



RTAP Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

By Emily Walters

This year marks the 20th year RTAP has been up and operating.

The American Public Works Association (APWA) administers the National Program in a consortium arrangement with Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) since July 1, 1987. They have been helping bring transit funding and training opportunities nationwide ever since.

For over two decades, National RTAP has provided its reliable hotline, produced videos and other training material to keep transit operators and systems up-to-date with new challenges. This year, RTAP has a sleek, new logo, a national

newsletter, and a new website. Outreach and communication are two areas that National RTAP feels are vital to being able to offer the most education and trainings opportunities available.

RTAP is also concerned with offering the same, dependable training and education opportunities to tribal and operators. National RTAP will be working closely with the Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) to strengthen communication and opportunities with the tribes.

"The Rural Transit Assistance Program has consistently led the way in developing highly needed and usable re-

sources for the diverse and imaginative people in the field of rural public transportation." said Charlie Dickson, Associate Director of Community Transportation Assistance of America (CTAA).

All the new products, and partnerships display how in its 20th year, RTAP continues to evolve and deliver the same great service its constituencies have come to rely on.

Don't Forget to Stop
by the RTAP Training
at the CTAA Expo
in Reno, NV!
May 23, 2007
2 p.m.-5 p.m.

New Faces to the RTAP Board

By Emily Walters

The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) would like to welcome the new additions to the RTAP Review Board, Bobby Killebrew, Dan Mundy, and Shirley Tarwater.

Bobby Killebrew is the Deputy Director of the Public Transportation Divi-

sion of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). He is a past winner of the Multi-State Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) Outstanding Achievement Award and also serves on the American Public Transportation Association's State Affairs Committee, the MTAP Project Steering Group and the American

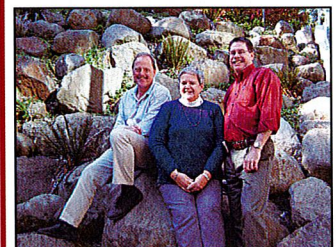
Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' Standing Committee on Public Transportation.

Dan Mundy is the Branch Chief of the Rural and Small Transit Operators-Procurement Management Branch at the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Cont...

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May 2007

Photography by Emily Walters and Bobby Killebrew



Dan Mundy, Shirley Tarwater, and Bobby Killebrew at the October Board Meeting in 2006.

RTAP Mission and Goals

The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) was created by Congress in 1986 to provide training, technical assistance and research activities that assist rural and tribal transit operators. RTAP works to identify and disseminate high quality information and training and materials to rural transit operators and state programs. Funded by the Federal Transit Administration, National RTAP is administered by the American Public Works Association in a consortium arrangement with the Community Transportation Association of America.

New Faces cont...

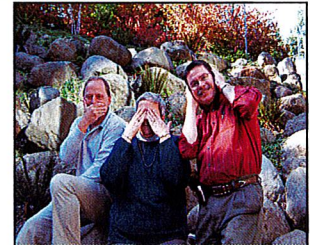
Dan has worked in public transportation for 20 years and has managed the FTA Section of the 5311 program in California for the past three years. Shirley Tarwater, CTPA, is an Intermediate Multimodal Operations Specialist at the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) - Multimodal Operations-Transit Section. Shirley has served as the Section 5311 Rural Transit Program Manager for MoDOT since 1999. She is also the department's liaison to the Missouri Public Transit Association's Rural Committee and serves as the state delegate to CTA.

As members of the RTAP Review Board, Killebrew,

Mundy and Tarwater will work with other members to identify and produce technical assistance and training materials for rural transit agencies across the nation. The board meets twice a year in Washington, DC. Each board term is three years.

"National RTAP relies heavily on the insight and expertise of the Review Board to ensure high quality products and services," said Dave Barr, Director of National RTAP, "The Board maintains a crucial link between National RTAP and the needs of our customers."

National RTAP wants to hear from you! Please submit interesting events that have occurred on your bus or funny jokes and stories!



Dan Mundy, Shirley Tarwater and Bobby Killebrew in Skamania, WA.

