

February, 1989

Volume 3, Issue 1

**UMTA ADMINISTRATOR
ANNOUNCES RELEASE
OF SECOND RTAP
NATIONAL TRAINING
MODULE**

On December 8, 1988, UMTA Administrator, Alfred A. DelliBovi, announced the release of the second training module developed under the RTAP National Program entitled "Understanding the Capabilities and Needs of Special Passengers." Mr. DelliBovi stated that the module has been designed to help increase the sensitivity of rural transit employees to the special needs of elderly and disabled passengers and that, like the first training module developed under the National Program, it can be used in either a self-study or instructor-led format.

The module includes a 60-minute videotape, a participant's workbook, a manager's handbook, a test, and two audiotape cassettes. Mr. DelliBovi noted that the materials received extensive review through two field tests and oversight by the 15-member RTAP National Advisory Board.

In announcing the second training module, DelliBovi took the opportunity to congratulate state administrators and rural transit operators for the "excellent job they have done in getting the Urban Mass Transportation Administration's RTAP Program off to a successful start." All fifty states, he said, have initiated an RTAP state program and are undertaking a wide range of activities to meet their self-identified needs for training, technical assistance, and research. Mr. DelliBovi expressed his confidence that the new materials will assist states and operators in developing their capacity for addressing the training needs of the rural transportation community. "I invite all of you to continue to work with the UMTA RTAP National Program to ensure that its products and services support your efforts."

Each state DOT has been provided a copy of the new module for duplication and dissemination. Additional copies of the module can be purchased from International Support Services, telephone 703/761-3030.

**UPDATE ON RTAP
NATIONAL PROGRAM**

> Training Materials. Work has begun on the National Program's third module on emergency procedures for the rural transit driver. The current projected date for module completion is July . . . In addition, the National Program is updating the catalogue of existing training materials issued last year. This update will include information on new materials that have been produced with RTAP state funds and should be ready for distribution in March.

> National Resource Center. Hot line usage is running at about a hundred calls per month. The calls are covering a wide range of topics but most popular are RTAP itself; recent changes to the UMTA Section 16(b)(2) and 18 Circulars; the Ford van safety issue; and training resources. Operators and states are

accounting for the lion's share of the calls . . . Now available through the Resource Center is a bibliography that lists reports available in major areas of interest to rural transit professionals. Also available are special information packets on hot topics such as substance abuse control and the Ford van safety issue . . . Under development are a handbook on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regulations relating to small transportation vehicles and an update of the 1986 directory of rural and specialized transit operators . . . Call the UMTA RTAP National Resource Center at its toll-free number 800/527-8279 for all your rural transit questions.

> Peer-to-Peer National Technical Assistance. There are now 42 peers covering a wide range of technical areas available to help state and regional agencies set up special workshops to assist rural operators evaluate and adopt innovative solutions to rural transit problems . . . To date, the Network has been involved in technical sessions at *Community Transportation Reporter's* EXPO and at TRB's Eleventh National Conference on Specialized Transportation, made presentations at state transit association meetings, and worked with county officials. Examples of topics covered have been how to develop bid specifications and how to select safe wheelchair lifts and securements . . . To help state and regional agencies use the RTAP Technical Assistance Network, the National Program has just published a catalogue describing how the Network operates and who the peers are . . . State DOTs, state transit associations, and regional planning agencies are encouraged to call the RTAP toll-free hot line at 800/527-8279 to find out more about the activities of the Network and how it can complement their RTAP state program. If you have implemented an effective rural transit technique or practice, call the hot line about how to become part of the Network.

