



CONNECTIONS

Office of Public Transit Newsletter • September 2003

It's a NEW LOOK!

We've redesigned our Transit Connections Newsletter. The newsletter has been updated to incorporate our new Office of Public Transit logo design and reoccurring columns in an easy-to-read format. The newsletter will be published every four months, starting with this issue in September, followed by January and May.

As part of a redistribution of office responsibilities and our new, stronger focus on marketing, we wanted to develop an office logo that reflected forward movement, leadership, strength and support in a crisp, new image. The new color scheme was

selected to compliment the Iowa DOT logo, which has been incorporated into our new office logo. We hope you'll like our new look and agree that our office logo presents a forward-moving identity.

On a related note, we are currently working on redesigning our Web site. Our new color scheme, logo and other changes will be incorporated in our Web site, iatransit.com, to allow for easier navigation, interactivity and future expansion. Watch for more exciting changes in the coming months.

Reauthorization of federal transit programs pending

Iowa's transit systems are paying close attention to what is happening in Washington, D.C., these days. The Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century, which has provided the authorization for federal funding of transit and highway programs for the last six years, will expire Sept. 30 of this year.

Congress has been working on developing a new authorizing act. Right now there are a number of proposals floating around and it is unclear exactly what direction the federal programs might take in years to come.

Among the issues of most concern to Iowa are: 1) maintaining the principle of guaranteed appropriations for transit and highway programs; and 2) making sure that transit funding isn't all pulled into funding formulas that send virtually all the money to the nation's big cities and most populous states, since we know that there are critical transit needs in the smaller cities and rural areas, too. Iowa is also very interested in a proposal from the American Public Transit Association to make sure that smaller cities with very high transit ridership (like Ames and Iowa City) are adequately funded for transit even though the current formula for small cities is based strictly on population and population density.

Hopefully the next issue of this newsletter will be able to report that a new bill has been passed and highlight any program changes.

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Director's Column

By Michelle McEnany

Hello, my name is Michelle McEnany. As the director of the Office of Public Transit, I am delighted to have this opportunity to introduce myself in our newsletter and share some of the exciting things our office has been working on.

As many of you know, I've been serving as director of the Office of Public Transit for a little over a year now. I've been with the Iowa Department of Transportation for about four years, initially as the director of the Office of Aviation and now as the director of both the offices of Aviation and Public Transit.

Prior to joining the DOT, I was the Director of State and Local Relations for the Greater Des Moines Partnership where I was responsible for transportation public policy. In this position I was involved in both aviation and public transit issues. In that role I was able to build a positive working relationship with elected and appointed officials, and community leaders from around the state; many of whom play an active role in the decision-making process for both the aviation and public transit programs.

In assuming the leadership role in the public transit program at the DOT, I found that the office does an excellent job of working with the industry to get projects programmed and implemented and to make sure all the related requirements are met. I see myself building on that strong base of technical assistance with new emphases in the areas of transit marketing and active involve-

ment in the process of seeking increased funding. To that end, my staff and I have identified goals for our office that we hope will result in a positive impact on public transit in Iowa. Our established goals are:

1. Increase awareness to:
 - a. promote transit and the services available; and
 - b. enhance image.
2. Maintain and improve access:
 - a. for transit-dependent;
 - b. to opportunities/jobs; and
 - c. for the general public.
3. Continue the coordination efforts to:
 - a. maximize limited public resources;
 - b. provide the needed services; and
 - c. continue to open services to the general public.

For the second year we are partnering with the Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) on an image campaign to create and promote a positive image for public transit here in Iowa. We are trying to get the message to a wider audience through media spots and through a display at the state fair and other public arenas.

A big part of our emphasis is inclusiveness. Public transit is here to serve everyone. This is part of Iowa's vision—that publicly funded transportation services should be available to all persons needing a ride. This message is emphasized in our marketing program as we envision Iowa becoming a model for other states that have numerous taxpayer-supported, client-only transportation

services, but little or no general public service.

The Office of Public Transit has also been actively involved in planning issues that affect the public transit program; more specifically, the DOT's efforts to update our statewide transportation plan. As an early part of this process, we've established a committee that is reviewing our current transit funding distribution formulas. We will keep everyone up to date on what is happening with that committee's review. You are likely to hear more about the overall plan update as other elements of the process gear up over the next couple of months. As with any planning effort, it is important that you as members of the public, and as persons interested in public transit, make your viewpoints known to us.