RTAP State Award Winners 2006

By Emily Walters

Every two years at the Transit Research Board (TRB) Rural Intercity Bus Conference, the National RTAP recognizes the significant work of the state RTAP programs with the Outstanding Achievement for a State Program Award and the Outstanding Achievement for a State RTAP Product or Service Award. This year's winners were the West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Public Interest and the Arkansas Transit Association (ATA).

The West Virginia DOT, Division of Public Transit received the award for Outstanding Achievement for a State RTAP Product or Service for their Drug

and Alcohol Recordkeeping Folders.

The Arkansas Transit Association (ATA) was awarded the Outstanding Achievement for an RTAP State Program.

With its "circuit rider program and new state of the art training center ATA can offer courses on site which is more cost-effective and useful to rural Arkansas transit providers than holding centralized classes. "These award winners represent some of the terrific work being performed by the state RTAP's across the country," said National RTAP Director Dave Barr. All entries are judged equally on: cost effectiveness, innovativeness, timeliness, usefulness, and replicability.



Accepting the award for West Virginia DOT is George Levitsky, Fairmont-Marion County Transit Manager and David Barr, Director of the National RTAP.



Anne Gilbert and Russ Parish from ATA accepting the Outstanding Achievement Award from David Barr

Farewell to Board Members

By Emily Walters

RTAP bids a fond farewell to outgoing Review Board members: Karen Walton, Michael Frisch, Debra Gleason and Past Chair Tom Ashby.

Karen Walton was the Executive Director for the Matanuska-Susitna Community Transit (MASCOT) in Wasilla, AK. Walton was Chairman of the Marketing Committee and a member of the Executive Committee for the RTAP Review Board.

"I truly have never met a group of people more dedicated to helping rural transportation systems succeed, who have helped systems rise from the status of a "loose amalgam of vehicles" to "professional transportation operators," said Walton, "I have learned so much and I leave very proud of the work that we accomplished."

Walton is left the board to accept a position with Sun Metro in El Paso, TX as the Assistant Director of Safety, Training, and Security.

Michael Frisch, Transportation Program Manager for Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. in Crookston, MN has completed his three year term. Frisch also participated on the Marketing Committee for the Board.

"It feels like I am moving away," said Frisch. "[RTAP] is a good way to network with people and other organization."

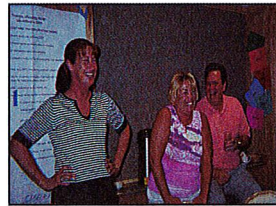
Debra Gleason, Transportation Director of the Steuben Area Rides in Bath, NY, is also left the Board in April. She was a member of the Marketing Committee and served her term on the Board.

"Best part of working on RTAP Board....working with other professionals from around the country that share the same interests and bring a variety of ideas, experiences, and expertise to the group. During my term, the most satisfying part was the Strategic Planning and seeing a plan develop that will be carried forward into the future." said Gleason.

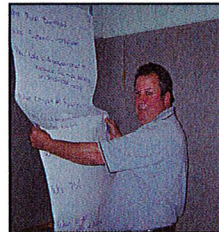
Tom Ashby is the outgoing chair this year. He has served on the Board as a member, Chairman and as the Past Chair. He was a member of the Product Development Committee and the Executive Committee. Ashby has retired since first coming on the board and currently works as a consultant in Illinois.

"The time I have spent on the board are some of the best times I have ever had. The education, the leadership and genuine network of true transit professionals are unlike any board I have served on." said Ashby. "The one thing I value most is the friendships I have made through this board and the transit industry."

"We are dependent on the Review Board members



Karen Walton, Debra Gleason and Tom Ashby in Chicago, IL.



Mike Frisch at the Strategic Planning Meeting last August.



Tom Ashby, David Frey, Bruce Fuchs, Debra Gleason, Shirley Tarwater, Bobby Killebrew, Maureen Hensley-Quinn, Ken Bock, Karen Walton, Emily Walters, Dan Mundy, Mike Frisch, and Dave Barr. Not pictured Kathi Littlejohn.

to provide the expertise and guidance on product development and customer needs," said National RTAP Director Dave Barr. "The success of National RTAP can be laid solely at the feet of exemplary Board members like Mike, Deb, Karen and Tom; they represent the best of the program."