> Facilitation of Communication. The big story here has been regional meetings. To get the word out on national developments, promote information exchange between states, and encourage regional cooperation, the National Program has been working with various states to set up RTAP regional meetings around the country . . . The most recent meetings have been hosted by the University of Kansas Transportation Center, the Alabama Transit Association, the University of Wisconsin -- Milwaukee Extension (Statewide Transportation Programs), the New Hampshire UMTA Technology Transfer Center, and the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation . . . an upcoming regional meeting is being planned by the Montana Department of Commerce for mid-April in Billings . . . The regional meetings are revealing that states are producing materials with their own RTAP funds that are transferable to other states . . . that states are starting to use the National Program's substance abuse awareness module to satisfy the training and educational component of UMTA's new drug rule . . . and that states are starting to develop joint RTAP projects . . . In certain cases, the National Program is designing special meetings for individual states . . . Other ways the National Program is facilitating communication is through presentations at national conferences, coordinated activities with national organizations such as AASHTO, and meetings with the RTAP National Advisory Board.

**UMTA RTAP STATE
PROGRAM:
SPOTLIGHT ON
KANSAS**

by Patricia Weaver
Kansas University
Transportation Center

The Kansas Department of Transportation established the Kansas Rural Transit Assistance Program in October 1987 through a contract with the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC). The Center, which also has responsibility for running the FHWA Technology Transfer Center, implements all facets of the RTAP state program. The purpose of the Kansas RTAP is to improve access to training and technical assistance for rural and specialized transportation providers in the state. In the sixteen months that have elapsed since the beginning of the program, Kansas providers have seen a major expansion in these services.

Training

Since October 1987, the Kansas RTAP has provided approximately 22 workshops. Participation by provider agencies has increased significantly, and in several cases individuals have been turned away until new workshops could be scheduled to accommodate the demand. Topics that have been offered have included safety and evacuation training, marketing for rural agencies, wheelchair securement, insurance purchase options for rural agencies, and driver training (vehicle maintenance, passenger assistance, and emergency procedures). New workshops planned for the coming year include fundraising, developing employee assistance programs, substance abuse awareness, and defensive driving. Driver training workshops will be offered at least four times during the next year. Workshop topics are planned and implemented with input and cooperation from the State RTAP Advisory Committee, the Kansas Public Transit Association, and the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Technical Assistance

The Kansas RTAP provides telephone and on-site technical assistance. Because there are limited resources for this activity, the program has targeted the following areas for intensive effort:

- > Insurance Pooling. Kansas providers have had a long-standing interest in developing options to reduce liability insurance costs. The Kansas RTAP is supporting data collection activities to establish a risk purchase group. It is anticipated that the risk purchase group will be established by July 1, 1989, with projected insurance savings of 10-20 percent in premiums per year to participants.
 - > Microcomputers. The Kansas RTAP supports the implementation of microcomputers in rural transit agencies through providing access to a monthly microcomputer newsletter and software directory, and conducting needs assessments.
 - > Paratransit Coordinating Councils. A number of counties in the state are in the developmental stages of establishing paratransit coordinating councils for single or multiple counties. The Kansas RTAP is providing data collection services for these councils.
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Information Dissemination

The Kansas RTAP undertakes a variety of information dissemination activities through:

- > The Kansas Trans Reporter. Approximately 1,000 copies of the 16-20 page newsletter are sent out quarterly to state transit providers and other RTAP state programs. The focus of the newsletter is on technical and management improvements for rural systems. Articles sometimes are taken directly from other state transit newsletters and from the *UMTA RTAP National Program Bulletin*.
- > Kansas Trans Fact Sheets. The Kansas RTAP Advisory Committee has identified topics for more in-depth coverage through literature syntheses. Three Fact Sheets have been produced to date on wheelchair lifts and securements, marketing, and microcomputers. Future fact sheets will cover volunteers, developing an employee assistance program, database applications, and fundraising.
- > Video Lending Library. The Kansas RTAP has established a video lending library which includes videotapes developed through the RTAP National Program and obtained from other RTAP state programs. VCRs also are available for loan through the library.
- > Telephone Hot Line. An 800-telephone hot line was established in October 1987 to provide rural agencies immediate access to information regarding all aspects of transportation. Transit managers call to find out about the availability of training, to order videos and publications, and to make special informational requests.

Network Building

One of the strongest benefits of the Kansas RTAP has been its contribution to network building -- between the providers in the state, the state transit association, the state DOT, the UMTA regional office, the university and the RTAP National Program. While cooperative activities existed before RTAP, they have become more meaningful and continuous under RTAP.

