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**1989 ANNUAL REPORT
FOR UMTA RTAP
NATIONAL PROGRAM**

In 1989, the national component of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration's (UMTA's) Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) continued to: develop the RTAP National Resource Center; prepare training materials; establish a national peer-to-peer network; and facilitate communication among the federal government, states and local operators. Following are highlights of the year's accomplishments.

National Resource Center

> The UMTA RTAP National Resource Center's **toll-free hotline** received 1,269 calls in 1989. The most frequently asked questions were on vehicle procurement, federal anti-drug rules and regulations, driver training, new service start-up, and UMTA's Section 16(b)(2) Program. The majority of the callers were transit operators and the average response time to calls was under forty-eight hours. The Center began publishing select hotline queries and responses in the *Community Transportation Reporter*.

> An **electronic bulletin board service** was implemented, which now makes the Resource Center accessible by computer. The electronic bulletin board has many special features that allow users the ability to send and receive computer mail and to participate in on-line conferences.

> A **bibliography** on rural transit literature was prepared and disseminated to state DOTs.

> Two **guides to rural transit products, services and resources** were produced and disseminated through the *Community Transportation Reporter*.

> An **update of the 1986 directory of rural and specialized transit operations** was prepared and submitted to UMTA.

Preparation of Training Materials

> The **catalogue of training materials and resources for rural and specialized transit systems** was updated and distributed to state departments of transportation (DOTs). This edition contains listings for approximately 70 materials. Each listing describes the material and has information on the material's developer, format, cost, and topics covered.

> A video-based training program called "Emergency Procedures for Rural Transit Drivers" was produced and distributed to state DOTs. This training program is designed to give both new and experienced drivers the tools to manage emergencies. The program covers vehicle preparation, driving in hazardous weather and road conditions, securing the vehicle, breakdown procedures, accident procedures, and handling on-board passenger illness and injury.

Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance

- > The RTAP National Program has identified 46 "**peer practitioners**" to promote exemplary techniques and practices in rural public transportation management and operations. Peers made 44 site visits in 1989. These visits were for awareness presentations at workshops and conferences and for providing assistance in implementation. Most frequently requested areas for help were in transit system management, vehicle maintenance, wheelchair and lift restraints, vehicle selection and specifications, marketing and use of volunteers.
- > A **catalogue of peers** was produced and disseminated to state DOTs and state transit associations. The catalogue is designed to help state, regional and local organizations utilize the technical assistance network. It describes how the Network operates and who the peers are.
- > A **videotape called "Public/Private Partnerships in Rural Transit"** was completed. This technical assistance resource, which was prepared in conjunction with UMTA's Public Private Transportation Network, showcases three exemplary public/private partnerships in the RTAP National Peer-to-Peer Network. The resource is designed for use by communities that are considering a new service or seeking ways to reduce service delivery costs, and by state DOTs in making presentations to their grantees about private sector participation.

Facilitation of Communication

- > Four **RTAP regional meetings** were held in 1989 to help promote communication among RTAP state programs. The host organizations for these meetings were the New Hampshire UMTA Technology Transfer Center, the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, the Montana Department of Commerce, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. These meetings covered national developments, promoted information exchange between states, and encouraged regional coordination. A total of 27 states were involved in these meetings.
 - > The National Program provided the **funding for the Ninth National Conference on Rural Public Transportation**, and provided support in the development of two **technical sessions on RTAP and a roundtable for RTAP state program managers**. A **notebook of "RTAP showcase materials"** was prepared for state DOTs with sample project information sheets, newsletters, training course announcements and brochures, technical assistance fact sheets, scholarship programs, training course evaluations, and multi-state projects.
 - > A **nine-page bulletin** for state DOTs and national organizations interested in rural public transportation was published and disseminated. The bulletin provided a comprehensive program update, profiles of 15 state programs, and a description of the American Association of Highway and Transportation Official's (AASHTO's) Multi-State Technical Assistance Project.
 - > A **survey of UMTA RTAP state programs** was conducted. All fifty states completed the survey, which provided information on the nature, type and level of state involvement in rural transit technical assistance under RTAP as well as feedback on the effectiveness of the National Program in supporting the RTAP state programs. A report of the survey findings is currently being prepared.
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**Facilitation of Communication
(continued)**

