

Nebraska Transit Trends

STATEWIDE MOBILITY MANAGEMENT SCHEDULING AND DISPATCHING SOFTWARE UPDATE

Bill Bivin, Statewide Mobility Manager

Agencies continue to purchase scheduling and dispatch software through NDOT's pre-qualified vendor list. Eighteen rural transit agencies are using or are in the process of procuring software from CTS TripMaster, Routematch, PassioTech, or QRYde. The other vendors are DemandTrans, Ecolane, Shah Software, TripSpark, and Via. Any of the prequalified vendor packages will help your agency with accurate data collection and reporting. Software streamlines the mandatory reporting requirements, and also allows you to collect and more easily analyze the specific data most important to the decision-making of your agency.

If your agency obtains transit software, you can:

- Reduce paperwork and make managing rider information easier.
- Use fare cards or other payment options.
- Simplify scheduling trips and communication between dispatch and drivers.
- Send updates to all your drivers or to just one.
- Manage vehicle maintenance and choose additional data that you want to collect.

All of these opportunities improve your operational efficiency and the rider experience. There are many options and unique features to choose from that allow you to customize a solution that best fits your agency and your community. NDOT continues to pay 100 percent of the startup costs. The ongoing annual operation, maintenance, and support is an eligible non-operating expense reimbursed at 90 percent (80% Federal and 10% State funds). NDOT has a dedicated consultant team to help you through all aspects of the contracting process. Contact Kari Ruse or me if you have some interest or any questions.



Tri-City Roadrunner



Norfolk Public Transit



Kimball

IN THIS ISSUE

NATP President's Message	2
Seward County Leadership Change ...	3
Legislative Update	4
Federal Mask Requirement.....	5
NE City Staff Spotlight	6
NATP Leadership.....	7

NATP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy New Year a little late.

It is hard to believe we were all in Lincoln a year ago for Legislative day and then later that week all our lives changed. With that said the NATP Board has been discussing what we can do to provide education and information that you need and how we will go about doing it. Since we will be unable to do Legislative day in the usual way, we are considering a half day of virtual learning and information. The yearly Managers meeting is still up in the air we are considering late Summer or October. If you have any preferences, please let us know what would work best for you.

It sounds like many agencies have gotten their dispatch software and are very happy with how it is performing. Hopefully, we can have a round table discussion with some of these Managers.

I talked to George Gallardo and it sounds like those of us who are next in line for our Audits will do them virtually with George. Which means some of us who do not have a laptop computer will be needing to get one!

We have been fortunate in McCook that the Transit employees have escaped COVID so far. Please keep in your prayers the agencies in Nebraska who have been affected and that we will all be able to get vaccinated soon.

Until next time!
Beth Siegfried, NATP President



NEBRASKA PUBLIC TRANSIT WEEK

APRIL 11-17, 2021

Mark your calendars! The 2021 Nebraska Public Transit Week is scheduled for April 11-17. Nebraska Public Transit Week will, again, look a little different this year. To gain valuable insight from agencies across the state, we will be holding a Zoom session every month leading up to Public Transit Week. Managers who participate in these Zoom sessions will be entered to win a prize. Plan to attend the final Zoom session on Monday, March 15th.

As with previous years, you can download additional materials from the website by clicking [here](#). Password for website: NPTW21TM

Make sure to watch your emails for additional information and reminders in the weeks leading up to Public Transit Week.

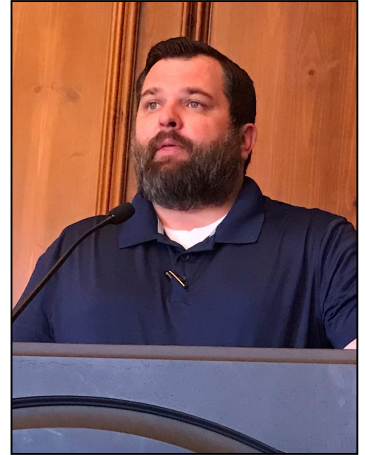
Contact Kaitlyn Richardson (402-480-6859; richardsonke@unk.edu) or Carrie Bartholomew (402-480-6857; bartholomewc@unk.edu) at the Nebraska Safety Center with any questions.

SEWARD COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Seward County would like to announce recent changes relating to our Public Transit position.

On December 8th, 2020, Jeff Baker accepted a position at VFW State Headquarters in Lincoln and submitted his resignation to the Seward County Board of Commissioners effective December 31st, 2020.

At the regular meeting of the Seward County Board of Commissioners held on December 29th, 2020, the Board appointed Matt Starkey to serve as the next Seward County Veterans Service Officer and Public Transit Director. The Board will be evaluating changes to the position and have asked Jeff to stay on part-time temporarily, to serve as the Grant Administrator until a final determination is made regarding changes to the appropriate job descriptions.