RTAP Review Board

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Recipients of the 2006 Tribal Transit Grant Program

The following tribes are the recipients of FTA 2006 Tribal Transit

Grant Program:

- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Caddo Nation
- Cherokee Nation
- Chickaloon Native Village
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Cocopah Indian Tribe
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation's
- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
- Coquille Tribe of Oregon
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe
- Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians
- Gulkana Village Council
- Hannahville Indian Community
- Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
- Hualapai Indian Tribe
- Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Kaw Nation
- Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Lummi Tribe of Lummi Reservation
- Menominee Indian Tribe
- Northern Cheyenne
- Oglala Sioux Tribe
- Orutsaramiut Native Council
- Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
- Ponca Tribe Nebraska
- Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma
- Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
- Pueblo of Laguna-Shaa'srka Transit
- Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma
- Quinault Tribe of the Quinault Reservation
- Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians
- Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Santee Sioux Nation
- Seminole Nation
- Seneca Nation of Indians
- Skokomish Indian Tribe of the Skokomish
- Snoquamile Tribe
- Spirit Lake Tribe
- Squaxin Island Tribe
- Suquamish Tribe
- Susanville Indian Reservation
- The Chickasaw Nation
- The Citizen Potawatomi Nation
- The Navajo Nation
- The Sac and Fox Nation
- The Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe
- The Sitka Tribe
- Upper Sioux Community
- Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska
- Yavapai-Apache Nation
- Yurok Tribe

The 2007 Tribal Transit Grant Applications are currently published as of April 4, 2007. Tribes have until August 2, 2007 (120 days) to fill out and return applications to FTA.

For more information visit the FTA website at www.fta.dot.gov or contact your FTA regional Tribal Liaison (Appendix A) for application-specific information and issues.

For general program information, contact Lorna R. Wilson, Office of Transit Programs, at (202) 366-2053, email:

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For more
information
about the
Tribal Transit
Program
visit
www.fta.dot.gov

Idaho Utilizes RTAP Emergency Training Tool

By Gary Gleason and Janet Weaver

The terrorist attacks on transit systems in Madrid, London and Mumbai, and more recently the catastrophic losses caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, have underscored the need for all public transportation providers – including relatively isolated locations in Idaho – to develop training programs aimed at safety, security and emergency preparedness.

Illinois Transit Department's Division of Public Transportation has been a national leader on the topic, launching a multi-year training and technical assistance effort that resulted in transit emergency preparedness plans throughout the state.

Beginning in the summer of 2005, with the assistance of the national consulting group Communique USA, Incorporated, ITD presented transit emergency preparedness awareness training sessions in St. Maries, Twin Falls, Nampa and Pocatello for managers of all the Section 5311 Rural Program providers in the state. Urban providers in the Section 5307 program audited the course. Training was designed to help each of the providers meet or exceed Federal Transit Administration mandates for Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness Plans (SSEPP).

Instruction included:

1. Threat and vulnerability assessments
2. Organizational capability

assessments

3. Interagency coordination, and
4. A training and exercise plan

These basic awareness training events were followed by site assessments for each of the state's 5311 providers, and additional on-site training for frontline transit staff for how to best prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from all types of hazards and threats.

Cheri Elms with ITD's Public Transit Division emphasized that the training provided in Idaho was based around findings from a 1998 report by the National Transportation Safety Board demanding that federal grantees have safety plans that include six key elements:

- Driver/Employee Selection
- Driver/Employee Training
- Drug and Alcohol Compliance
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Safety Data and Analysis
- Security

"Response to the sessions was very favorable," said Gary Gleason of Communique. "As a result of this initiative Idaho transit providers are in a much better position to fulfill their responsibilities as First Preventers, First Responders and First on Scene."

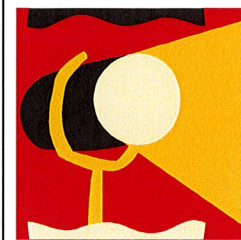
The training and technical assistance work in Idaho served as the prototype and field-testing for the recently released **Threat and Vulnerability Toolbox** from National RTAP.

