 2019. The 16-hour core curriculum and 4 hours of annual continuing education are still required. However, online training can fulfill 2 hours of continuing education.

Instructions to access the online training can be found at nebraskatransit.com. Once you are on the site, click on resources > driver training courses > new: online driver training. The transit manager or someone else in your system can create one account to access all training. Use the built-in sign in sheet so we know which driver(s) attended the online training and they can receive certificates with their names. You can also organize group training by utilizing the sign-in sheet.

Currently there are 4 online courses available—ADA and Emergency Procedures, Customer Service and Riders' Needs, Problem Passengers and New Driver Training. Once you are on the website to register, you must scroll down the list to select transit-related courses as there are other NDOT courses on the site. Additional courses will be added as they are developed.

You can use "New Driver Training" for new drivers even before their first day of driving. The module includes basic information about defensive driving, wheelchair securement, Title VI, drug and alcohol testing, data collection, etc.

CAROL MAXSON

NATP was saddened to hear Carol Maxson passed away on Friday, February 22, at her home in Ogallala. Carol worked in public transportation for 20 years as the Director of Public Transit in Ogallala, and throughout that time, was a member of the Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers and served as President for ten years. Funeral services were held Saturday, March 2, 2019, at Prairie Hills Funeral Home in Ogallala.

NATP sent a memorial in Carol's honor to The Joy Mission in Julesburg, Colorado as requested in her obituary. We received a thank you letter with the following excerpts:

Carol spoke, often, of her time with you at NATP and enjoyed the fellowship she had with each member. She delighted in transportation of all sorts and was a great encouragement to Frank as he drove the Sedwick County school buses.

Carol championed a project of a joyous fellowship. Fire by Night was designed for those who travel only at night. A small building is equipped with books, CDs, DVDs and Bibles for anyone who may desire them. One may take communion and spend time with the Lord, kneel at the cross, leave a prayer request, praise or financial gift. Open 24/7, insulated, heated in winter, fans to cool in summer. While Carol did not live to see the project completed and Fire by Night moved to the Interstate (cross roads of U.S. Highway 385 and Interstate I-76), Carol's faith and enthusiasm for the project never wavered. She was such an inspiration to us all. We will miss her smile and no-nonsense approach to the work Father God has given to The Joy Mission since April 1993.

Thank you for remembering Carol! Her family thanks you, as well!

Ivy Joy & Frank Johnson, Co-Pastors of The Joy Mission



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NEBRASKA PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK CELEBRATED APRIL 7-13



Governor Pete Ricketts has proclaimed the week of April 7-13 as Nebraska Public Transit Week.

Nebraska Public Transit Week is a celebration and promotion of public transit across Nebraska organized by the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), the Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers (NATP), and Advance Innovation and Safety in Transit in cooperation with Nebraska's public transit providers.



Nebraska public transit had over 6.5 million riders in 2018 traveling nearly 10 million miles. Public transit options, in both rural and urban communities, are vital to those who do not own or cannot use a personal vehicle. This includes the 5.6% of households in Nebraska that do not have access to a vehicle. Public transit provides a connection to medical care, education, and jobs for thousands of Nebraskans.

Public Transit Week promotes both urban and rural providers. While urban providers have the largest ridership, they account for only seven of the 65 public transit providers in Nebraska. The 58 rural transit agencies accounted for nearly 35% of all public transit miles traveled, most offering demand response service, where rides are booked ahead of time for stops to a specific destination at a specific time, similar to what Nebraskans experience with rideshare programs. In addition to these 65 providers, seven agencies operate regular scheduled intercity routes across the state.

Local providers can be found on the Nebraska Public Transit website at nebraskatransit.com. The website includes an interactive map for finding public transit providers, details on events during Public Transit Week, and information for riders. The recent website redesign increased accessibility for all Nebraskans and improved security.

To celebrate Public Transit Week, transit agencies will be hosting events in their service areas.



2019 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Renewals for the 2019-2020 NATP membership year will be mailed in June and will also be available online – watch for details. 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

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The member spotlight for this issue is Kimball County Transit. Christ Warner is the transit manager and 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?

The original handi-bus service was established by the Community Action Agency and Kimball County took it over in January 1975. Up until January 2017, the service was provided mainly with one bus and one driver with office staff working 5 to 10 hours a week and using the occasional fill in driver.