Jeff has served many roles with NATP, including serving on the Board, on the Rodeo Committee and Rodeo Marshal to name a few. NATP wishes Jeff the best of luck in his new position.

effective January 14th, 2021.

Updated contact information:

Matt Starkey – mstarkey@co.seward.ne.us

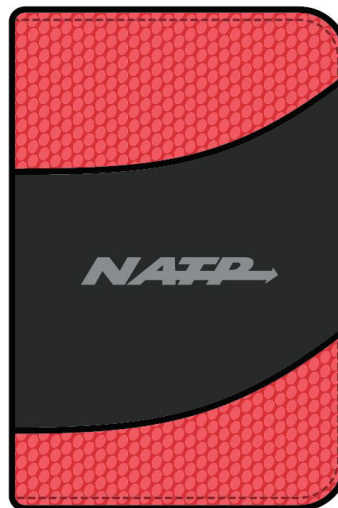
Jeff Baker – jrbaker@vfwne.org

(Jeff will also be maintaining his previous email address jrbaker@co.seward.ne.us until final transition plans are completed)

NATP MEMBER APPRECIATION

The Association purchased padfolios to show appreciation to our members' public transit employees. Managers are encouraged to host an appreciation event for public transit employees during Public Transit Week or during another special event. You are encouraged to submit photos to the NATP office of how the padfolios were distributed to employees at jennifer@youraam.com.

If you have not already returned your order form, contact the NATP office at jennifer@youraam.com or 402-405-1278.



Dates to Remember

NATP Senator Breakfast and Legislative Event cancelled
Plans are being made for a virtual event in late March or early April
Watch you email for details.

Plans are being made for the NATP Manager's Workshop later this year.

2021 NATP Rodeo and Driver's Training
August 24-25 - Kearney, NE

2021 CTAA Rodeo and EXPO
November 6-11
Richmond, Virginia

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

NATP will not be hosting a Senator Breakfast this year but we do encourage you visit with your Senator about how your agency has handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

One bill has been introduced by Senator McDonnell this Legislative Session directly related to transit.

LB661 makes it a felony for a person to commit assault on a public transportation driver. This elevated penalty applies to police officers, first responders, and health care professionals. The driver must be engaged in the performance of his or her official duties.

This bill has been referred to the Judiciary Committee and a public hearing was held on February 24. You can view a copy of the bill on the Nebraska Legislature website at Nebraskalegislature.gov and search for LB661.

You are encouraged to call or write your Senator in support of this bill and contact members of the Judiciary Committee, who will decide if the bill should be brought to the full Legislature for vote.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sen. Steve Lathrop, Chairperson
Sen. Tom Brandt
Sen. Wendy DeBoer
Sen. Suzanne Geist
Sen. Terrell McKinney
Sen. Adam Morfeld
Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks
Sen. Julie Slama

Contact information for the Senators can be found at nebraskalegislature.gov or you can contact the NATP office for information.

In order to facilitate public input on legislation, a new feature has been added to the Nebraska Legislature's website for submission of written comments on pending legislation on the Legislature's website at any stage of the process. (To access this feature, search for the bill you wish to submit a statement on and click the corresponding button near the top of the bill page.)

These submissions will not be considered testimony or part of the public hearing record, but the submitted comments will be available for access by senators and staff throughout the session. Once you submit a comment, you will receive an email asking you to confirm your comment. If you do not complete the confirmation process your comment will not be able for the Senators and staff to view.

Please note, there should be no expectation of privacy regarding comments submitted in this format. If a citizen uses the database to submit his or her views prior to the public hearing on a bill or resolution, this option will allow input to the members of the committee prior to any committee votes.

FTA REGION 7 ANNOUNCEMENT: FEDERAL MASK REQUIREMENT FOR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

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On Saturday, January 30, 2021; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an Order imposing a mask requirement applicable to public transportation systems, rail, and van, bus and motorcoach service providers to mitigate the risk of COVID-19. The CDC Order implements President Biden's Executive Order 13998, Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel, "to save lives and allow all Americans, including the millions of people employed in the transportation industry, to travel and work safely." On Jan. 31, 2021, TSA issued Security Directive 1582/84-21-01.

Officially, the public transportation mask-wearing mandate goes into effect at 11:59 p.m., on Monday, Feb. 1.

