



CONNECTIONS

Office of Public Transit Newsletter • May 2005

Update on reauthorization of federal transportation programs

When last we left you, Congress had just passed another short-term extension of TEA 21, the authorization legislation that had originally been scheduled to expire in September of 2003. Despite each house of Congress passing their own version of a reauthorization bill last year, they couldn't reach an agreement on the overall funding level (the Senate approved \$318 billion over six years, the House approved \$275 billion and the White House kept saying they would veto anything over \$256 billion) nor on myriad other details. Though there were some differences in the transit sections of the two bills, it was primarily highway funding issues that seemed to be the hang-up.

The extension of TEA 21 that passed last November authorized the existing highway and transit programs through May 31 of this year, giving the new Congress that convened in January that deadline to either agree to a reauthorization bill or pass another extension.

Both houses of Congress appear to be making an effort to meet that deadline. On February 7th, the House of Representatives reintroduced their bill, with the bottom-line adjusted to \$283.9 billion over the six year period—a figure that has now apparently been agreed to by the leadership in both houses plus the White House. Of this total, \$53.5 billion would be for transit programs. On March 3rd the House bill passed out of committee with very few changes and March 11th it was approved by the full House, again with only a few minor changes.

Meanwhile, the Senate has several committees responsible for different parts of the overall bill. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed out the highway title of their bill on March 16th. On March 17th the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee approved the transit title. Committee actions on the motor carrier and finance aspects of the bill are expected after the spring recess. So far it appears that the Senate bill will conform to the same bottom line as that approved by the House, but the amount designated for transit by the Senate is only \$51.6

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

2	Director's Column
3	IPTA annual meeting and bus rodeo competition
4	IPTA's 2006 state and federal legislative update
6	Donna Johnson is Talking Transit
7	Pam Ward honored for transportation service
8	Des Moines MTA's fleet service lane becomes automated
9	Statewide FFY05 DBE goal approved by FTA
9	Transit Tidbits
10	New emphasis on coordinating publicly funded transportation
11	Random drug and alcohol testing rates remain the same
11	Office of Public Transit streamlines notices to private operators
12	Who's Who in Iowa Transit - Brian Tapp
13	Who's Who in Iowa Transit - Claudia Rodenburg
14	Local fundraiser benefits transportation program
15	2005 Calendar

billion. Every expectation is that the full Senate will adopt their version of the reauthorization sometime during April.

Once the Senate has a bill adopted, there will still need to be a conference committee to work out the differences. Even with there being fairly close agreement on overall numbers, there are program differences. For instance, the House bill would have Job Access/Reverse Commute funding distributed among states

Reauthorization, see page 14

Director's Column

By Michelle McEnany

On May 1, CBS aired a made-for-TV movie, *"Riding the Bus with My Sister."* The movie provided viewers with an opportunity to see how public transit plays a vital role in our communities, and the important services it provides.

The movie is based on a book by Rachel Simon, who was a featured speaker at American Public Transportation Association's 2003 annual meeting in Salt Lake City. There, she spoke about her book, which chronicles a year spent with her mentally challenged sister who creates powerful connections with drivers and fellow passengers while using the public transit system.

Beth's story rings true for persons with disabilities right here in Iowa who also rely on public transit. Whether mentally challenged or physically handicapped, they rely on transit to get to medical appointments, jobs, school and social activities.

The movie's story is already garnering positive publicity on both national and local levels. Public transit provides essential services for persons with disabilities, and plays an integral role as a lifeline for a community. According to the April issue of the Easter Seals on-line newsletter, "Two out of

three people with disabilities not working want to, but accessibility issues prevent them."

The majority of Iowa's fleet of more than 1,600 public transit vehicles are either lift-equipped or offer ramp access to accommodate various mobility needs. Iowa is unique in the fact that some level of services is available in all 99 counties in Iowa by 35 designated public transit systems.

"Riding the Bus with My Sister" depicts the ways in which public transit benefits all who use it, whether in Pennsylvania or in Iowa. Public transit allows people from all walks of life access to opportunities, and helps them accomplish what is important to them. In many cases, public transit can mean the difference between being institutionalized and living at home.

Many Iowans need public transit. Individuals who are elderly or transportation-disadvantaged depend on it. Nationally, more than 600,000 people ages 70 and older stop driving each year and become dependent on others for transportation. Also, according to the latest U.S. Census, one out of every 16 households in Iowa is without a vehicle.

Many people choose to ride public transit to avoid paying for downtown parking spaces, or to avoid driving in rush hour traffic, inclement weather or

areas impacted by road construction. Express routes and fixed routes can be convenient and provide a valuable alternative to driving alone.

Rising fuel costs encourage more people to look to public transit as an alternative. Ride-sharing and vanpooling are also becoming more popular for those concerned with the increasing costs of operating their personal vehicle.

With Iowa's growing elderly and transit-dependent populations there is a greater emphasis on community-based services. Commuting distances have increased and more employment opportunities are outside core service hours. The availability of transit services allows employers to recruit and retain employees from a larger labor pool. Community members who are disabled or elderly have a lot to offer employers if affordable, regularly scheduled transit service can be made available to them.

Iowa's public transit systems provided more than 23 million rides last year and the need for service is projected to continue rising. According to the Public Transit Equipment and Facilities Management System, it would take more than \$79 million just to replace each of the vehicles currently eligible for replacement under the federal useful

life minimum standards. This figure does not include funding for the purchase of new vehicles for expansion of service, or any additional amounts that would be required to put new service in place.

Public transit providers are working hard to meet the demand for service. One of the ways they are able to provide their current level of service is through comprehensive maintenance programs that have allowed 59 percent of Iowa transit vehicles to exceed their minimum useful life. But even maintenance comes at a cost, and decisions have to be made on a regular basis as to which vehicles are apt to provide the most miles and hours of service with the least amount of extended maintenance.

Everyone should have access to public transit. To find out more about public transit services offered in Iowa, visit our Web site: iatransit.com.

