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**CLYMER TRANSMITS
DISPATCHING
TRAINING
PACKAGE TO
STATES**

UMTA Administrator Brian W. Clymer has transmitted a new UMTA RTAP National Program training package to state DOTs for dissemination to their rural operators. The new training package, entitled "Essential Skills for Dispatching," is designed to improve the skills of dispatchers and other transit staff who work as dispatchers. Reports of large requests for the new package from Florida and West Virginia indicate that the package is timely and needed.

Like other training packages that have been produced by the National Program, this one can be used either as self-instructional material or in an actual training session. The package's interactive materials -- videotape, dispatcher's workbook and manager's handbook -- focus particularly on the dispatcher's role as a coordinator for the transit system, a communicator with the public and drivers, and a record keeper. They are divided into the following six units:

1. Dispatching: What Your Job is All About
2. Keeping the System Moving: Your Role as a Coordinator
3. Talking to the Public: What to Say and How to Say It
4. Dealing with Drivers: What to Say and How to Say It
5. Keeping Records: Why They're Important and What You Need to Do with Them
6. Putting it All Together

The videotape is 30 minutes long and features a number of scenarios involving a dispatcher with passengers and with drivers. A narrator introduces specific teaching points designed to improve the dispatcher's skills. The dispatcher's workbook contains additional information on dispatching, as well as exercises and roleplays for the dispatcher to complete, and the manager's handbook includes directions for structuring group training sessions and offers suggestions on how the manager can be involved in the training. The estimated time to complete the entire course is approximately six hours.

To obtain additional copies of the training package or to inquire about having a trainer lead a day's workshop on dispatching, contact the National Resource Center at 800-527-8279.

**RTAP ELECTRONIC
BULLETIN BOARD
LETS RTAP STATE
COORDINATORS
EXCHANGE
INFORMATION**

The UMTA RTAP National Program electronic bulletin board allows the rural transit community to access the databases of the National Resource Center via computer and to send and receive electronic mail. Over half the states have tried the service including Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Popular uses of the service are to find out about the latest legislation, regulations and events that are affecting the rural transit industry; to download lists of manufacturers for bid lists; to register information about vehicle problems; and to receive current information from Resource Center product and service guides.

Starting in March, the UMTA RTAP National Program will include an updated monthly report of its activities on the electronic bulletin board and invite State RTAP Coordinators to include similar reports on their activities. In their reports, states might want to advertise if they have an upcoming training course with spaces available for other states, or tell about a new publication they have released, or communicate about new ways of doing business. And if a state would like special information from other states or from the national program, it can include these requests in its report. RTAP Coordinators can access this "RTAP Conference" using their modem and computer communications software program. The number for the electronic bulletin board is 202/628-2537.

For additional help in using the electronic bulletin board including how to purchase modems and communications software, contact the National Resource Center at 800-527-8279.

**NEWS FROM
THE STATES**

The **Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department** has focused on establishing a training and assistance program that meets training needs in the areas of commercial driver's licensing, defensive driving, passenger assistance, safety, and maintenance, and makes available the UMTA RTAP National Program training packages. It contracts with the Arkansas Transit Association to provide a full-time trainer who coordinates and/or conducts training and assistance as required. The program is available to any organization or agency who provides public transit or paratransit services through UMTA-assisted projects administered by the Department. Contact person: J.L. Gilbert, Administrator, Public Transportation Section, Planning Division, 501/569-2471.

Over the last year, the **California Department of Transportation** has established a state RTAP hotline to provide information and technical assistance to rural transit operators and held two driver training workshops. The "hands-on" workshops provided training to managers, supervisors, driver trainers and drivers in the areas of vehicle equipment and procedures, wheelchair lift orientation, emergency procedures, passenger awareness, and the components for a driver trainer program. Scholarships that covered the cost of registration, meals, travel and lodging were awarded to UMTA Section 18 providers and rural UMTA Section

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THE STATES
(continued)

16(b)(2) recipients. A third all-day workshop featuring sessions on the Americans with Disabilities Act was presented by California's RTAP Coordinator -- the California Association for Coordinated Transportation (or CalACT). CalACT plans to schedule a number of RTAP workshops throughout 1991, addressing other training needs identified by California's rural transit community, and anticipates establishing peer-to-peer training for rural transit providers. Contact person: James D. Conant, Chief, Federal Assistance Branch A, Division of Mass Transportation, 916/322-1416.

