
BULLETIN

March 1992

Volume 5, Number 1

FTA Administrator Brian Clymer has transmitted two new RTAP National Program products to state DOTs. The first is a promotional kit, called "Tap Into RTAP," and includes a variety of materials to help organizations promote RTAP. Designed to be used at conferences and other promotional opportunities to educate rural transit operators about RTAP, the kit contains a 10-minute videotape, presentation guide, program brochure, state RTAP contact list, publications order form, one-page descriptions of national products and services, and ad slicks. It has been constructed so that states can add in their own materials.

The second new National Program product is a training package, called "Essential Skills for Trainers." This package is for anyone who wants to learn more about how to be an effective trainer. It includes a videotape, a facilitator's handbook and a participant's workbook. The videotape is 30-minutes long and features interview segments with an experienced professional trainer who discusses the training process and the specific skills needed by a trainer. The facilitator's handbook contains outlines and activities for a facilitator to conduct an actual training event. The participant's workbook includes key points from the video and exercises created to improve the participant's skill and comfort with training. The module's units cover effective training, training adults, trainer roles, training activities and materials, and putting it all together.

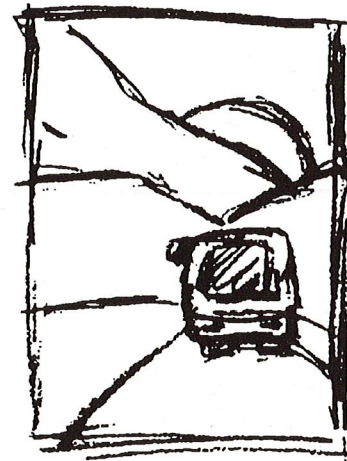
To obtain additional copies of these materials, contact the FTA RTAP National Resource Center at 800/527-8279.

1991 saw many new accomplishments for the RTAP National Program. Following are highlights for the year:

National Resource Center

- The FTA RTAP National Resource Center's toll-free hotline received close to 2,500 calls from the fifty states. Rural transit operators and state DOTs continue to make up the two largest categories of callers. "Accessibility" was the leading topic of calls to the hotline, followed by questions on: training re-

FTA Administrator Clymer Says "Tap Into RTAP"



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sources and materials; FTA reauthorization and other federal legislation; upcoming transit conferences and workshops; requests for publications; vehicles and vehicle safety; funding resources; and RTAP products and activities. The hours for the hotline also were expanded, to 8:00 p.m. EST, and a telecommunications device for the deaf added. The mean response time for calls was less than two days.

- The National Program's electronic bulletin board had over 575 linkups; thirty-four states used the service. A special "RTAP Conference" was added to encourage the exchange of information on national and state RTAP activities, and an updated user's guide and one-page reference sheet of computer commands were made available.
- Profiles of the FTA's Section 18 and 16(b)(2) programs were prepared. For systems funded under these programs, the profiles give information on vehicle fleet composition, accessibility, services provided, ridership and trip characteristics, operating budget size, and use of volunteers.
- The Center continued to disseminate RTAP news and resource guides through CTAA's *Community Transportation Reporter*.

Preparation of Training Materials

- The FTA RTAP National Program's second train-the-trainer conference was held in San Diego. The first two days of the conference covered generic training skills; the third day showed how to apply these skills to the RTAP National Program training modules. Thirty individuals attended. States represented were Arizona, California, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. All rated the workshop good or excellent.
- The "Essential Skills for Trainers" video-based training package was completed.

Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance

- The Program's Technical Assistance Network made 29 awareness-building presentations to promote exemplary techniques and practices in rural public transportation management and operations. Most frequently requested areas for help were in marketing, ADA implementation, effective state coordination mechanisms, emergency evacuation procedures, and funding resources.
- Four on-site peer-to-peer visits took place. Two of these contacts were general management reviews, a third assessed a system's marketing and outreach activities, and the fourth provided orientation and management assistance to a novice rural transit manager.



Essential Skills for Trainers

A Training Package to Improve Your Training Skills!

- Find out what's involved in creating an effective training session.
- Learn to work more effectively with groups.
- Discover how to use role plays, brainstorming, and discussions to keep your participants motivated.
- Find out what is important when you use training packages.
- Discover how to have fun while you train!

Available from The FTA RTAP National Resource Center, c/o The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), 725 15th Street, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20005 Telephone: 800-527-8279

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- RTAP technical assistance briefs covering measuring system performance and alternative fuels were produced and disseminated to state DOTs.