Michelle

IPTA to hold annual meeting and 19th annual bus roadeo competition

The Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) will hold its annual meeting June 8-10 in Cedar Rapids at the Marriott Hotel. The primary focus of the meeting will be training, through showcasing cutting edge technology and advanced software solutions for optimizing productivity and growing ridership while dealing with spiraling costs.

Ron Logsden, Iowa City transit manager and IPTA's training liaison to the DOT, says, "Holding the meeting in Cedar Rapids allows for transit managers from around the state to see firsthand the real-time, on-board surveillance cameras installed on Five Seasons Transportation & Parking (FST&P) fixed route buses. FST&P, based in Cedar Rapids, has been a leader in utilizing technology to improve its transit operations." Tours and demonstrations are being arranged to allow managers to meet with industry experts to view leading edge solutions in information and communications and automation and control. Automating many tasks associated with planning, scheduling, dispatch, managing and delivering transit services to enhance quality of service and optimize productivity of our resources will be a key point of discussion. Intelligent Transportation Systems, Automatic Vehicle

The primary focus of the meeting will be training, through showcasing cutting edge technology and advanced software solutions for optimizing productivity and growing ridership while dealing with spiraling costs.

Locators and on-board surveillance cameras affect every aspect of our operation, from dispatching to bus operation to maintenance to management. We're excited to learn more about this cutting edge technology."

Representatives from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in Kansas City, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the DOT have been invited to speak at the annual meeting, along with IPTA's federal and state legislative consultants. Michelle McEnany, director of DOT's Office of Public Transit, will be leading a presentation on current issues concerning public transit in Iowa.

McEnany will also be presenting awards to the most improved urban transit system and to the most improved rural transit system. The awards are based on increased ridership and decreased cost per ride for the year ending last June 30.

The annual meeting is comprised of training, business meetings and an opportunity for transit managers to meet with their peers. They can also view some of the latest products and vehicles at the trade show to be held Thursday evening.

This meeting will be held in conjunction with the 19th Annual Bus Roadeo in Cedar Rapids on Saturday, June 11, which FST&P is hosting. Bus operators from around the state will have an opportunity to participate and showcase their driving skills. Family, guests and members of the general public are encouraged to show support for their local transit systems and are invited to attend the event to observe the safe driving skills required of bus operators on a daily basis. DOT staff, IPTA members and local community volunteers will judge the competition.

An awards ceremony will take place immediately after the roadeo. First-, second- and third-place winners in the state competition will receive awards and cash bonds. The first-place winners of each division are offered an opportunity to represent their local transit system, as well as the state, at the national bus roadeo competition. Winners of the large bus division will compete later this fall in conjunction with APTA's annual meeting. Top competitors in the small bus and van divisions will compete in the national bus roadeo sponsored by CTAA that will be held next spring in conjunction with their annual meeting.

DOT and IPTA jointly sponsor the annual bus roadeo. The Rural Transit Assistance Program of the FTA provides part of the funding for this event.

To obtain more information about IPTA's annual meeting or the bus roadeo, contact Bev Thomas, IPTA's executive director at 515-440-6057 or apmsthomas@aol.com.

IPTA's 2006 state and federal legislative priorities update

The Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) has been actively promoting the benefits of public transit and seeking support for local services. This statewide effort, conducted by Iowa's 19 urban and 16 regional transit systems, has been surging forward with the message that public transit provides Iowans transportation choices for maintaining access to work, school, medical facilities, meal sites and social activities. "Iowa legislators and other elected officials have an opportunity to help continue the vitality of Iowa's public transportation system, a service that many Iowans rely on for a higher quality of life. For some, it can mean the difference between living independently and being institutionalized," said Pam Ward, IPTA president and transit administrator for both the City of Ottumwa and 10-15 regional transit.

"While much remains to be seen regarding reauthorization and completion of the Iowa legislative session, one thing is for certain--the teamwork of the legislative committee and their effort placed into the many tasks and initiatives thus far into the year have been something everyone can be very proud of," said Mark Munson, IPTA's legislative chairperson and transit manager for the city of Dubuque's transit system, Keyline Transit.

On February 22 members of the IPTA legislative committee and board met with Senator John "Jack" Kibbie, Representative Christopher Rants, Representative Chuck Gipp, Senator Michael Gronstal, Representative Pat Murphy, Senator Stewart Iverson and Senator Jeff Lamberti. Munson said, "The meetings were very cordial and positive as we discussed how transit is important for Iowa and shared our common vision with clear and specific priorities that will best benefit the industry as a whole.

Thanks to the fine work of Steve Spade, Des Moines MTA; Rose Lee, Region 3-RIDES based in Spencer; and Amber Wagner, Wagner Resources; we were able to support our message with a beautiful priorities brochure containing powerful facts and statistics regarding our vital services and systems." The following are highlights of census data referenced in IPTA's presentations:

- One out of every 16 households in Iowa is without a car.
- 17 percent of all Iowans are disabled.
- By 2020 the number of Iowans over 65 will increase by over 20 percent, increasing demand for transit to ensure self-sufficiency and independence.



Senator Grassley reviews IPTA's legislative priorities with IPTA President Pam Ward.

On February 23 members of the legislature joined IPTA for a continental breakfast at the Embassy Suites Hotel. They listened to legislative chair Mark Munson deliver a brief presentation on transit in Iowa, followed by a presentation from Senator Bob Dvorsky on issues facing the legislature during the upcoming legislative session.

Following the breakfast, Mark Joyce delivered an important presentation to association members on effective advocacy strategies for supporting Iowa public transportation. "Joyce noted attributes of successful advocates along the criteria of merit, counsel, members and campaigns. Future state strategies will include more emphasis on growing Iowa's financial commitment to public transportation, effective advocacy and preparing for redistricting," said Munson.

Later that day the association members, in their red vests with bright blue IPTA logo, were transported by the Des Moines Metro to the capitol

building. The group was clearly identifiable and received many positive remarks about the bright clothing color and solidarity of their message.