Science-based measures are critical to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Mask-wearing is one of several proven life-saving measures including physical distancing, appropriate ventilation and timely testing that can reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Requiring masks will protect America's transportation workers and passengers, help control the transmission of COVID-19, and aid in re-opening America's economy.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has posted Frequently Asked Questions online and will continue to add to this site with additional information in the coming days. The Department will be scheduling stakeholder calls beginning the week of February 1, 2021.

Please send questions to: TransitMaskUp@dot.gov

STAY TOASTY ON TRANSIT

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CRANE Public Transit held a Christmas giving event called "Stay Toasty on Transit". They collected over \$200.00 from CRANE staff to purchase a pair of gloves and a pair of fun socks for each rider. Also included in the donations are packets of hot cocoa mix, individual packages of marshmallows (to put in the hot cocoa), candy canes, and Rice Krispy treats. They made up Christmas gift bags to hand out to riders the week of Christmas.

OMAHA METRO – A YEAR IN REVIEW

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Oh, to return to January 2020. We'd no idea how innocent we were.

It's no truer than here at Metro. As planned, during the week of March 8th, we conducted two public meetings. The third was cancelled. Looking back, we shudder to remember that over the next two and half weeks our "essential" business would be scrambling to figure out how to keep buses on the street. With ridership decreasing and anxiety rising, we wondered, "What do we do to keep our employees and passengers safe".

By the week of March 23rd we're reducing express, fixed route and complimentary paratransit services. Steps to protect our employees and passengers were the implementation of backdoor boarding, no fare collection and urging the use of face coverings. All Metro employees were already wearing masks.

Operationally, we figured it out, as all of you did. Our employees, who are most resourceful, assisted in identifying vendors....and....so it seemed appearing out-of-nowhere, there was a 77-gallon drum of sanitizer plus small bottles for employees to fill and a local bag maker sewed our initial mask order. We'd taken pride in our contracted cleaning service, but knew this had to increased ten-fold. We acquired "fogging" equipment and added mid-day bus cleaning of heavier traveled routes. These tasks continue.

No employee has been furloughed or laid off. For those not driving, non-driving work is scheduled in and around the facility. They paint, power wash, organize and dispose of materials and outdated supplies, mow, police the grounds, fog the fleet and building interiors, design and construct plexiglass barriers, etc. Interestingly, many operators who are rarely in the facility work alongside employees they've never met before. Their bonding has been profound. A prime example is the in-house Food Bank. It started in response to increasing whispers of employees needing food assistance. We've operators with a spouse/partner who left employment to oversee at-home learning and/or be the day-care provider. The reduced income is most serious for some. The employee solution was to start and support an in-house Food Bank. Their only ask was a place to store and distribute the food. An easy partnership that's most successful and is supported with food drives and competitive bake sales. Metro has a very diverse work force and there are many different ways for "yummy" goodies to be prepared.

Wanted: 2021 NATP Roadeo Committee Members!

Contact the NATP office at jennifer@youraam.com if you are willing to serve. The committee will meet once or twice virtually to assist with planning, help with course set up and judge on the day of the Roadeo.

ADVANCE ZOOM TRAININGS

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Nebraska Safety Center has decided to make all transit driver training for the first quarter of 2021 virtual. These distance learning courses will be facilitated via Zoom and registration will be limited. These courses will still have a "location" listed on the Transit Manager Portal as well. We encourage managers to only register drivers for courses that they would have traditionally gone to in-person. Our hope is to begin regular, in-person training again starting in April.

Attendees of distance learning courses are expected to attend the entire course duration. If attendees fail to participate and follow distance learning course guidelines, they will NOT receive credit for taking the course. Please review and become familiar with all of the Distance Learning Guidelines before registering your drivers for Distance Learning Courses.

Due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic, certain facets of transit driver trainings may change to adapt to new circumstances as 2021 progresses. Please keep a watchful eye on your emails for any updates regarding trainings.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Carrie Bartholomew (402-480-6857; bartholomewc@unk.edu) or Mitchell Locken (402-817-2013; lockenm@unk.edu) at the Nebraska Safety Center.

WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Nebraska Safety Center has been working on building a Nebraska Transit Wellness Program. No matter what your background, age, or lifestyle, everyone can benefit from learning more about wellness and how to incorporate small wellness practices into their daily lives. The purpose of the Nebraska Public Transit Wellness Program is to provide information on wellness related topics and practices and make them easier to understand and more attainable to add into a daily routine.

The first step we have introduced in this program is a "5 Minutes of Wellness" video series. This series details basic stretches and movements to keep employees active during their regular day-to-day. Currently, there are 10 short videos available on the Nebraska Public Transit Youtube page, and the link to the full playlist can be found on the Nebraska Public Transit Website. The first video is an Introduction that breaks down why wellness matters and what to expect from the series. Our hope is that Transit Managers will take some time to share these videos with their employees and encourage them to take those extra 5 minutes out of their day to focus on moving and stretching.