Facilitation of Communication

- The “Tap Into RTAP” promotional kit was prepared and disseminated to state DOTs.
- The National Program was promoted at national conferences sponsored by FTA, APWA, APTA, AASHTO, CTAA, and TRB, and at regional and state transit conferences sponsored by New Mexico, New England, Utah, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Kentucky, and South Carolina.
- An RTAP regional meeting was held for the New England states. It was hosted by the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District, a Section 18 operator that coordinates the Connecticut RTAP program. The meeting covered national developments, promoted information exchange between states, and encouraged regional coordination.
- The National Program made a site visit to the Tennessee DOT to find out about its RTAP activities and to receive feedback on the National Program’s products and services.
- Three meetings of the 15-member FTA RTAP National Program Review Board were held. The Board, whose members now rotate on a staggered-term basis, continued to: provide guidance on priority needs in the areas of training materials development, information dissemination, and technical assistance; to oversee the quality of National Program products and services; and to promote the National Program to states and operators. DHHS, FHWA, USDA, AASHTO, APTA and ITLA continued to serve as ex-officio members of the Board.
- Three issues of the *FTA RTAP National Program Bulletin* were published for state DOTs and national organizations interested in rural public transportation. The *Bulletin* included articles on the National Program’s latest products and services and what’s new in the FTA RTAP state programs.

For more information about the program’s products and services, contact the FTA RTAP National Resource Center at 800/527-8279.

Earlier this year the National Program sent out a **questionnaire to state DOTs** inviting them to tell us what activities they would like us to undertake to support their activities. To date, we’ve received responses from Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia. We’ll summarize the

Other News

state responses in the next *Bulletin*.

In response to requests from states, the RTAP National Program is planning **8-10 pilot train-the-trainer workshops around the country** before the end of the calendar year. The purpose of the 2-3 day workshops will be to: (1) help states develop their in-state training capacity; (2) provide training on good trainer skills; and (3) demonstrate how to use the RTAP National Program training materials. In carrying out the workshops, the National Program will be responsible for coordinating and covering the expenses for the trainer and written materials. States will be responsible for arranging all of the workshop's local requirements. For more information contact Lisa Pogue, Staff Associate in the RTAP National Project Director's office, 202/393-2792.

Other News (continued)

Progress continues on a **new training module on risk management**. Drafts of the manager's handbook and facilitator's guide have been prepared. And work has started on **a module on safe transport of the public under ADA**. The purpose of the module will be to assist operators to design local training programs that ensure that their drivers are trained to proficiency. Important considerations will be how to operate vehicles and equipment safely and how to properly assist and treat individuals with disabilities in a respectful and courteous way, with appropriate attention to differences among individuals with disabilities. This project will be a joint effort with Easter Seal's Project Action.

Technical assistance briefs on developing an in-house training program and developing personnel policies are in their final stages of preparation. Briefs on dealing with making a system accessible and innovative funding strategies are also in the pipeline.

States in the Midwest, Northeast and Northwest are coordinating **RTAP regional meetings** tied to other regional or state transit meetings. Contact Janice Hennings, Executive Director for the Minnesota Public Transit Association, in the Midwest (612/884-7439); Kit Morgan, Administrator of the New Hampshire Public Transportation Bureau, in the Northeast (603/271-2564); and Pam Hughley, RTAP Coordinator for the Washington State Public Transportation Office, in the Northwest (206/586-1229).

RTAP will be a topic of discussion at the following **upcoming conferences**: CTAA's EXPO (Kansas City, MO; May 19-22); AASHTO/APTA's state affairs conference (Portland, OR; June 28-30); FTA's state program managers meeting (Washington, DC; August 9-11); FHWA's RTAP national conference (Lexington, KY; August 2-5); and TRB's specialized transportation conference (Tampa, FL; October 25-28).

The next issue of the *Bulletin* will include **an update on all of the fifty state RTAP programs**. We'll be contacting state DOTs soon to

contribute material on their programs' major accomplishments. We're also planning for our **annual solicitation of new board members**. This year we're looking for two new operators and one new state DOT official. Solicitation materials will be in the mail soon.

Consider applying for an FTA Section 10 Managerial Training Grant. The Managerial Training Grant Program's three major purposes are to:

1. Provide opportunities for training of personnel in managerial, technical and professional positions in the public transportation field.
2. Encourage the development of innovative training plans by public transportation organizations.
3. Contribute to the understanding and resolution of problems confronting public transportation organizations so as to advance the efficient operation and improve the quality of service provided.

Section 10 Managerial Training funds are reserved for award as Single Agency Grants. These "block" type grants are awarded on the basis of a comprehensive, agencywide training plan that describes a program of training activities to be conducted over a period not to exceed 24 months.

Local public bodies and agencies and operators of public transportation services are eligible to participate in the program on a 50/50, non-Federal funds, matching basis.

Eligible training providers include colleges and universities, technical schools, and other organizations or entities offering managerial and technical training with application to the public transportation field. Grantees will not be reimbursed for training activities conducted by agency employees. Also, the cost of course development is not an eligible expense item for reimbursement under Section 10.

For more information contact Pauline D'Antignac, Section 10 Program Manager, FTA at 202/366-9157.

FTA Training Grant Program

TAP-IN: Rural and Specialized Transit Information Is a Keystroke Away

*How to Log On and Use
FTA RTAP's National Electronic Bulletin Board*

Hardware required: personal computer, telephone line, communications software*, modem*.
Parameters: baud rate between 300 and 2400, no parity, 8 data bits, and 1 stop bit.

To log on: Use your computer software to dial **(202) 628-2537**.

Registration: The first time you TAP-IN, you will see several screens of "registration" information. The following suggestions should help you get started.