On March 7, the association sent 11 members, accompanied by Peter Hallock of the DOT's Office of Public Transit, to Washington, D.C., where IPTA's federal legislative priorities were presented to the congressional delegation. Meetings were held with Congressman Jim Nussle, Congressman Tom Latham, Senator Tom Harkin, Senator Chuck Grassley, Congressman Leonard Boswell, Congressman Steve King and staff for Congressman Jim Leach. During those meetings, Pam Ward, IPTA president and transit administrator for Ottumwa Transit Authority and 10-15 Regional Transit System, introduced the delegation. In addition, legislative chair Mark Munson highlighted the

Priorities, see next page

Priorities, from previous page

legislative priorities and distributed the FY 2006 federal legislative priorities booklet. Iowa public transit managers also provided local examples of how their services were serving their communities and some of the issues and challenges they face meeting the demand. "All in all, the association presented a very clear and concise message and clearly emphasized IPTA's #1 priority of vehicle replacement. Without a doubt, the priorities booklet was a vital, professional tool for the delegation, with beautiful pictures from transit systems across the state and powerful transit facts like those found in the state priorities booklet," said Ward.

IPTA's legislative committee will continue to monitor the state legislative session as well as the federal transportation reauthorization bill. Munson said, "Work concerning federal policy issues will continue with Ed Redfern's assistance." Redfern is IPTA's federal legislative liaison. "In June the committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the prior year's strategy and initiatives with a report to the membership at the annual meeting in Cedar Rapids. Thanks again to all the generous contributions of time and talent from everyone involved in the 2006 legislative process," added Munson.

About IPTA

The Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) supports the professional development and improvement of its members by providing industry information, training, technical assistance and other opportunities for networking, collaboration and sharing of ideas and best practices. IPTA strives to develop a common vision regarding which decisions, changes and methods of support will best benefit the industry as a whole.

IPTA membership is open to designated public transit systems in Iowa. Associate membership is open to agencies providing service under contract to the transit systems, inter-city bus carriers, taxi operators, vendors and others.

To find out more about IPTA, visit their Web site: iapublictransit.com or contact Bev Thomas, IPTA's executive director, at 515-440-6057.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' PURPOSE STATEMENT

- Direct the activities of IPTA
- Provide leadership
- Establish priorities and make decisions
- Represent the diverse interests of our members
- Be the "engine" or driving force of IPTA
- Communicate IPTA's mission and activities to members and other entities

BOARD CONTACTS 2004-2005

IPTA Executive Director Bev Thomas, 1001 Office Park Road, Suite 105, West Des Moines, IA 50265
Office: 515-440-6057 Fax: 515-440-6055

President Pam Ward, Ottumwa Transit and Region 15, 105 E. Third Ottumwa, IA 52501
Office: 641-683-0608 Fax: 641-683-0671

Urban Vice President Steve Spade, Des Moines MTA, 1100 MTA Lane, Des Moines, IA 50309
Office: 515-283-8111 Fax: 515-283-8135

Rural Vice President Rose Lee, Region 3, 522 10th Ave. E., P.O. Box 1240, Spencer, IA 51301
Office: 712-262-7920 Fax: 712-262-6276

Secretary Pat Otto, City of Mason City, 10 First St. N.W., Mason City, IA 50401
Office: 641-421-3616 Fax: 641-421-3629

Treasurer Brian McClatchey, University of Iowa - Cambus, 100 Cambus Office-University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242-1000
Office: 319-335-8632 Fax: 319-335-6647

Member-at-large Ron Logsdon, Iowa City Transit, 410 E. Washington, Iowa City, IA 52240
Office: 319-356-5154 Fax: 319-356-5155

Legislative Chair Mark Munson, Keyline Transit, 2401 Central Ave., Dubuque, IA 52001
Office: 563-589-4196 Fax: 563-589-4340

Legislative Chair-elect Walt Stephenson, MET, 1515 Black Hawk St., Waterloo, IA 50702
Office: 319-234-5714 Fax: 319-234-5152



Donna Johnson is Talking Transit

Most planners agree that the demographics of the United States will change dramatically during the next two decades. As a baby boomer myself, I can say that most of us will reach retirement age during this time period, but many of us will still be working. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that in twenty years the number of Americans age 65 or older will increase by nearly 80 percent, from 35 million today to more than 62 million in 2025. In Iowa, elderly individuals are expected to make up over 20 percent of the state's population. As we age, we often become less willing or able to drive, making it necessary to depend on alternative methods of transportation.

I am sure many of you are like me, relying on family or friends for transport when we are ailing or our vision isn't what it used to be. My 20-year-old daughter thought it was great when I let her drive me around during her early teen years, but now, as a young mother who is employed full-time, driving mom around at

night just doesn't bring quite the excitement that it used to. I can relate. My mother is not able to drive, so she relies on friends and family for a ride to the store, medical appointments, shopping, church and social functions. My mother is in her early 70s and some of her friends are as many as twenty years older than she. And, as sad as it sounds, at this age they also attend a lot of funerals.

Whether we quit driving due to declining health, eyesight, physical or mental abilities; the cost of operating a car or simply by choice, the facts remain the same and will affect either us or someone we know and love. It's kind of ironic that it seems we need to make more trips to the doctor when we no longer have the means to get there. We want to stay active in our communities and yet our social activities are often the first trips to be marked off our list when it comes to making the choice between getting to the grocery store or a medical appointment, or going to church or to visit an old friend.

Although walking is an option in some cases, snow- or ice-covered sidewalks cause problems, as do uneven surfaces or having to cross traffic with no street or traffic

lights. Sometimes we are unable to walk quickly enough to cross even with pedestrian lights. Safety issues have a direct impact on whether or not a person even considers walking.

Public transportation depends on federal, state and local funding to operate. With our population base aging so dramatically, public transportation options will require even more funding. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has helped by requiring complementary paratransit service along fixed routes for people whose disabilities prevent them from using the fixed route services offered in urbanized areas. But what about those parts of town where even the fixed route services aren't available due to lack of funding? Many of us have chosen to live in an area where there is no public transportation available. As our suburbs spread out, we will be faced with even more transportation challenges once our personal automobile is no longer an option.