This training curriculum and interactive DVD was produced by a consortium of transit emergency preparedness experts led by ITD's contractor Communique. This training curriculum and interactive DVD

was produced by a consortium of transit emergency preparedness experts led by ITD's contractor Communique.

This National RTAP product has been further refined by the consultants for the state of California in its soon-to-be released state-wide Transit Emergency Planning Guidance. This process is one of many projects undertaken by the states in conjunction with national partners such as the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Community Transit Association of America, American Public Transportation Association, National RTAP and the Federal Transit Administration to improve safety and security of transit passengers and systems. More best-practices information is available on a Web site established in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation at the University of South Florida Center for Urban Transportation Research. Information is available at <http://www.cutr.usf.edu/bussafety/> to improve safety and security of transit passengers and systems.

Spotlight on a State



The National RTAP is always looking to highlight State RTAPs and transit systems.

Please submit your stories to ewalters@apwa.net

Threat and Vulnerability Toolbox is now available at from your State Manager

A Sophisticated Transit System in a Rural Community

By Emily Walters



Pictured above is Steuben's adjustable hydraulic bus lift

Coordination is a hot topic being discussed everywhere in the transit community especially, with the establishment of United We Ride and the passage of SAFETEA-LU. What is coordination? How can we get it to work for us? What about turf issues? One rural transit system in upstate New York may serve as a good example: Steuben Area Rides (the Transportation Division of The Arc of Steuben known as StAR) in its 30th year is planning on opening its bus doors to the public.

The transit system started in 1977 with just three vans and currently has 14 buses and a seating capacity of 245 ambulatory and 36 wheelchairs. StAR, located in Bath, NY is a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 grantee, which serves mainly as a transportation provider to individuals with disabilities and the elderly. In addition to providing transportation to people who work at The Arc of Steuben or who attend their programs, they also provide mental health transportation, (to and from adult day health care programs) and also serves non-emergency medical and dialysis transportation



Above: A photo of a bus owned by Steuben Area Rides

Pictured below is StAR's maintenance facility



needs in Steuben County. They have statewide operating authority as well as interstate operating authority to travel into Pennsylvania. They are also the largest non-student transportation provider in Steuben County, NY, a county comparable in size to the state of Delaware. It encompasses about 1,600 square miles, runs 87,000 trips and travels approximately 500,000 miles annually. StAR has its own maintenance facility that is equipped with an adjustable hydraulic bus lift and post lift for smaller vehicles.

While the majority of their ridership is based on contracts with various human service agencies throughout the county, Steuben Area Rides is planning to open five or six of their routes to the public in areas that are not currently being served by other public transportation services. Initially, the routes will run on their current schedules with the ability to increase as deemed necessary by public demand.

Steuben Area Rides has a history of working towards coordination and has been spending at least 10 years in pursuit and building towards formal coordination. John Reel, Rural Mobility Specialist for New York State Department of Transportation, Transit Bureau, especially, has been instrumental in assisting Steuben County with communication between the different

providers and the county in its efforts of coordination. Several years ago Steuben Area Rides closed down one of their routes and trained their riders to ride the Hornell Area Transit System, HATS, (located in Hornell, NY) to work. Recently, the other public transit system that operates in Steuben County serving Bath and Hammondsport, Steuben Area Transit operated by First Transit, began offering a bus stop at The Arc of Steuben facility.

All three transportation systems work cooperatively on the Schuyler-Steuben Counties Transportation Planning Committee to improve public transportation services in the area and have been discussing transfers between systems and links to systems.

Opening its buses to the public would enable Steuben Area Rides to receive operating assistance while expanding transportation services to the general public in underserved communities of Steuben County.

They will be able to provide vital links to existing public transportation providers with the potential to increase their ridership as well. It would be costly for a new independent transit system to come in to Steuben County and begin the services that are being proposed by StAR, because StAR already has a dependable ridership and known name.