- **Password:** Enter the password that you want to use as your personal key every time you log on to TAP-IN. (You will be asked to repeat this password to confirm your choice.)
- **Display of lower case:** Choose "Y" unless you want all caps displayed on your screen.
- **Graphics choice:** We recommend choice "A."
- **Color highlighting:** Choose "No" unless you have a color monitor and like color prompts.
- **File transfer protocol:** Choose "None" unless you already know your preferred protocol.
- **Turbo-keys:** Choose "No" for starters.

TAP-IN BULLETINS: When you first TAP-IN, one of the earliest screens will show you the contents of our electronic newsletter, **TAP-IN BULLETINS**. Any time you are at a "MAIN command?" prompt, entering a "B" will display this same list of bulletins. Examples of what you might find on TAP-IN's bulletins include the following:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Preface | Accessibility Update |
| Calendar | National Roundup |
| Capitol Comments | New Resources |
| Legislative Update | |

To read a bulletin, type the number of the bulletin you wish to read. Type "N" instead of a number to read all the bulletins that have been updated since your last session with TAP-IN. Bulletins can be transferred to your own computer. Follow the File downloading directions on the reverse of this sheet.

The Main Menu: Below is a copy of TAP-IN's main menu. You will see this after the listing of bulletins has been displayed.

FUNCTION TO PERFORM	COMMAND
Read Messages.....	R
Enter a message.....	E
Join classifieds, vehicle, or RTAP conference.....	J
Exit this area of TAP-IN.....	Q
Read TAP-IN BULLETINS.....	B
List files available to download.....	L
Download a particular file.....	D
Disconnect from TAP-IN.....	G
OTHER UTILITIES	
Utilities.....	U
Re-read Initial Welcome.....	I
Kill a Message.....	K
Scan Messages.....	S
Other File Utilities.....	F
Summon Operator.....	O
Leave Comment for Operator.....	C
Read Personal Mail.....	P
Topic of Messages.....	T
Help.....	H

Need help? RTAP Hotline: **(800) 527-8279**

* If you need a modem and software, the RTAP National Resource Center makes these available at a modest charge. Call (800) 527-8279 to arrange a purchase.

Messages: Users of TAP-IN can post messages publicly to all other users, or send private messages to specific users.

- **To read your messages**, type "R" at the main menu. Then type "1 +" to see every message that is public or has been sent to you. Choose "H" for other message reading options.
- **To enter a message**, type "E" at the main menu. When asked, type the name of the user to receive your message. Type "A" for a message to all users, or "S" for a message to the SYSOPs--i.e., system operators. Enter a subject at the subject prompt. Next choose "U" if you want your message to be public so that everyone can read it, or "R" if you want your message to be private. After you have input your message, type <Enter> on a blank line. The board will then ask, "What about sub-functions?" Respond by typing "S" to save your message.
- **To erase a message**, type "K" at the main menu followed by the number of the message to be "killed." Or, if you don't know the number, read through your messages and type "K" when the message to be erased is displayed. You can erase only messages that you have sent or that have been sent privately to you.

Conferences: The "conferences" portion of TAP-IN allows for the posting and exchanging of messages devoted to various topics, such as classified ads (employment, notices, requests for proposals, etc.), and vehicles (comments and questions). The software treats these conferences as special sets of messages. Note also that the software uses the same menu for the conferences as for TAP-IN's main menu. Look to the lower left corner of your screen to see if you're in a conference.

- **To join a conference**, type "J" at the main menu. This will give you a list of conferences. Then type the name of the conference you wish to join, e.g., "vehics" or "classfd". Carefully read the introductory screens presenting the special policies that pertain to the particular conference you have joined.
- **To read and respond to messages**, type "R;1+" at the conference main menu. If you want to respond to an advertisement or a message, type "R" when that message is displayed on your screen. Your replies can be either public ("U") or private ("R").
- **To add your own message**, type "E" (to enter a message), then "A" (for all users). When asked for a brief subject, type a brief headline. Then enter "U" (to make your message public) and type the text of your message. Complete your message by typing <Enter> on a blank line, followed by an "S" to save your entry.

File downloading: Through TAP-IN's "Files" feature, you can transfer valuable resources onto your own computer!

- **To find a file**, type "L" at TAP-IN's main menu to see a list of seven categories of files available to you for downloading.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Human Resources | 5. Bulletins |
| 2. Products & Services | 6. Shareware |
| 3. Documents | 7. Conference Contents |
| 4. Legislative Update | |

Type the number (1 through 7) of the directory from which you wish to access files. You will see a long list of files with brief descriptions.

- **To select a file for downloading**, type the file's complete name (including suffix)--e.g., "statassn.hum". If you are asked to specify a protocol at this point, the response "Xmodem" will work well with most systems. You may need to consult your own software's documentation in order to download a file. For more help, call the Hotline.
- **To return to the main menu**, type <Enter> twice, followed by "Q;M".

Help: Remember, at almost any prompt, typing "H" or "?" will bring you an explanation of the options available to you at this point. Or, during business hours, you can call the RTAP Hotline to speak to a system operator. RTAP Hotline: **(800) 527-8279**