Along these same lines, we have been participating in a statewide review of how programs and policies may affect persons with disabilities' ability to live within Iowa communities. This self-assessment is in response to a 1999 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, known as the Olmstead decision. That ruling confirmed that states must support the provision of services to persons with disabilities in as integrated a setting as possible, and must allow persons with disabilities a choice between community-based services or institution-based care. Access to transportation is a key for community-based living, and therefore our office has been actively involved in this assessment and planning effort.

Several positive points were mentioned in this analysis that relate to public transit, such as: all new fixed-route transit buses are required to meet ADA accessibility standards; many existing vehicles have been retrofitted for wheelchair access to allow urban transit systems to attain 100 percent fixed-route accessibility; all new transit facilities are required to meet ADA accessibility standards; and several projects have been funded to retrofit existing facilities to ADA standards, to name a few.

Many aspects of the Olmstead analysis will require interagency cooperation, and in these areas we will be working with the State Level Transportation Coordination Council. The council was created about 10 years ago, in part to serve as a forum for the discussion of transportation coordination issues. It is chaired by the DOT and includes members representing the state departments of Human Services, Elder Affairs, Education, Public Health, and Workforce Development, as well as the Iowa State Association of Counties and the Iowa League of Cities.

In closing, I would like to say that I am excited about working with the public transit program and each of you. We have some tremendously talented people right here in Iowa who are committed to promoting the benefits of transit to all citizens by making our communities more livable, and providing access to opportunities for everyone.

Michelle

HONORS AND AWARDS

2002 AdWheel Award

The Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) and the Iowa DOT jointly were awarded a grand prize in a special category of the 2002 AdWheel marketing competition from the American Public Transit Association (APTA). The award was presented at the APTA annual meeting held in Las Vegas, Nev., in September 2002 for Iowa's Public Transit Image Campaign.

Iowa's campaign, entitled "Faces of Transit" was developed on the basis of APTA's national Public Transportation for Tomorrow (PT)² initiative. The national education and outreach program was designed to build increased awareness, support and investment for public transportation throughout the nation.

The focus of Iowa's campaign was to help Iowa leaders understand that public transportation provides mobility and freedom for all citizens of our communities, as well as access to opportunities that they might not otherwise have. Iowa's lieutenant governor proclaimed the week of Feb. 25 as Iowa Public Transportation Week, and transit systems throughout the state conducted activities to increase the awareness and understanding of transit in their communities.



Public Transit System recipient of Governor's Awards

Five Seasons Transportation and Parking (FST&P) received a "Special Recognition in Air Quality Award" and a "Special Recognition in Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy Award." FST&P leadership and innovation have been important contributions for

furthering environmental sustainability in Iowa.

William (Bill) Hoekstra, FST&P's director, accepted these premier awards at a ceremony held for the award winners in February. Congratulations, Bill, on receiving two 2002 Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Awards.



(Left to right) Duane Fosseen, David Gosch, J.P. Golinvaux, Bill Hoekstra and Governor Vilsack

Award for Outstanding Public Service in Rural Public Transportation

Pam Ward, administrator for Ottumwa Transit and 10-15 Regional Transit Agency, received the FTA Administrator's Award for Outstanding Public Service in Rural Public Transportation. The award was presented to Pam by FTA's region 7 administrator, Mokhtee Ahmad, at the 15th National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation in Huron, Ohio, Oct. 27-30, 2002. Congratulations Pam!



Pam Ward receives award from FTA Regional Administrator Mokhtee Ahmad



Bus operators receive recognition and awards

The Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA) has a new recognition and awards program for bus operators. Fourteen bus operators from around the state were honored at the annual bus rodeo banquet held in Spencer June 20. Nominations were provided by public transit systems interested in giving statewide recognition for bus operators that met specific local area criteria. Qualifying factors for recipients included no documented incidents, complaints, at-fault crashes or moving violations, among other requirements.

Brian McClatchey, IPTA president, congratulated each of the winners as he recognized them for their accomplishments and as first recipients of this newly established IPTA award. A certificate and lapel pin were given to each of the winners as a way of thanking them for their professionalism in providing public transit service.