It wasn't until NDOT held mobility management meetings that Kimball County began to realize the potential services that could be provided in our area. It simply started by providing our county residents a way to reach specialized medical needs that could only be found outside of our county. One conversation lead to another and today we provide service in 3 counties - Banner, Kimball, and Cheyenne, with 4 vehicles. We are contracted to take on Deuel County July 1st, allowing us to serve all of the Sothern Panhandle of Nebraska.



Deuel County staff

How long have you served as the manager?

I consider myself a new manager with only two years of service in public transportation. I am constantly in a state of learning. My experience is mostly in residential business management with a unique perspective from running a transitional housing project using 17 different funding sources.



Kimball County staff

How does your transit system serve the local community?

In such a rural part of Nebraska, our local community includes all the very small villages and towns in the region. Our goal is to provide access to people who may not otherwise have it. It can be anywhere from 30 minutes to over an hour to reach basic things like clothing stores and basic medical facilities. Many of the closest medical specialties are actually across the border into Wyoming and Colorado. We provide on-demand door-to-door service, with a majority of riders going to the larger towns such as Sidney and Scottsbluff. The

idea of local means keeping the dollars in the Panhandle if possible. If we are able to provide access to the things people need to stay independent and living in their homes, then we have helped our communities.

What are some highlights of serving your community?

We provide rides during large community events. It's a way to thank our taxpayers for allowing us to grow and provide the much-needed service to our rural area. Whether it's having our young and old riders throwing candy through the parade or making several trips to get people to the community concerts, its fun to see the enjoyment the riders get out of it.



As a transit system, we are beginning a project that will have a huge impact on our small downtown. We have received a grant to remodel a building that sits on the corner of the only stop light in town. The community has been extremely supportive, and the remodeled building will bring life that end of the street.

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

We face many of the same challenges as other transit systems such as funding and recruiting great drivers. My current challenges are growing pains/infrastructure. Two years ago, we were scheduling on paper and had one vehicle parked in a parking lot. The challenge has

been and continues to be keeping up with the demand as we go through the various changes such as adding vehicles and changing to web-based scheduling software.

Thankfully, I have been able to take advantage of scheduling software through RTAP reps or I don't know where we would be today. I don't think I realized how much time it truly took to do scheduling on paper until we weren't on paper anymore. For any of my neighboring small transits that don't believe they can transition to a web-based system because it's too expensive or they are afraid they won't be able to use it, call me!

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

Collaborating to make the workshops, Rodeo and regional conferences available to my small transit system has truly made a huge impact. The information presented and the ability to hear what other transit systems are doing brings ideas and lets me know how we are doing.

What do your riders think of your transit system?

Most of our passengers ride frequently and what I consistently hear is how our drivers are so caring. The shuttle has become a place to socialize for some of our riders making their



appointments close together so they can ride around from stop to stop and chat. To me that speaks volumes for our drivers and our transit system.

Any other thoughts?

I hope in the future we see more and more collaborations among transit systems and start to think outside the box. I believe it's the best way to provide service and reach those areas in Nebraska that still don't have any public transportation.

Dates to Remember

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

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Next newsletter deadline is July 15, 2019

Please send your articles and pictures for the Nebraska Transit Trends newsletter to the NATP office by July 15, 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, 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

Upcoming Events



Midwest/SW Transit Conference
September 11-13, 2019
Kansas City

This year NATP has partnered with ten other states to present the Midwest/SW Transit Conference in Kansas City. It will be held September 11-13, 2019. NATP

has done this multi-state conference twice before in 2013 and 2016. It will be a great opportunity for education and networking with vendors and fellow transit programs.

This will take the place of the Manager's Conference that would normally take place in June. We will hold the NATP Annual Meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 as part of the Midwest/SW Transit Conference.

Register and make hotel reservations – these are now available at <https://cvent.me/8WX9E>.



2019 Rodeo & Training
August 20-21, 2019
Kearney

The annual NATP Rodeo and Training will be held August 20 and 21 in Kearney. On Tuesday, August 20, a driver's training will be held at the Holiday Inn Conference Center. The training will include refresher and elective courses. Directly after the training, the Rodeo driver testing and judge's orientation will be held at the conference center. The Rodeo will be held on Wednesday, August 21 at the Nebraska Safety Center with an awards luncheon following. Registration and additional details will be available in June.