The **Colorado Department of Highways** plans to continue to contract with the Colorado Association of Transportation Agencies (CASTA) to conduct most of the elements of its RTAP program. CASTA has sponsored train-the-trainer courses in the areas of passenger assistance techniques, defensive driving and passenger relations, and now plans to match agencies in need of training with the new certified trainers. In addition to sponsoring training courses, state RTAP funds will continue to be used to publish a newsletter, promote a peer-to-peer network, offer training scholarships, sponsor a roadeo, conduct minor research, and co-sponsor an annual fall conference. This coming year, a major emphasis area of the program will be commercial driver's licensing. Contact person: Liz Van Lauwe, Transportation Specialist, Transit Unit, 303/757-9769.

The **Florida Department of Transportation** has entered into a contract with the University of South Florida to develop and administer an ongoing mechanic's training program. Other subject areas under consideration for training sessions are vehicle procurement, defensive driving and sensitivity training. Contact person: Henry M. Donaldson, Statewide RTAP Training Coordinator, Transit Office, 904/488-7774.

The **Indiana Department of Transportation's** RTAP program has grown and changed in response to the needs of its RTAP-eligible systems. Sustaining projects, such as a fellowship program, a maintenance management information system project and a resource lending library, continue to assist agencies throughout Indiana. Training programs include the Indiana Driver Training Program and a Passenger Assistance Techniques trainer network. Current research includes an assessment of the status of the intercity bus industry in Indiana after deregulation. In the next program year, Indiana plans to update its *The Right Route*, a guide to establishing public transportation systems. Contact person: Rebecca Rowley, Coordinator, Indiana RTAP Program, Institute for Urban Transportation, 812/855-8143.

The **Michigan Department of Transportation's** RTAP program has placed major emphasis on making training grants and scholarships available. Each eligible rural transit agency is allowed up to \$1,000 per year in training grants with a maximum of \$500 per person/per training event. Special scholarship awards are provided for national conferences and workshops. The first phase of a risk management project has been completed; the next phase will produce a risk management manual that should be useful nationally. Contact person: Jack Hayes, Supervisor, Transit Services Unit, Bureau of Urban and Public Transportation, 517/335-2541.

**NEWS FROM
THE STATES**
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The **Missouri Highway and Transportation Department's** RTAP program is conducting on-site driver training sessions for rural transportation providers throughout the state. Sessions cover defensive driving, passenger assistance techniques, and the RTAP National Program driver training modules. The program also provides consultative services to assist agencies in purchasing vehicles. Contact person: John Rice, Transit Training Specialist, Transit Bureau, 314/751-2523.

The **Montana Department of Commerce** has developed a guide to assist small operators implement drug testing nationwide. The guide is a 12" x 8" x 10" black box containing videos, policy procedure forms and posters that can be used by small operators in establishing a drug testing program. Contact person: Tom Lythgoe, Transportation Planner, Passenger Bureau, Transportation Division, 406/444-4266.

The **New Hampshire Department of Transportation's** RTAP program has been emphasizing assistance to improve training opportunities for transit and paratransit operators around the state. RTAP has funded passenger assistance techniques and defensive driver instructor training for 22 individuals, and will pay for the delivery of workshops at agencies as long as other operators may participate. The New Hampshire RTAP also has sponsored a one-day marketing workshop that has led to a program of small grants for marketing assistance. Other successful projects include scholarship awards for out-of-state activities; distribution of National Program and other training packages to transit operators (and paratransit operators on request); and a quarterly newsletter which is prepared in cooperation with the New Hampshire Transit Association. Contact person: Kit Morgan, Administrator, Public Transportation Bureau, 603/271-2564.

The **New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department** is purchasing computers and software for its Section 18 operators. Under a joint project with New Mexico's FHWA RTAP program, the Engineering Technology Laboratories of New Mexico State University will provide a 40-hour workshop for transit operators and Section 18 program managers in the Spring. Contact person: Barbara Brown, Program Manager, Public Transportation Programs Bureau, 505/827-0410.

The **North Carolina Department of Transportation** will soon launch THE BUS-The Public Transit Employee Development Center. THE BUS is a forty-foot intercity motorcoach outfitted with state-of-the-art training equipment for drivers and other transit personnel. The Transit Division's driver education representative will drive THE BUS to locations throughout the state to provide training. In addition, starting in March the Transportation Institute of North Carolina A&T State University will begin providing monthly train-the-trainer workshops using the RTAP National Program training modules. Finally, RTAP-sponsored micro-computer training and support is continuing, with five computers recently deployed to Section 18 properties. Nearly 30 properties serving 50 counties are now on line. Contact person: Peter Albrecht, Technical Assistance Consultant, Public Transportation Division, 919/733-4713.