Awards were given to the following individuals:

Howard Barrett, Sioux City Transit

Dennis Bowles, HomeCare Services, providing service on behalf of Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency, based in Des Moines

Gary Campbell, City of Fort Dodge - Dodger Area Rapid Transit

Thomas "Tommy" Farren, River Bend Transit, based in Davenport

Jeanne Frauenkron, Black Hawk County Metro Transit Authority, Waterloo

Karen Graeser, Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission, based in Waterloo

Bernard Gundel, Area XIV Agency on Aging - Southern Iowa Trolley, based in Creston

Ron Hird, Linn County Lifts, providing service on behalf of East Central Iowa Transit, based in Cedar Rapids

Ron Krahn, Opportunity Village, providing service on behalf of Regional Transit System, based in Mason City

Jessica Lorenzen, Clinton Municipal Transit Administration

Melissa Mays, University of Iowa - CAMBUS, Iowa City

Francis Nowack, Mid-Iowa Development Association, based in Fort Dodge

Mark Stephenson, Siouxland Regional Transit System, based in Sioux City

Duane VerMulm, Regional Transit Authority - RIDES, based in Spencer

DOT announces annual transit system awards

Two transit systems from central Iowa have been honored by the Iowa Department of Transportation for their accomplishments during the 2002 fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2002. The City of Ames' CyRide was recognized as the most improved urban transit system of the year. PeopleRides, based in Marshalltown, was acknowledged as being the most improved regional transit system of the year.

The awards were announced June 19 at the Iowa Public Transit Conference in Okoboji. The Iowa Public Transit Association and the DOT jointly sponsor the conference. The awards are based on a combination of ridership increases and a decrease in the cost per ride. This is the second time CyRide has received this award.

CyRide, which is headed by Transportation Director Robert Bourne, posted a 12.2 percent gain in ridership. This helped reduce the cost per ride by 7.2 percent during fiscal year 2002. Bourne explained that CyRide's improvements were largely the result of transitioning to no-fare, student circulator service on two routes.

Ridership on the Marshalltown-based PeopleRides system increased by 8.5 percent, while the cost per ride dropped 14 percent. G.A. Griffith, operations manager of PeopleRides, attributes the 2002 gains to improved

dispatching and a growing awareness that the region's services are reasonably priced. PeopleRides serves the counties of Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek, and Tama.

Michelle McEnany, DOT's director of the Office of Public Transit, recognized other transit agencies that had also made noteworthy improvements. These included three urban transit systems: Ottumwa Transit Authority, with a 2.2 percent increase in ridership and 11.3 percent decrease in cost per ride; city of Bettendorf with a 5.8 percent increase in ridership and 6.7 percent decrease in cost per ride; and the city of Muscatine's Muscabus with a 7 percent increase in ridership and 2.4 percent decrease in cost per ride. Another regional transit system that posted a significant increase in ridership for FY2002 was Southwest Iowa Transit Agency headquartered in Atlantic, providing service to Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby counties. SWITA increased its ridership by 4 percent while decreasing their cost per ride by 4.9 percent.

Bill Hoekstra - leader, volunteer, and friend

Serving as a member of the Jim Leach for Congress Committee and Campaign's paid staff (Bettendorf, Iowa) back in 1976, Bill Hoekstra learned how important it is for people to get involved in their communities. Leach was elected to Congress that year and Bill went on to a career in public transportation. Since 1977 Hoekstra has been managing some aspect of public transportation and striving for improved communities and transportation in Iowa. Starting out as a paratransit bus service contractor with Johnson County SEATS and later Linn County LIFTS, Bill aspired to gain a professional career in transit that would permit him to hone his marketing skills and provide leadership working on community and economic development projects. His "out-of-the-box" thinking helped Bill receive an offer as the Five Seasons Transportation and Parking (FST&P) director for the city of Cedar Rapids.



Bill Hoekstra, FST&P Director

As both transportation and parking director, Bill has worked very hard over the years to improve passenger amenities and public transportation in the Cedar Rapids area. Bill devoted his time and leadership in promoting ideas to revitalize downtown Cedar Rapids. He helped bring the first downtown school and daycare center to the region, which is located in the ground transportation center. Another project Bill championed was the construction of a park-n-ride area in Cedar Rapids. The park-n-ride area is part of FST&P's Easy Park/Easy Ride program designed to bring people in from outlying residential areas to the downtown business area. Bill also worked with the city to enclose the pedestrian corridor so the Cedar Rapids Library, ground transportation center and APAC buildings could be directly connected to the skywalk system. While these may sound like economic development projects, each of these projects has a direct impact on public transit. Over the years, FST&P has doubled the use of its Ride and Shop programs, in part by refurbishing some of the older, dilapidated skywalk system and adding new skywalks to the system. Transit riders can now navigate the downtown area without having to walk outside in inclement weather. This also helps the flow of vehicular traffic and relieves congestion while minimizing safety risks to pedestrians.