- >The National Program held three meetings of the **15-member UMTA RTAP National Program Review Board** in 1989. The Review Board of seven state DOT officials and eight operators continued to: provide guidance on priority needs in the areas of training material development, information dissemination, and technical assistance; oversee the quality of National Program products and services; and promote the National Program to states and operators. The US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Department of Agriculture, the Federal Highway Administration, AASHTO, the International Taxicab Association, and the American Public Transit Association (APTA) continued to serve as ex-officio members of the Board.
- >The National Program was promoted **at national conferences** sponsored by the Transportation Research Board, *Community Transportation Reporter*, APTA, the American Public Works Association and AASHTO.
- >The National Program **provided on-site technical assistance** to the state of New York in the establishment of its RTAP state program.

**WHAT'S AROUND THE
CORNER FROM THE UMTA
RTAP NATIONAL
PROGRAM**

Just out from the UMTA RTAP National Program are two new reports: one called "The First Two Years of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration's Rural Transit Assistance Program"; the second called "A Directory of UMTA-Funded Rural and Specialized Transit Systems" . . . also now available is a user's guide for the electronic bulletin board service . . . and the first brief on using volunteers in transportation from a new RTAP technical assistance series.

In final production are a training module on essential skills for dispatching . . . a technical assistance brief on vehicle procurement . . . an updated catalogue of who's in the peer-to-peer technical assistance network . . . statistical profiles on rural and specialized transit operators . . . a technical assistance resource on public/private partnerships in rural transit . . . and a report on national trends in the UMTA RTAP State Program.

RTAP Regional meetings are planned for May 6 and 7 in Minneapolis and June 13 through 15 in Coeur D'Alene (Idaho) . . . RTAP also will be a topic of discussion at AASHTO/APTA's State Transit Conference (Traverse City, MI; June 17 through 21), Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA's) EXPO (Phoenix, AZ; June 26-29), and UMTA's Biennial State Program Manager's Meeting (Washington, DC; August 12-14).

Look soon for solicitation announcements from AASHTO and CTAA to fill five spots on the UMTA RTAP National Program Review Board. The deadline for state transit agency and rural operator nominations will be August 1 . . . also look later in the year for an announcement for a major two-day train-the-trainer workshop aimed at improving the instructional skills of individuals who are using the RTAP National Program training packages in structured training sessions.

***Around the Corner
(continued)***

Still in the early stages of development are a training module on transit board member training . . . and three technical assistance briefs: on using alternative fuels, policies for special passengers, and wheelchair restraints.

State DOTs will be provided copies of all products prepared by the National RTAP Program. Additional copies can be obtained through the National Resource Center (800/527-8279).

WHAT IS STARTS?

STARTS stands for Specialized Transit and Rural Transit Safety and is a major UMTA-funded training package prepared by the Transportation Safety Institute with modules on vehicle safety inspections, passenger relations, and defensive driving. Included in the STARTS package are a video, slides, an administrator's guide, a driver's safety manual, a road training guidelines manual, a safety inspection checklist, a written quiz, and certificates of completion for each module.

Since STARTS was distributed to every state DOT last spring, it has been used to train over a thousand transit drivers across the country.

Tips from the field on STARTS for rural operators: use the defensive driving module in conjunction with a speech from a safety officer; use the passenger relations module during an in-house driver safety meeting (administer the test and provide certificates of completion afterwards; takes only thirty to forty-five minutes); think about incorporating the three STARTS modules along with other available training materials into a comprehensive driver training package.

For more information on STARTS contact Robert Lower, Transportation Safety Investigator, Transportation Safety Institute, telephone 405/680-3614.

***RTAP NATIONAL
PROGRAM TRAINING
MODULES NOW
AVAILABLE THROUGH
THE NATIONAL
RESOURCE CENTER***

You can now obtain copies of any RTAP National Program product from the National Resource Center for the cost of reproduction. Call the RTAP Resource Center at 800/527-8279 for the cost of these and other public-domain materials in its library.