**NEWS FROM
THE STATES**
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The **Rhode Island Department of Transportation** currently is establishing a commercial driver's license certification program for paratransit operators through an arrangement with a local community college and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority. The state's RTAP Advisory Committee has met three times and is formulating a training program that will utilize private consultants. Contact person: Sarah T. Amaral, 16(b)(2) Coordinator, Transit Bureau, 401/277-2694.

The **South Dakota Department of Transportation** has created a one-page training grant approval form through which it contracts with consultants to provide in-state training and gives scholarship grants to operators and drivers for individual training opportunities. All expenses for the training are reimbursed except for the trainee's salary. This simple administrative structure has funded attendance at conferences; participation in peer-to-peer technical assistance events; testing for mechanic's certification; and training for drivers, managers and boards of directors. The department also has joined with the North Dakota Highway Department to contract with a private consulting firm to perform a substance abuse planning project. Contact person: Willis C. McLaughlin, Transportation Specialist, Local Government Assistance, 605/773-4813.

The **Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation** sent four trainers to a recent University of Milwaukee passenger assistance training workshop. These individuals will teach three regional workshops over the course of the year to pass along the information and skills they learned at the workshop. The Department also is about to request bids for two new RTAP projects. The first project will provide two train-the-trainer workshops and twelve regional driver training classes in the area of commercial driver's licensing; the second will develop operations planning seminars for small urban and Section 18 operators. Contact person: Karen Dunlap, RTAP Program Manager, Public Transportation Division, 512/483-3663.

The **Vermont State Agency of Transportation** RTAP program plans to award a grant to a single recipient to develop and implement initiatives in the areas of alcohol and drug abuse, unified cost accounting and management and driver training. Work in the first two areas will be extensions of earlier work. Manager workshops are proposed in ride-referral/ridematch, computer programs, state and federal regulations, grant research, insurance needs, risk management, commercial driver's licensing, and coordination and cooperation. Driver training will focus on commercial driver's licensing, emergency guidelines, needs and capabilities of special passengers, passenger assistance techniques and first aid/CPR training. Contact person: Linda Eldredge, Public Transit Program Specialist, Public Transit Operations, 802/828-2702.

The **Virginia Department of Transportation** sponsored three two-day workshops on drug awareness. The workshops were designed to provide training for management and driver supervisors on recognizing substance abuse problems and dealing with them effectively. Attendance by rural public transportation systems and 16(b)(2) operators was supported through RTAP scholarships. The Department is considering conducting a fourth workshop in the Spring. Contact person: Jack E. Apostolides, Associate Public Transportation Engineer, Rail and Public Transportation Division, 804/786-1722.

**OTHER NEWS
FROM THE
UMTA RTAP
NATIONAL
PROGRAM**

The National Program just completed its first train-the-trainer workshop. The workshop offered a variety of sessions to improve training skills and attracted 41 attendees representing 22 states. Participant evaluations rated the effectiveness of the workshop as being good to excellent. The training materials used during the workshop are being adapted to be included as part of a formal RTAP National Program training package due out in the summer.

New RTAP products available through the National Resource Center are technical assistance briefs on vehicle procurement, policies for special passengers and alternative fuels . . . an updated catalogue on who's available to provide technical assistance through the RTAP peer-to-peer network . . . a special pamphlet on the transportation provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act . . . and a technical assistance resource called "Public-Private Partnerships in Rural Transit," which was produced in cooperation with UMTA's PPTN and is designed to introduce public, private and non-profit transportation professionals to the issues involved in developing public-private partnerships.

In final production are a training module on roles and responsibilities of transit board members . . . the third edition of the catalogue of training resources for rural and specialized transit operators . . . and a report on national trends in the UMTA RTAP state programs.

Still in the early stages of development are a training module on risk management and an RTAP promotional video.

An RTAP regional meeting is planned for March 11 in Hartford, Connecticut for New England, New York and New Jersey . . . RTAP also will be a topic of discussion at UMTA's '91 Conference (Orlando; May 29-31 conducted jointly with CTAA's EXPO'91) and APTA/AASHTO's 1991 State Affairs Conference (Boston; June 30-July 3).

The National Program welcomes five new members who have been named to the UMTA RTAP National Program Review Board. They are Pam Delamater, Transit Advisor for the Clinton Area Rural Transit System in Plattsburgh, New York; Karen Ross Grant, Planning Manager for the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation; Mary Hunter, Executive Director for the Banana Belt Senior Citizens in Lewiston, Idaho; Michael Mobey, General Manager for the Isabella County Transportation Commission in Mount Pleasant, Michigan; and Robert Works, Director of the Transit Program Section for the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The new members were introduced at the Board's October meeting in Sarasota, Florida.