For more information or to obtain copies of Kansas RTAP materials, contact Patricia Weaver, State RTAP Coordinator, 913/864-5658.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE STATES

The **California Department of Transportation** has approved a technical assistance grant to a private, non-profit organization to develop and implement a social service insurance pooling program for the nonurbanized areas of California. In addition, plans are underway to develop (1) workshops that will address the needs of small rural transit operations, and (2) scholarships that will permit operators to attend these and other training classes. Contact person: James Conant, Chief of Federal Assistance Branch, Division of Mass Transportation, 916/322-1416.

The **Colorado Department of Highways** is contracting with the Colorado Association of Transportation Agencies to undertake a range of activities including driver training, a newsletter, and special workshops and studies. To date, the Department has sponsored an accident investigation workshop and published two manuals. The manuals are entitled "Driver Selection and Training" and "Emergency and Accident Procedures." Contact person: Tom Mauser, Transportation Specialist, Division of Transportation Development, 303/757-9772.

The **Idaho Transportation Department** has established a 15-member RTAP Advisory Group to advise state staff on the program of projects funded under RTAP. The Advisory Group members include transit operators; elderly, handicapped, and specialized transportation representatives; and state and legislative officials. Including representatives from other state agencies has assisted state efforts at interagency transportation coordination. With RTAP funds the state has published a brochure entitled "Coordinated Transportation: Understanding Your Options For Cost Savings." Contact person: Marie Bishop, Grants Officer, 208/334-8282.

The **Maine Department of Transportation** has established a scholarship program that awards up to \$500 to transit employees, rural planners, and state administrators to offset the cost of obtaining training and attending conferences. It also is undertaking a research project to improve statewide transit marketing strategies. The state plans to evaluate operator computer needs, assist properties implement standard reporting and performance monitoring procedures, and initiate a small bus/van roadeo. Contact person: Frances Everett, RTAP Coordinator, Public Transportation Division, 207/289-2841.

The **Maryland Mass Transit Administration's** RTAP Program is complementing its ongoing technical assistance program for rural and specialized transportation operators. With RTAP funds, the state was able to bring the University of Wisconsin -- Milwaukee Extension's advanced management course to Maryland after offering the introductory course in Baltimore a year earlier. Approximately 20 of the state's transit managers benefitted from the week-long course. The Maryland MTA also has executed a contract with the Transportation Association of Maryland to provide technical assistance and other support services for the operators of Maryland. In the fall of 1988, the two organizations co-sponsored the bi-annual Statewide Transportation Programs Workshop. Contact: Mira Riggan, Statewide Grants Coordinator, 301/333-2995.

The **Michigan Department of Transportation** provided grants for nine rural transit operators to attend TRB's Eleventh National Conference on Specialized Transportation. It also provided grants for individuals to attend a week-long Transit Operations Supervisors Seminar held in Ann Arbor in December. The state will make recommendations on three proposed workshops in the area of management training at its next state RTAP committee meeting. Contact person: Jack Hayes, RTAP Coordinator, Urban and Public Transportation, 517/373-0470.

The New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Transportation has contracted with the New Hampshire FHWA Technology Transfer Center to establish an UMTA Technology Transfer Center that will carry out its RTAP program of projects. To date, the new UMTA Center has started a quarterly newsletter, called *Transit Times*, and conducted two workshops centered around the National training module on "Understanding the Capabilities and Needs of Special Passengers." It also has established a reference library and a scholarship fund. Future plans include holding a third workshop on the National training module, hosting an RTAP regional conference, providing passenger assistance training, and cooperating with Maine and Vermont on a weekend training fair. Contact person: Kyle McElroy Dallaire, Director, UMTA Technology Transfer Center, 603/862-1409.