Is Iowa ready to provide adequate transportation choices for our aging population? Alternatives to driving, whether in small communities or larger urbanized cities, can be sparse. Our mobility needs can change permanently or on a day-by-day basis, such as when we take a fall, or when

we are hospitalized and need a short recovery period but still want to get out into our communities. Making our communities more livable and offering more transportation options is something we need to be considering now.

While transit spending is a very small part of the overall federal budget, it is vital to an increasing number of Americans who are turning to public transportation as their means of getting to work, school, medical care and other activities of daily life. By working together to obtain the investment necessary to maintain our current transit system and make improvements where demand exceeds service, we will be making strides toward the integration of services and coordinated efforts that will be necessary to meet the needs of Iowa's aging population.

We are always open to suggestions about ways in which we can partner with, promote and enhance public transit in Iowa. State and community decision-makers are invited to visit our Web site: iatrtransit.com, or contact our office or transit managers around the state to learn more about the importance and impact of their decisions on public transit.

Ward honored for service to transportation industry

A reception was held recently to honor Pam Ward for 25 years of service to the city of Ottumwa and thirty years in transportation. Pam Ward is the transit administrator for both the Ottumwa Transit Authority (OTA) and 10-15 Regional Transit. The regional system serves the counties of Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Van Buren, Wapello, and Wayne.

The public was invited to attend the reception, which was held on the afternoon of Thursday, February 24, at the Ottumwa transit office. The event was well-attended, with representation from OTA and 10-15 past- and present board members; Ottumwa Mayor Dale Uehling; Steve Rasmussen, City Administrator; Samil Sermet of the Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Public Transit; current and former employees; and customers of both transit systems. "Perhaps the most important guests to me were my mom, Marian Dennison; husband, Tim; daughters, Kelly and Dana; granddaughter, Kiley; and son, T.J. Without my family's continual support, I could never have achieved all I have over these many years," said Ward.

Mayor Uehling presented Ward a plaque for her 25 years of service to the city of Ottumwa and board members presented her with a proclamation letter to commend her for service. Plants, flowers, and

"Without my family's continual support, I could never have achieved all I have over these many years."

Pam Ward

cards were sent from as far away as Virginia and many well-wishers called Ward to personally congratulate her on this milestone and thank her for her years of service to the transportation industry. Senators Harkin and Grassley also personally congratulated Ward while she was in Washington, D.C. on a legislative trip representing the Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) in early March.

Ward was recently recognized by the National Transportation Research Board with the "Roger Tate is Smiling" Award. She is a charter member of the Rural Transit Assistance Program national review board and chaired that organization for four years. She has been a strong advocate for public transit at the state and federal levels, as well as the local level, and is currently serving as president of IPTA.

Congratulations, Pam!



(Above) Pam Ward, Transit Administrator, celebrates 25 years of service.

(Below) Pam Ward receives honorary plaque from Mayor Uehling.



Des Moines MTA's fleet service lane converted into automated multifunction drive-through service facility

After 30 years of use, the facility service lane of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) complex in Des Moines exhibited the wear of time and the effects of flood damage sustained in 1993. Now, thanks to Brown Engineering and funding from the Federal Transit Administration,

MTA has a modern shop to handle the complete maintenance and repair requirements of a 146-vehicle fleet.

Brown Engineering, headquartered in Des Moines, was awarded a contract to plan and design a comprehensive, integrated makeover of MTA's fleet service lane. This was a major accomplishment result-

ing in an existing truncated service bay being converted into an automated multifunction drive-through service facility. The new service lane allows for engine servicing, fueling, washing and cleaning. A mix of specific-purpose vehicle servicing equipment was selected from leading industry manufacturers. Economically beneficial automation improvements carried out included cycle initiation sensors for the wash-and-dry system, bus interior cleaning equipment, a whole-bus vacuum system, radio transmission of vehicle data, and fluid use data logging. Special lighting, ventilation and waterproofing techniques have made the newly improved service lane a clean, warm and well-lit facility, resulting in improved manpower and process performance while garnering supportive comments from the public. The structures, machines and controls were all custom-fabricated to fit the space available.

New fleet service procedures were put into place to minimize cycle time, maximize personnel utilization and minimize material waste. The wash water and cleaning air is recycled to enhance energy efficiency. State-of-the-art automatic fueling and data collection is tied to the existing computerized accounting/management system. Waste is

minimized and valuable personnel time is used more efficiently. Careful coordination with MTA and potential suppliers allowed sequencing of competitively awarded specialized equipment purchases and installation. The final cost of all elements of the project was within five percent of the original engineering estimate for the entire modification, and the project was completed on schedule.

"We are very pleased with the outcome of this project," said Steve Spade, MTA's general manager. "Money was saved by utilizing part of our existing building and modifying the underground storage tank rather than replacing the tank. We are also able to utilize our staff more efficiently since the new process takes less staff time per vehicle serviced. The benefits are measurable and the project makes good ecological sense," added Spade. The MTA fleet service lane is now capable of servicing a vehicle every 3 minutes or around 100 buses in about 5 hours, using only 3 to 4 employees, resulting in a 40 percent decrease in bus service time.

The riding public is served by having cleaner buses. MTA personnel benefit from having a safer, more organized work area and working in more supportive conditions. The agency is a beneficiary through the improved performance of its personnel, more accurate record-keeping, image enhancement and

Service facility,
see next page



Des Moines MTA's new bus wash system is a key feature of their service lane makeover.



After each MTA bus is washed, 80% of the water is stripped off the bus by the bus dryer system.

Service facility, from previous page

compliance with Iowa Department of Natural Resources leak detection requirements for underground fuel storage systems. The interests of the general public are met by reducing emissions and run-off, conserving energy and reducing operational costs. The service lane improvements have been fully operational since October 2004 and are exceeding expectations.

MTA's service lane makeover project was selected by Iowa's professional engineering association as an outstanding engineering project. At its 49th annual meeting on March 31, the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Iowa recognized the ingenuity and cost-effectiveness of the engineering services Brown Engineering performed. The ACEC meeting was held in conjunction with the Iowa Engineering Society's 115th annual meeting also in Des Moines. Brown Engineering president Terry Martin, and project engineers Mark David and Robert Sieh, spoke to the engineering association about this challenging and unique project located right here in Iowa. J.P. Golinvaux, DOT Office of Public Transit procurement specialist and transit programs administrator to the MTA, also made a short presentation. Congratulations to MTA and Brown Engineering for your collaboration in designing and implementing an award-winning project that will benefit MTA's customers and markedly improve vehicle appearance.