Bill is also noted for his innovative ideas and willingness to test new Iowa products. For instance, under Bill's leadership and a public-private partnership agreement, FST&P was the first transit system in a northern climate to test heavy-duty electric powered buses. FST&P has also tested hydrogen, ethanol, electric, liquid propane, gas, natural gas, clean diesel and soy-diesel alternative fuels in transit usage. FST&P has also used soybean-based lubricants, developed by the University of

Northern Iowa, in transit buses. Bill also helped secure federal funds for the first ADA wheelchair lift equipped intercity bus in the Midwest.

Bill always seems to be involved with one or more cutting edge projects. Bill helped Rockwell-Collins, now Siemens, develop its ground transportation GPS program, in part, by deploying GPS on local buses. Siemens is a magnet in helping technologically savvy Iowans gain employment right here in Iowa. FST&P helped another Iowa-based company, Mirenco of Radcliffe, test Driver Max, which is a computerized fuel management system that helps bus operators drive more efficiently. Bill's interest in energy conservation has also led to the installation of an energy management system in FST&P buildings, saving both natural gas and electricity since 1989. FST&P's energy management initiatives didn't stop there. A waste oil furnace was installed to heat the maintenance shop in the winter. Used engine and gearbox oil, as well as transmission fluid, from buses is now used as a fuel source. Recently, FST&P has begun transmission of computer data over UHF radio frequencies. Another of FST&P's projects with positive environmental impacts uses numerous e-business tools. Since 1991 Bill has worked with his staff to establish and continually upgrade what may be Iowa's first LAN supporting a city's public transit and parking programs. Additionally, FST&P has laid claim to being Iowa's first system to launch a Web site dedicated to both public transit and parking programs striving to achieve "paperless offices."

Bill also has a compassionate side that makes him want to help people while improving the place in which he lives, and providing greater job access to members of his community. Bill has been credited with helping to bring housing to downtown Cedar Rapids by developing space on the upper floors of the ground transportation center; working with local human service agencies on Welfare to Work; and starting the Nighttime Transit System that gets people from the inner city to jobs and educational programs. Bill also helped with the recruitment of new employers to Cedar Rapids. Both the HD Youth Shelter and public school system have benefited from Bill volunteering his time to provide grant writing assistance. Staff from Aging Services also tapped into Bill's grant writing expertise when they launched their capital campaign. Bill then went on to develop a program on using transit and parking that Aging Services has been able to offer to its clients. Given his level of community involvement, the media often invites Bill to do guest columns for their local newspaper. Another of Bill's pet projects involved helping to get Iowa legislation passed for a new minor league ballpark in Cedar Rapids.

After all this, it isn't any surprise that William (Bill) R. Hoekstra has been the recipient of several awards and has participated on numerous committees.

Bill holds a master of arts degree in public administration; bachelor of arts degree in political science; associates of arts degree in general studies; and a teaching and instructional certification.

Bill Hoekstra, see page 7

Coralville Transit hires familiar face in transit



Vicky Robrock, Coralville Transit Manager.

Vicky Robrock, a native of the Manchester area, returns to where she first began her transit career. While earning a bachelor of science degree in recreation education at the University of Iowa in the mid-1980s, Vicky worked at CAMBUS and Iowa City Coach Company. As a CAMBUS Employee, she drove both fixed route and paratransit service. While there, she trained for, and served as, supervisor of the paratransit service.

Vicky gained several years of experience with the school bus system in New Hampton Community Schools; and in August 1998, she accepted the position of transit manager for the Regional Transit Authority (Region 8) serving three counties (Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson counties) and providing complimentary paratransit service for the city of Dubuque. Most recently, Vicky was the operations supervisor for RIDES (Region 3) that serves nine counties in northwest Iowa.