New Jersey Transit is just beginning New Jersey's RTAP Program. The New Jersey program will be divided into four areas: driver training, management training, technical training scholarships, and technical support to the statewide Council on Specialized Transportation (COST) for transit research and information dissemination. A full-time instructor will be hired to perform regular monthly training sessions. Also a mid-size lift-equipped bus will be purchased as a travelling classroom for defensive driving, behind the wheel training, and passenger assistance techniques. RTAP funds will be augmented with state casino revenues so all specialized transit operators (rural and urban) can participate in the training sessions. Contact person: Lyle Peterson, Director, Office of Special Services, 201/643-4842.

The North Dakota Highway Department is conducting training classes for bus drivers in defensive driving and in accidents, rescue and evacuation. Travel expenses to attend the workshops are covered by the state RTAP. Other ways the state is helping to get training to its rural operators is through the purchase of a VCR recording camera and computer software, and through the granting of scholarships to send transit administrators to in- and out-of-state seminars and workshops. The state also has started a quarterly rural transit newsletter and plans to conduct operational reviews of ten rural transit properties. Contact person: Bill Weimer, Public Transit Coordinator, 701/224-2194.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has selected Pennsylvania State University to carry out its RTAP training and technical assistance activities. The state's RTAP Advisory Committee evaluated and ranked the submitted proposals for the project. Contact: Jim Grier, RTAP Coordinator, Rural and Intercity Division, 717/783-3990.

The South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation has developed a comprehensive vehicle operator safety training manual which it has used in four major driver training and safety workshops for over 100 drivers. The National Program's substance abuse awareness materials were adapted for use in the written materials and workshop presentations. Between January and March, the state will conduct four additional workshops: one geared to transit managers (three-and-one-half days) and three geared to transit governing boards (one-and-one-half days each). The state has developed manuals for these workshops, and has involved its 13-member Advisory Committee extensively throughout the

evolution process for both the workshops and manuals. Finally, the state is continuing to provide RTAP scholarships to help sharpen the transportation skills of its Section 18 and 16(b)(2) operators. To date, over 61 of its transit grantees have benefitted from the scholarship program. Contact: Karen Ross Grant, Planning Supervisor, Public Transportation Division, 803/737-1280.

The **Vermont Agency of Transportation** has contracted with the Vermont Public Transit Association to develop a uniform transportation accounting system for rural, public and human service transportation providers and to create a promotional presentation on the benefits of public transportation services. In addition, it has entered into a contract with St. Michael's College, which also is the FHWA Technology Transfer Center for the state, to develop and implement scholarship and training programs; to provide technical assistance services including a peer-to-peer network; and to supply other consultant support. Currently, the College is preparing a training schedule to address various aspects of driver training (passenger assistance, defensive driving, first aid/CPR). Contact: Linda Eldredge, Public Transit Program Specialist, 802/828-2702.

The **Virginia Department of Transportation** has offered full scholarships to 27 transportation managers to receive comprehensive training in transit management operations. Four managers were sent to the two-week training course offered through the University of Wisconsin -- Milwaukee Extension and 23 attended a four-day rural transit management workshop held in Blacksburg (VA). VDOT has entered into coordination efforts with other states in the areas of training and information exchange. Recently, the states of Virginia, North Carolina and West Virginia shared in offering management training to their transit grantees. As a result of this joint effort, Virginia plans to participate in a forum on maintenance issues with eight to ten states. Virginia is developing driver training modules that will cover pre-trip inspection, emergency repairs, driver-passenger relations, emergency and evacuation procedures, and defensive driving techniques.

The **Washington State Department of Transportation** has delivered training in microcomputer use, marketing, and general management for three public transportation providers in the state. It sponsored a mid-management class at its annual state transportation conference. It has paid for public transportation personnel to attend operational and management workshops in- and out-of-state. Currently, the state is trying to work out an arrangement where one of its public transportation providers would be responsible for conducting training throughout the state in the area of passenger assistance. Contact person: Bernard Koontz, Transit Branch Manager, 206/586-2400.

Many of the products, studies, and services described above have applicability for other states, and readers are encouraged to call the named contacts to obtain copies of materials or more information.

MTAP/RTAP: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

by Dave Clawson
AASHTO

The state role in public transportation has grown significantly in recent years. Many state transit officials have become concerned about the ability of their agencies to keep pace with increased responsibilities and expanding roles in a variety of areas, including technical assistance.