Statewide FFY05 DBE goal approved by FTA

The federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program provides a vehicle for increasing the participation by minority business enterprises in state and local procurement. DBE regulations require state and local transportation agencies that receive federal financial assistance to establish goals for the participation of DBEs, review the scopes of anticipated large prime contracts throughout the year and establish contract-specific DBE subcontracting goals. Three major federal transportation agencies are involved in the DBE program. They are the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

FTA's Office of Civil Rights recently approved the Iowa Department of Transportation's (DOT) DBE goal for the federal fiscal year 2005. The transit program's weighted DBE goal is 0.4 percent, which is 0.2 percent race neutral and 0.2% race conscious.

To find out more about the Department's analysis and methodology for federal transit projects as approved by FTA, please refer to our Web site: iatransit.com. Under the state resources section you can find a copy of the public notice and information used to determine the statewide goal.

The Iowa DOT takes affirmative action steps to ensure that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises have the maximum practical opportunity to be awarded Iowa DOT contracts for construction, professional and technical services. The Iowa DOT also has taken specific steps to ensure there is no discrimination in the awarding and administering of contracts. The Office of Contracts administers the department's DBE program with authority derived from:

- Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and any amendments;
- Executive Order 11625 and any amendments;
- Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21);
- 49 CFR Part 26 of the Federal Register and any amendments.

If you have any questions regarding the transit DBE goal, please contact Donna Johnson at 515-233-7875 or via e-mail at donna.johnson@dot.iowa.gov. For certification applications or additional information about the certification process, please contact the DOT Office of Contracts, EEO Section, at (515) 239-1422.

Transit Tidbits

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has announced that 9.6 billion trips were taken on U.S. local public transportation systems in 2004, an increase of 2.11 percent over the previous year.

(Source, APTA web site. http://apta.com/media/releases/050329ridership_up.cfm.)

Iowa's public transit fleet of 1,625 vehicles is said to be one of the oldest in the nation. Over 59% of transit vehicles in Iowa have already exceeded their useful life based on federal standards. It would take more than \$79 million just to replace each of the vehicles currently eligible for replacement under the federal useful life minimum standards. (Source, Public Transit Equipment and Facilities Management System administered by Iowa DOT's Office of Public Transit.)

Since 2002, 17 Iowa public transit systems have utilized Job Access/Reverse Commute funds to expand services to help 1.6 million people get to work. (Source, Iowa transit system's annual statistical reports.)

73,000 households in Iowa are without a car. (Source, 2000 Census)

New emphasis on coordinating publicly funded passenger transportation

By Robert Krause, Planning and Coordination Manager

Pat Palmersheim, executive director of the Iowa Commission on Veterans Affairs, attended his first Transportation Coordination Council (TCC) meeting last month. It was a real eye-opener to him.

"I just didn't realize the network of transportation to so many areas of the state would be available." Prior to this, Palmersheim had been wrestling the transportation alligator on his own. "Right now, veterans are buying lots of vans – you see the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) vans."

Palmersheim sees an increased need for transportation for veterans because of the move to establish regional clinics for veterans. Right now there are veterans clinics in Iowa City, Des Moines, Waterloo, Dubuque, Mason City and Sioux City. Additional clinics are planned for Spirit Lake, Carroll, Shenandoah and Ottumwa. Servicing these clinics with internal veterans' assets will stretch the system and mean fewer dollars for other needs.

Palmersheim's experience is one that other agencies have experienced over the years. Members of the Transportation Coordination Council include the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Education, Workforce Development, Department of Elder Affairs, the

Department of Human Rights, the League of Cities and the Iowa Association of Counties.

Each agency or group has different and unique transportation and coordination needs. The Department of Public Health, for instance, has a need for better transportation of rural clients that is pronounced enough that it shows up on major public health surveys. The Department of Education has a need to trim costs that are not educationally essential. Department of Human Services has a plethora of targeted programs providing services to special needs people, many of which need transportation. And, the list goes on.

The Iowa TCC has been designated as the entity to study these needs and work collaboratively to develop answers. Those answers continue to evolve. The Department of Public Health (DPH), realizing that knowledge of public transit is beneficial, has worked to develop a public transit handbook focused on health care providers and customers. DPH has also entered into a separate agreement with the Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) to assess public transit services in selected counties and create a 12 month action plan to enhance access to health care services and providers. Other agencies are developing their own transportation initiatives, including a

better inventory of federal transportation funding in programs currently administered.

Iowa has been a leader in this kind of coordination over the years, since the inception of the nation's first coordination law in the 1970s. Now, Iowa has received an additional boost from the federal government. As the result of a General Accounting Office audit that cited the relative lack of transportation coordination in human service programs, the federal government created the "United We Ride" coordination initiative. This White House driven initiative gives added impetus to what Iowa has been doing to coordination by getting all federal agencies, not just the Federal Transit Administration, involved in coordination. This promises to trigger a review of federal spending by the 62 federal programs which, all or in part, provide money that can be used for the transportation of people.

Iowa has received a small planning grant from the United We Ride initiative and is using it to further coordination by establishing an action plan on coordination. Creation of the action plan will be people-driven, with a series of regional conferences and a state conference that will give the TCC the information necessary to formulate a plan and move coordination forward at the same time. At these meetings, the general public, transporta-

tion managers and dispatchers, social service workers of various stripes, and other entities with people transportation needs will be given a platform to meet, get to know each other, collaborate on local transportation concerns and identify those hard barrier issues that need to be addressed at the state level.

A schedule for these meetings will be announced later this year. In the meantime though, the TCC is not resting on its laurels. It is moving forth with the planning for the regional conferences. In addition, it has recruited and will continue to recruit new member state agencies with transportation concerns, such as Veterans Affairs. The TCC is moving forward with a survey of federally funded transportation programs in Iowa and is continuously reviewing information and seeking opportunities to open up new fronts in coordination.