Another aspect of the Nebraska Transit Wellness Program is a short newsletter, Welcoming Wellness in Rural Transit. The first issue of this newsletter debuted this month and is available on the Nebraska Transit Website. Issues will feature a wellness challenge for agencies to participate in, a delicious and health-conscious recipe to try out, and two featured wellness topics. The purpose of this newsletter is to focus-in on certain wellness topics and help transit agency employees take small steps toward wellness.

If you have any questions, concerns, or recommendations related to the Nebraska Transit Wellness Program, please contact Carrie Bartholomew (bartholomewc@unk.edu) at the Nebraska Safety Center.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: BOBBI LECHNER

NEBRASKA CITY - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

My name is Bobbi Lechner and I'm from Nebraska City. I have a son, a daughter and four beautiful grandchildren. My husband and I live on the farm that my Great Grandparents purchased in 1871. It's been in our family for almost 150 years! I started working for Blue Rivers as a substitute bus driver in September 1986 and became a full-time driver in November. I became a full-time dispatcher in 2010. Transferring to the office meant I couldn't compete in the Rodeo's anymore because I had to drive 51% of the time to be eligible. Rodeo's are a testing of a drivers skills. I started competing at the Nebraska Rodeo in 1994.



One of my new hobbies is making quilts. This is something I've wanted to do for a long time! During my time off (due to the Corona virus shut down), I created my first t-shirt quilt. My Transportation "Rodeo" quilt is made of 30 t-shirts from the Nebraska State Rodeos and the National Transportation Rodeos. The other t-shirts I used, I purchased from the cities I visited while competing at the Nationals. They all took a lot of blood, sweat and tears to get, some more than others.

I was shocked when I entered and won the Nebraska Rodeo in 1994. I was able to compete at the National Rodeo the following year in Portland, Oregon. To compete in the National Rodeo you have to place 1st or 2nd in the State Rodeo. The last year I went to the Nationals was in 2009.

I won the State Rodeo 9 times and placed 2nd once. I competed and judged at the State Rodeo from 1994 -2018. This is a list of National's that I have competed in/and placed:

- 1995 - Portland, Oregon
- 1997 - Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- 1998 - Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2000 - Fort Lauderdale, Florida: Placed 2nd
- 2002 - Austin, Texas: Placed 2nd
- 2003 - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 2005 - St. Louis, Missouri: Placed 5th
- 2006 - Orlando, Florida: I won the 'Most Spirited Driver Award'
- 2008 - New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2009 - Providence, Rhode Island

Bobbi remains an integral part of the transportation department in Nebraska City.

Thank you Bobbie for your continuing dedication to Blue Rivers!

2020-2021 NATP LEADERSHIP

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**Next newsletter
deadline is
April 1, 2021**

Please send your articles and pictures for the Nebraska Transit Trends newsletter to the NATP office by April 1, 2021.

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.

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www.neatp.org

JOIN CTAA

A national membership association dedicated to serving community and public transportation providers across the country.



*Benefits Offered to **CTAA** members:*

TRAINING

CTAA members receive discounted access to all CTAA training and certification programs.

DRIVER BACKGROUND CHECKS

IntelliCorp offers a special package of products at a discounted rate to all members.

INSURANCE

Cobbs Allen is CTAA's endorsed broker for employee benefits and property/casualty insurance.

PRODUCT DISCOUNTS

CTAA members receive discounts for vehicles, tires and service centers, along with joining Staples Business Advantage.

and much more...

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For Transportation Providers:

- Rural:** Base dues of \$250, plus \$25 for every vehicle (maxed at \$3,000)
- Small-Urban:** Base dues of **\$500**, plus \$25 for every vehicle (maxed at \$5,000)
- NEMT:** Base dues of \$250, plus \$25 for every vehicle (maxed at \$3,000)
- Specialized:** Base dues of \$250, plus \$25 for every vehicle (maxed at \$3,000)
- Tribal:** Base dues of \$250, plus \$25 for every vehicle (maxed at \$3,000)

For Mobility Partners:

- Federal and State Agencies:** Base dues of \$500
- State and Regional Transit Associations:** Base dues of \$300
- Partner Organizations:** Base dues of \$500
- Corporate Partners:** Base dues of \$500
- Mobility Managers:** Base dues of \$25 if your organization is a member
- Voting Individuals:** Base dues of \$200
- Non-Voting Individuals:** Base dues of \$125



Want to join?

Contact CTAA's Membership and Business Development Director
Loreal Lance

lance@ctaa.org