To assist state transit officials in their expanding technical assistance role, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in 1987 initiated a major new transit project known as the Multi-State Technical Assistance Project. This project is commonly referred to as MTAP. The purpose of this project is to link together state transit officials in a variety of project activities to share experiences, practices and creative solutions. This process is helping the state officials involved in MTAP to improve the effectiveness of their public transportation programs.

The concept of MTAP was originally developed by the Task Force on Technical Assistance, which is part of the AASHTO Standing Committee on Public Transportation. Project activities began in 1987, and, in early 1988, a consulting firm was retained to complete a major part of the first year project activities.

Twenty states have joined MTAP, and other states may join in the upcoming months. The twenty states which belong to the MTAP consortium include: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

First year funding for MTAP is provided by participating states in amounts ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000, based on state population. By pooling relatively modest amounts of funds, the states involved can receive significant products and benefits. It would cost an individual state much more to achieve results comparable to the MTAP on its own. Project administration for MTAP is handled by AASHTO. Direction for the project is provided by a Project Steering Group led by Robert Works, who is employed by the Public Transit Division of the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

First Year Project Activities

The first year project activities have been divided among three major components, which include:

1. Identifying and showcasing of state transit activities, such as innovative state funding practices, administrative practices, and technical activities.
 2. Networking with peers to exchange information about alternative state transit practices. This exchange may include telephone conversations, the exchange of products, and/or on-site visits to discuss/observe practices.
 3. Regional meetings of state transit staffs to discuss and exchange state concerns and practices around issues of common interest and to develop creative solutions.
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An MTAP resource notebook recently was released which includes several types of information for MTAP states in a very usable format. Included is a networking brochure, which is a catalogue of state-level alternative transit practices divided into three areas (state institutional/ organizational issues, state internal program management issues, and direct technical assistance). Each page of the brochure describes a particular practice and lists a person to contact to obtain more information. The networking brochure is the information base from which states can choose to contact, travel to, or invite someone in from another state to learn more about that state's practice(s). When staff from a state have completed a networking activity, they then develop a brief report to be sent to the other MTAP states regarding what they have learned about the practice and its applicability/transferability to their state.

"Showcases" selected from the state alternative practices are being developed in the areas of marketing; transit/highway coalition building; vehicle specifications; and use of computers in data collection, evaluation and review. The exact form of the showcase varies from practice to practice.

The MTAP resource notebook also contains a technical assistance catalogue with general information on state-level technical assistance activities in each state; a contact list for various UMTA programs; a list of state transit officials organized on a functional basis (program management, finance, marketing, etc.); and summaries of regional meetings.

Regional meetings for the three MTAP regions were held during the fall of 1988. The Eastern MTAP meeting was held in Wilmington (NC) in October. In November, the Western MTAP meeting was held in Phoenix (AZ), and in December, the Midwest MTAP meeting was held in Milwaukee (WI). The regional meetings were very informal in nature. In place of presentations, the participants set their own agenda for the meetings and then participated in lively discussions of mutual concern. Issues discussed at the regional meetings included the new UMTA drug rules, vehicle specifications and other issues related to vehicle purchases and warranties, marketing, funding and legislative issues, grants administration, and several other timely issues.

Second Year Plans

The MTAP Project Steering Group is developing a second year work plan for 1989 to build upon the project's momentum developed over the past year. Networking activities as well as additional regional meetings will be continuing in 1989.

Those involved in the MTAP program have worked closely with those involved in the UMTA RTAP program to insure that the two programs are complementary. Joint regional meetings of the UMTA RTAP program and MTAP are being scheduled where possible. The distinction between MTAP and RTAP is that the MTAP program focuses on the activities of state transit agency employees, while RTAP focuses on the activities of those employed in transit operations. Every effort is being made to avoid duplication of effort and to maximize the results of available resources.

For additional information about MTAP, contact Bob Works, Chairman of the MTAP Project Steering Group, at 612/296-2533, or Dave Clawson, AASHTO, at 202/624-5800.