The TCC meets monthly, and the Office of Public Transit is now dedicating nearly half-time support staff to the TCC. Minutes of the TCC can be found on the www.iatransit.com web site. Stay tuned. You will hear more in the near future!!

Random drug and alcohol testing rates remain the same

The March 3, 2005, Federal Register says that the FTA has received and analyzed the calendar year (CY) 2003 Management Information System (MIS) data from a representative sample of transit employers. Because the random drug testing rate was not lower than 1.0 percent positive for the two preceding consecutive years (1.04 percent for 2002 and 0.96 percent for 2003), the random drug testing rate will remain at 50 percent for CY2005.

If the random drug testing rate for CY2004 results in less than one percent positive, as happened in CY2003, the testing rate for CY2006 may go down to 25 percent. FTA will announce any changes in testing rates for CY2006 early next year based upon their review of a sampling of information received for CY2004. We'll be keeping our eyes on this to see if the industry as a whole can again achieve less than 1.0 percent positive test results for random drug testing.

In 2004, the FTA retained the random alcohol testing rate of 10 percent (reduced previously from 25 percent) based on the "positive rate" for random alcohol test data from 2002 and 2003. The random alcohol violation rate was lower than 0.5 percent for the two preceding consecutive years (0.22 for 2002 and 0.20 for 2003). Because of these

results, the random alcohol testing rate will remain at 10 percent for CY 2005.

Direct and indirect recipients of FTA funding, and/or providers of transit services using FTA funded vehicles, are required to follow FTA rules on drug and alcohol testing found in Title 49 Part 655 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), and the procedures for collection and analysis found at 49 CFR Part 40. The rules found in Part 655 mandate the testing of safety-sensitive employees for the use of prohibited drugs and the misuse of alcohol in violation of federal statutes or regulations. It also prohibits the performance of safety-sensitive functions when there is a positive test result.

FTA drug testing regulations require that all covered employees be tested for marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines and phencyclidine (PCP). Illegal use of these five drugs is prohibited at all times and, thus, covered employees may be tested for these drugs any time they are on duty. Additionally, misuse of legally prescribed drugs or use of illegally obtained prescription drugs may also result in a positive drug testing result.

Office of Public Transit streamlines notices to private operators

Since the early 1980s the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has required private operators be contacted and given a chance to participate in planning activities and public hearings, as part of the annual solicitations for willing and able private charter operators when any transit system is seeking to do charters beyond the limited exempt types.

To meet this requirement, the Iowa DOT's Office of Public Transit (OPT) has operated as a private sector notification clearinghouse. Iowa transit systems can provide the OPT copies of any notices that should go to the private sector.

In the past, once a week OPT staff would make copies of any notices received and send them to approximately seventy parties, including the American Bus Association and United Motorcoach Association, as specified in the FTA charter rules, plus all private carriers certificated to operate in Iowa, and a few other interested parties outside of Iowa who have asked to be included.

In an effort to significantly cut the amount of paper required, as well as the labor

and postage to process this weekly mailing, OPT has instituted a new process of posting the notices on a special section of our Web site, iatransit.com. Along with this "electronic" posting, a memorandum is sent out to the parties on the list to alert them to these postings. We also still offer the option of direct mailings for anyone who does not have Web access.

The FTA recently commended OPT for its innovative way of meeting this requirement while saving valuable resources, including time and money. Paula Schwach, FTA Region VII's legal counsel based in Kansas City, said (about OPT's proposed process), "... it gives adequate notice to the private sector. I believe that IDOT's approach is to be emulated." As a result, Schwach is sharing OPT's method for meeting the federal notification requirement with FTA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

For a direct link to OPT's Private Sector Notification Clearinghouse go to http://www.iatransit.com/news/private_sector.asp.

Who's Who in Iowa Transit

Managing Iowa's newest transit system

About a year ago, Des Moines, Henry, and Louisa counties announced that the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) had been selected as their new public transit service provider. The previous provider, Community Action of Southeast Iowa, had discontinued this service after many years. On July 1, 2004, SEIRPC began operation of the Region 16 Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

At start-up, the RTA offered eight bus routes served by ten buses, eight drivers, one part-time administrative assistant, and one transit supervisor. "Rides and miles have increased steadily since we began operation of this service and we anticipate continued growth over the next few months," said SEIRPC's executive director Brian Tapp. As a result of this growth, RTA added four buses, two drivers, one full-time transit specialist and five new service routes to keep up with the demand for service in the far corner of southeast Iowa.

Tapp has been with SEIRPC for 12 years and has served as its Executive Director since 1999. He graduated from Western Illinois University in 1992 with Bachelor of Arts degrees in economics and political science. He followed up with a



Brian Tapp (left), Mike Norris (center), and Mike Hurley (right) are pleased with the steady growth of public transit services in southeast Iowa.

master's degree in economics in 1993. Brian served as the Iowa Association of Regional Councils Chairman from 2002-2004 and serves on numerous public and private sector boards. Tapp is now getting involved with the Iowa Public Transit Association and attending transit events as well as planning functions. Since he's been in the planning field for many years, he already knows several public transit managers in Iowa but looks forward to meeting those that he hasn't worked with just yet. Brian's personal interests include cycling, baseball and other outdoor activities.

Tapp says, "SEIRPC has worked hand and hand with local agencies and businesses to improve the availability of public transit for the people of southeast Iowa." Some of the partners who have worked with SEIRPC to improve public transit include: the Area Agency on Aging, Des Moines

County, Henry County, Louisa County, city of Ft. Madison, city of Keokuk, Keokuk Area Hospital, Old Threshers Inc., Hope Haven Inc., Ft. Madison Community Hospital, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Southeastern Community College, and Iowa Wesleyan College. Future changes include expanding the number of days to the Iowa City Hospitals and Clinics, more general public hours in the city of Keokuk, routes to the area swimming pools, and a shuttle to the city of Nauvoo.