Schedule of Events and Conferences

- Transport Chicago Conference June 1, 2007 Chicago, IL
- 2007 Transit Initiatives Conference June 10-12, 2007 Austin, TX
- Alaska Tribal Meeting June 12th and 13th 2007
- AASHTO and FTA State Managers Meeting August 8-10, 2007 Washington, DC
- 2007 Public Transportation Conference and Expo August 19-21, 2007 Vancouver, WA
- ATA Annual Conference October 15, 2007 Hot Springs, AR
- National Center for Transit Research GIS in Transit Conference 2007 November 6-8, 2007 Tampa, FL

Don't Forget
to stop by the
RTAP Training and
Reception at the
CTAA Expo in
Reno, NV!
May 23, 2007
2 p.m.-9 p.m.

A Sophisticated Transit System Cont....

By Emily Walters

"We provide more trips now than we did six years ago with 25 buses. Trips per mile have increased and efficiency has improved greatly," said Transportation Director of Steuben Area Rides, Debra Gleason. "Our transportation system has been providing 'coordinated' transportation services for at least twenty years now we just didn't know that's what it was because it's just a part of our culture."

The county of Steuben is still in the legal

'Request For Proposal' for the proposed new services so other interested transit systems may also competitively bid.

Once a transit system has been chosen then begins the development of the first formal attempt to coordinate in Bath, NY.

"If we are successful in our attempt, Steuben County will truly have a coordinated system," said Gleason.

"Coordination means partnership in Bath."

For more information please contact:

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Or Debra Gleason, CCTM

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Congratulations to Steuben Area Rides for being awarded the Outstanding Specialized Transportation Service Award!!! Given by the New York DOT at the 2007 New York State Rural and Specialized Transit Conference held in Syracuse, NY. They were recognized for their innovation and coordination efforts!!

Letter from the Chair

By Ken Bock, Chairman of the National RTAP Review Board

To All Community Transit Partners:

The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) celebrates its 20th birthday this year. We have many proud achievements to reflect upon. Since created by Congress back in 1986, RTAP, and its partners, the Federal Transit Administration, the American Public Works Association, the Community Transportation Association of America and state RTAP managers across the nation, have been involved with the development, production and distribution of 20 Technical Assistance Briefs, 17 Training Modules and a variety of publications. These have resulted in countless training opportunities at the national, state, local and operator levels. RTAP trainers and materials have been continuously used in seminars, workshops and other training functions since the inception of the program. RTAP has supported efforts in both our nation's smallest and largest transit systems.

For those of us who have been in this industry long enough to remember what the acronym UMTA stood for, I can recall

reading the first announcements of a new federal program providing funding for training and technical assistance for rural transit operators; and no match requirement. In those days, the internet and electronic media were a little less prevalent and training materials as well as access to those materials was a major problem for most rural operators who were barely getting by on whatever hand-me-downs they could get. Our rural transit industry was in its infancy, but its need was recognized.

As my State's first RTAP State Program Manager, I remember the look that came across the faces of rural transportation operators when I told them there was going to be new training resources and that federal funding was available to support these efforts. Disbelief reigned supreme.

Today I am a rural operator that benefits from the efforts of the national RTAP program and I am honored to serve this year as the Chairman of the National RTAP Review Board. That Board is charged with providing guidance

and recommendations on community transit training needs to the Federal Transit Administration. A solid foundation of RTAP innovation, creativity and dedication has yielded training and technical assistance programs that have strengthened our industry and improved services to customers and our communities. During this past year, current and former members of the RTAP National Review Board and our industry partners have reviewed the contributions and processes of RTAP and charted a course that we believe will help make the RTAP program even more responsive to the needs of our industry in the coming years.

This course has been laid out in a new strategic vision and Operating Procedures for the National Board. As this new vision is adopted and implemented, key elements will be presented in future RTAP newsletters as well as our national website, but the real evidence of our success should be found in the rural operations across the nation. I encourage you to review the RTAP program and take advantage of the

opportunities available to your organization and your customers. After all, you are our customers and while we look back on the accomplishments of our first 20 years with pride, our vision embraces your challenges and opportunities for the future of our industry.

Happy Birthday and welcome to YOUR new RTAP!

National RTAP

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