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DelliBovi Excited About New RTAP Program

**Tells Community
Transportation Expo
UMTA Has Acted Quickly
With Implementation**

Speaking to a crowd of over seven hundred attendees at the Community Transportation Expo '87 held in Indianapolis on June 19, UMTA Deputy Administrator Alfred A. DelliBovi said that his agency has "moved quickly to get this new program off the ground."

DelliBovi pointed to the fact that since April, when Congress authorized \$5 million a year for five years to establish a Rural Transit Assistance Program, UMTA has:

- ▶ sent the 50 Governors a letter introducing the new program and describing how it will operate (in the first year of the program, of the \$5 million total, \$4.25 million is to be allocated to the states, with a minimum amount of \$50,000 per state; the remaining \$750,000 is to go to the establishment of a National Program to support the states' programs);
- ▶ drafted and made available to states a circular that provides guidance on how to apply for the state-administered portion of the program; and
- ▶ entered into a cooperative agreement with the American Public Works Association (APWA) to develop the National Program through a consortium of organizations headed by APWA and including Rural America, the National Association for Transportation Alternatives (NASTA) and International Support Services (ISS).

DelliBovi announced that he had already received grant applications from several states, "Montana was the first," and expects to fund these in the current grant cycle. By September, he said that "programs could be funded in as many as one-third of the states," with other states following quickly next year.

DelliBovi said that while "each state will decide how it wants to spend the funds," he envisions what will emerge are training courses; circuit riders for on-site training in safety, maintenance and management; peer-to-peer networks; computer bulletin boards; and newsletters. He expects states "to establish mechanisms for involving rural operators" in developing their RTAP statements of work.

For more information on the RTAP State Program contact Lynn Sahaj, UMTA Program Manager at (202) 366-2053. For more information on the RTAP National Program contact Roger Tate, UMTA Program Manager, at (202) 366-0235.

National Program Officially Starts July 1

The National Program officially began operations July 1. UMTA has established the National Program to be a key mechanism to help the State Program meet the overall objectives of RTAP. The National Program goals are to provide the states a central repository of information, materials and programs relating to rural transportation issues and to assess the needs of states as they provide technical assistance to rural transportation systems. Other goals include developing training programs and peer-to-peer networks to address these needs, and facilitating communication among federal, state, and local officials.

Since it started operations July 1, the National Program's project team has been busy developing a first year work plan. The most important of its first year activities include:

- ▶ Developing four training modules in the areas of greatest need.
- ▶ Starting a National RTAP Resource Center. Users will be able to call a toll-free number to access the clearing-house beginning in October.
- ▶ Identifying model practices in rural public transportation and initiating a peer-to-peer technical assistance network.
- ▶ Establishing an advisory board of state officials and rural operators to make recommendations to the National Program.
- ▶ Gathering information on state program activities to ensure that the products developed and activities undertaken through the National Program are of use to and supportive of the state programs.

UMTA RTAP Advisory Board Meets for First Time August 5

The first act of the National Program was to establish a 15-member Advisory Board of rural transportation providers and state Department of Transportation (DOT) representatives. The Advisory Board members are:

Rural Transportation Providers

- ▶ Judith A. Byman
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency
Virginia, Minnesota
- ▶ Richard Curran
Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency
Nashville, Tennessee
- ▶ Connie Garber
York County Community Action Corporation
Sanford, Maine
- ▶ Betty S. Green
RIDES Transportation Project
Rosiclare, Illinois
- ▶ William H. Henderson
Dial-A-Ride Transportation
Everett, Washington
- ▶ Margaret E. Ness
Special Transit
Boulder, Colorado
- ▶ Michael Noel
Cambria County Transit Authority
Johnstown, Pennsylvania
- ▶ Pam Ward
Ottumwa Transit Authority
Ottumwa, Iowa

State DOT Representatives

- ▶ Joseph L. Daversa
Pennsylvania DOT
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- ▶ Lee F. Deter
California DOT
Sacramento, California
- ▶ Lawrence J. Harman
Massachusetts Executive Office of
Transportation and Construction
Boston, Massachusetts
- ▶ David D. King
North Carolina DOT
Raleigh, North Carolina
- ▶ William Luckerson
Alabama Highway Department
Montgomery, Alabama
- ▶ Margot Massey
Department of Highways and Public Transportation
Austin, Texas
- ▶ Patricia Saindon
Department of Commerce
Helena, Montana

The first meeting of the UMTA RTAP Advisory Board took place on August 5 in Washington, D.C. Discussion focussed on the Board's mission and top training needs for rural operators.

Board Mission

The Board articulated the ways it can be most helpful to the National Program's project team. First among these is to offer perspective for the project's ideas and proposed actions. In particular, it can identify special issues that need to be taken into account in addressing the technical assistance, training, and information dissemination needs of rural areas, and bring national attention to emerging issues. Other ways include recommending priorities for project investments, identifying multiple state needs for similar types of technical assistance and training, and directing the project to the best available materials and practices.

Top Training Needs

The Board identified a national driver training program as the top training need to be addressed by the National Program. Six items were listed for inclusion in the driver training program including vehicle maintenance and defensive driving, emergency and accident handling procedures, passenger relations techniques, substance abuse awareness, pre-trip inspections, and passenger assistance techniques. The first two of these items—vehicle maintenance and defensive driving, and emergency and accident handling procedures—are now slated to be the subjects for the first training modules.

After driver training, the Board cited management concerns (personnel management, board training, new manager's orientation, contracting for services, management information systems, system performance and evaluation and financial management) as needing the most attention for training material development. UMTA previously had identified this as a top training priority and has contracted with Dynatrend to develop a rural and small manager's workshop. More information on this project will be provided as it becomes available.

The next meeting of the Board will be held at APWA's Headquarters Office in Chicago on November 9th and 10th.