Two other SEIRPC staff members instrumental in the successful implementation of the new transit services are Mike Hurley and Mike Norris. As transit supervisor, Mike Hurley has an opportunity to work directly with the public and RTA drivers. In this role, he has a variety of duties, and at times even helps out with minor vehicle maintenance or serves as back-up bus driver. He

previously worked in management with RTA's predecessor, Community Action of Southeast Iowa, and before that taught high school social studies in Illinois for seven years. Hurley was born and raised in southeast Iowa. After graduating from Van Buren High School, Hurley earned an Associate of Arts degree at Southeastern Community College and a Bachelor of Arts degree in history at Western Illinois University. He is married with three children, and enjoys hunting and fishing.

Mike Norris, a transportation planner with SEIRPC for the past two years, works directly with the RTA program as well. He grew up in Pella and attended the University of Iowa where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in geography and a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning. I am sure there are many of our readers saying "Go Iowa" about now. Mike's background is an added asset to the transit program as he works closely with both Tapp and Hurley in determining route structure and new service opportunities, as well as evaluating current services offered by the RTA. Mike resides in Burlington with his wife Kelly, a sixth grade teacher. His hobbies include golf, home brewing and motorcycling.

Who's Who in Iowa Transit

Claudia Rodenburg, transit manager for the City of Council Bluffs, works with two states to provide transit services.

Here is a face that has been with transit for five years now. However, many of you haven't had a chance to meet Claudia Rodenburg, administrative assistant for the city of Council Bluffs, Public Works Department.

Claudia started with the city of Council Bluffs seven years ago, April 1, 1998, as the administrative secretary for the Public Works Department. On April 1, 2000, she was promoted to administrative assistant. In this position, she assumed the role of transit manager upon Parker Bean's retirement.

Council Bluffs contracts with Metro Area Transit (MAT) of Omaha, Nebraska, for its fixed-route system. They have five routes that serve the city of Council Bluffs seven days a week. "Like other systems across the state, with less money available for transit we were forced to re-evaluate our current system this past year. We held two community forums and solicited ridership needs from current riders and public service agencies. We were able to streamline our service by reducing the number of trips between Council Bluffs and Omaha each day," said Rodenburg.

Service is now provided between the two cities during morning and evening rush hours. While midday service was dropped for this particular route, operating hours were



Claudia Rodenburg, City of Council Bluffs

kept to nearly the same level. The change has resulted in very little impact to ridership, but has made a noticeable difference in their operating budget. Rodenburg went on to say, "We had to eliminate service to one area; however, input from the drivers and rider counts showed this area did not generate the ridership it had in the past. On a plus note, we were able to expand service on the weekends to a newly developed retail business area, which was greatly needed. I learned a lot about scheduling and routing during this process and I have a greater appreciation for the challenges faced by schedulers," said Rodenburg.

The city of Council Bluffs contracts out its ADA paratransit services (dispatch and revenue vehicle operations) with American Ambulance Service based in Omaha, Nebraska. This service is operated under the

name of Council Bluffs Special Transit Services (STS). They currently have two light-duty buses and two vans that are used daily, along with one light-duty bus as a back-up unit.

One of the most interesting things I learned while visiting with Claudia recently was that they just went through a new form of bus disposal that proved to be a profitable recovery venture for the transit system. MAT had begun selling their buses through E-bay and recovering more of their investment than through the sealed bid method. The city of Council Bluffs was able to advertise its bus through MAT's account and Claudia said it was very exciting to see the bids come in every day. "In 2001, we disposed of a vehicle for \$300 by the sealed bid method; this year on E-bay we received \$4,100 after fees. The new owner is in Kissimmee, Florida, so our bus will be enjoying a warmer climate!" said Rodenburg. "The buyer is, of course, responsible for all transportation costs so your system is not out any of those costs either," added Rodenburg.

In addition to her transit duties, as the Administrative Assistant to the Public Works Director Claudia conducts interviews, manages the department's Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) drug and alcohol testing program, and makes sure commercial drivers

licenses (CDL) holders have the required physicals and current licenses.

Claudia also attends Labor Management and Safety meetings when the Public Works Director is unable to do so. She assists the city engineer by keeping up-to-date spreadsheets on capital improvement projects, and processes all payments to contractors and engineering firms. As if that weren't enough, Claudia also handles all questions concerning the sewer billing connected with residential water bills.

Claudia is the mother of two grown children; a daughter, age 26, who lives in Chicago and is in the nurse anesthetist graduate program at Rush University Hospital, and a 22-year-old son who attends the College of Pharmacy at Iowa City. "GO HAWKS !!!!!!!!!!" says Rodenburg, in support of her son.

In her spare time she enjoys walking, bicycling, and cooking. She says she has been working on a quilt for about two years but is finally getting closer to finishing. Claudia also has a part-time job as a Tastefully Simple consultant. She does home taste-testing parties - gourmet spices, sauces, beer bread mixes, dessert mixes, soups and salsas. "I hate to call it a "job" because I get to "party" with my customers every time I go to work. I have made new

Rodenburg, see next page

Local fundraiser benefits transportation program

Centerville Nursing and Rehab recently presented the Appanoose County Transportation Program (ACTP) group with a \$5,000 donation to help purchase services from 10-15 Regional Transit Agency (RTA). ACTP and Centerville Nursing and Rehab are both frequent users of 10-15 RTA services.

The continuation of this service was threatened recently due to a lack of funds. "ACTP originally used funds from the tobacco settlement to expand hours of service provided by Seneca Area Agency on Aging in Centerville several years ago. Those funds, coupled with passenger contributions, have nearly been expended. In light of their situation, the ACTP group initiated a fund raiser – and that's how they received this nice contribution," said Pam Ward, 10-15 RTA transit administrator.

In an effort to increase donations, the local news media ran a story about ACTP. "We are very pleased with the

response the media coverage created. Along with other donations recently made, it is now estimated that the services will continue to be funded through 2007," said Tom Jones, 10-15 RTA assistant administrator.

The presentation was made the afternoon of March 22, 2005, in Centerville. Present were the mayor, county supervisors and the program managers, among others. KTVO-TV-3 covered the story, which was on the local news later that evening and also published in the local newspaper.

10-15 RTA provides transportation services in and around Centerville each Monday through Friday. The service operates on community contributions; fares or suggested passenger contributions; and local, state and federal funds.

10-15 RTA serves the counties of Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Van Buren, Wapello, and Wayne.

Reauthorization, from page 1

and major urban areas on a formula basis, while the Senate bill continues the current discretionary basis. The House version would create a totally new program called "New Freedom" to support services to persons with disabilities beyond the minimums required under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, while the Senate makes revisions to the Federal Transportation Administration's existing "Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Program" to accomplish the same thing. The Senate bill would change the basis for distributing funding for transit in non-urbanized areas to incorporate land area and growth rates in addition to population, while the House would stick with just population. The Senate also would require that a portion of the funding for transit urbanized areas be allocated based on population growth, which would not happen under the House bill.

For those decisions we will have to wait and see which house prevails on each issue. On other topics, however, there are changes which both houses seem to agree are needed. This includes requiring that human service agencies be included in the process of planning public transportation and also allowing funding from non-DOT federal programs to be used as part of the required match on federal transit assistance grants.

Right now the expectation is that Congress will either meet the May 31 deadline to adopt a reauthorization bill or do so within a few weeks after that date. That means that hopefully, by our next issue, we will be able to provide an analysis of the new act's provisions, in terms of both financial and policy impacts on Iowa's transit industry.

Rodenburg, from previous page

friends through this venture and have gained more self-confidence and independence," said Rodenburg.

This transit system actually has an opportunity to work with two states. In addition to the Nebraska-based providers for fixed-route and special transit services, the system works with an Omaha agency, the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, for planning services.

If you get a chance to meet Claudia, I am sure you will find many similarities in the services Council Bluffs offers and the decision-making processes they must go through to provide the best possible public transit service in the most cost-effective manner, as do other Iowa transit systems.

2005

May

May 10, Iowa Transportation Commission meeting, Ames, Iowa

May 10-12, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise training course, Kansas City, Mo. (For more information, contact Myrna Sirleaf, National Training Institute, 732-932-1700, ext. 228.)

May 16-20, Transit System Security, St. Louis, Mo. (For more information, contact Transportation Safety Institute, 800-858-2107.)

May 21-27, Community Transportation Association of America Expo 2005, St. Louis, Mo. (For more information, visit the Web site: <http://www.ctaa.org/>.)

May 24-27, National Head Start Association (NHSA) Annual Conference, Orlando, Fla. (For more information, contact NHSA, 703-739-0875.)

May 30, DOT offices closed in observance of Memorial Day

June

June 4, DOT vehicle and large equipment auction, Ames, Iowa (For more information, contact Mike Holl, 515-239-1576.)

June 6-7, Iowa Transportation Commission tour/public input meeting, Forest City, Iowa

June 8-10, Iowa Public Transit Association's Annual Meeting, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (For more information, contact Bev Thomas, 515-440-6057.)

June 11, Iowa Public Transit Association/DOT Annual Bus Rodeo, Cedar Rapids, Iowa (For more information, contact Bev Thomas, 515-440-6057.)

June 21-22, Transit System Safety, St. Louis, Mo. (For more information, contact Transportation Safety Institute, 800-858-2107.)

July

July 4, DOT offices closed in observance of Independence Day

July 12, Iowa Transportation Commission meeting, Ames, Iowa

August

August 8-9, Iowa Transportation Commission tour/public input meeting, Waverly, Iowa

September

September 5, DOT offices closed in observance of Labor Day

September 13, Iowa Transportation Commission meeting, Ames, Iowa.

September 17, DOT small equipment auction, Ames, Iowa (For more information, contact Mike Holl, 515-239-1576.)

September 25-28, American Public Transportation Association Annual Meeting and Expo, Dallas, Texas (For more information, contact APTA 202-496-4800.)

October

October 3-4, Iowa Transportation Commission tour/public input meeting, Council Bluffs, Iowa

October 29, DOT vehicle and large equipment auction, Ames, Iowa (For more information, contact Mike Holl, 515-239-1576.)

For more detailed conference listings, see the following Web sites:

<http://www.apta.com/meetings> (conferences and calendar)

<http://www.ctaa.org/events> (CTAA calendar of events)

<http://www.ctaa.org/training> (CTAA training calendar)

http://www.fta.dot.gov/11053_ENG_HTML.htm (calendar of events)

http://www.fta.dot.gov/2432_ENG_HTML.htm (training and professional development)



CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS is a publication of the Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Public Transit. It is distributed free of charge to public transit systems, agencies providing human service transportation, intercity bus carriers, and other interested individuals and organizations. It is also available on the DOT's Web site.

Please direct comments, stories or story ideas to:
Donna Johnson, Program Manager
Office of Public Transit
515-233-7875

Office of Public Transit
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010
515-239-1875

Visit our Web site at
iatransit.com

Our Mission Statement

"To advocate and deliver services that support and promote a safe and comprehensive transit system in Iowa to enhance Iowans access to opportunities and quality of life."

The staff wishes to thank those who have provided information and reference materials for this newsletter.

Office of Public Transit Staff

Michelle McEnany
Director
515-239-1659
michelle.mcenany@dot.iowa.gov

Lynn Zook
Administrative Support
515-239-1875
lynn.zook@dot.iowa.gov

Peter Hallock
Assistant Director
515-239-1765
peter.hallock@dot.iowa.gov

Donna Johnson
Program Manager
515-233-7875
donna.johnson@dot.iowa.gov

Pamella Lee
Transit Programming Coordinator
515-239-1872
pamella.lee@dot.iowa.gov

Robert Krause
Planning and Coordination
Manager
515-239-1132
robert.krause@dot.iowa.gov

Samil Sermet
Transit Programs Administrator
515-233-7877
samil.sermet@dot.iowa.gov

J.P. Golinvaux
Transit Programs Administrator
515-233-7879
joseph.golinvaux@dot.iowa.gov

*For additional copies and
mailing list inquiries,
please contact:
Lynn Zook
Administrative Support
515-239-1875
lynn.zook@dot.iowa.gov*