Vicky is attracted back to the Iowa City area because she enjoys the university setting and sees great potential in the Coralville transit system. Now that Vicky has a few months experience as the Coralville Transit Manager, she says, "It's interesting the similarities and differences between rural and urban transportation. I realized there would be a tremendous learning curve; however, my peers have been extremely patient and a tremendous asset." On a more personal note, Vicky adds "It's nice to be back in eastern Iowa, closer to my family in Manchester."

Vicky is an avid Hawkeye fan and is glad to be reacquainted with old friends. She spends much of her spare time with her two dogs and two cats and enjoys photography.

Changes in Mason City offers new opportunity for city employee



Mason City transit manager Pat Otto

The city of Mason City has made some changes in both structure and management of its public transit program. Pat Otto accepted the role of transit manager in August 2002 when the city decided to shift the responsibilities of the program from its finance section to community development. Although she has no previous transit experience, Pat brings many skills to her new job such as experience in grant writing and program management. She also holds a B.A. degree from Drake University in journalism.

Pat had been employed by the city of Mason City since 1977. She was the coordinator for the Mason City Youth Task Force, and is now the Neighborhood Development Specialist (NDS), and Neighborhood Services division manager for transit services, animal control, and neighborhood inspection services. Pat says, "The goal of the NDS is to focus the energies of the people in the neighborhoods and city staff on solving neighborhood prob-

lems, developing a vision for neighborhoods, and implementing neighborhood improvements." In that position, Pat helps organize the leadership in neighborhoods, coordinates neighborhood activities of city staff, and communicates progress on projects with local residents. Pat adds, "I think approaching transit management from this position may be unique among Iowa's urban transit systems. Transit is about people above all else, so I think the fit is a good one." On a final note, Pat says, "I'm enjoying everything, I am learning and I look forward to meeting more transit managers at future IPTA meetings."

Pat is married with two grown sons, Brendan and Jeremy. Her hobbies are reading, needlepoint and winter sports. Make sure you seek Pat out at future meetings to join us in welcoming her to the ranks of public transit management.

Bill Hoekstra, from page 5

Bill and his wife, Janet, have three children: Travis, age 21; Alyssa, age 11; and Trenton, age 10. Bill is actively involved in his children's lives. He coaches youth baseball, basketball and football, and is a volunteer at the elementary school parent/teacher association. Bill collects baseball memorabilia, political campaign buttons and classic cars, and is a Boston Celtics basketball fan.

Revised FTA procurement circular

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently published revised guidance on procedural requirements for federally funded transit procurements. FTA Circular 4220.1E, "Third Party Contracting Requirements," is available on the "What's New" page of FTA's Web site (www.fta.dot.gov).

2000 census impacts Iowa transit industry

Every 10 years our nation takes a count of its citizenry and others living here. Those figures help us to understand ourselves. They also provide a basis for distributing certain federal funds, including those supporting public transit.

Impacts on Funding

The importance of population as a factor in determining the amount of transit funding coming to Iowa varies across the different federal transit programs.

Under the non-urbanized program and program for services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities, population is the only factor. Within the non-urbanized program, even though Iowa's non-urbanized population dropped, most other states dropped more. Therefore, Iowa actually gained just under 1.5 percent in its share of the total program funding. Within the program for services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities, Iowa persons with disabilities dropped by 15.9 percent.

The funding allocated to states for support of services in smaller urbanized areas (50,000 population to 200,000 population) is based on a combination of population and population density. Partly due to the addition of Ames as a new urbanized area, Iowa's share of total funding under this program increased by 27.6 percent. Even without the addition of Ames, Iowa's share of the total would have increased 13.7 percent.

Funding for larger urbanized areas (over 200,000 population) is distributed more on the basis of performance statistics rather than population. As a result, it is not possible at this time to know exactly what impact the 2000 census figures may have on the transit funding for these areas.

Iowa Trends

From 1990 to 2000, Iowa gained 5.4 percent in total population, well below the national growth rate of 13.1 percent. This put us 43rd among the states for population growth.

The number of persons over age 65 grew by only 2.4 percent in Iowa vs. 12 percent nationally. We ranked 49th in growth of elderly population, though we dropped to 4th in the percent of our population which is elderly (14.9 percent down, from 15.3 percent in 1990).

The number of non-elderly persons with disabilities in Iowa grew significantly. For 2000 these persons made up 8.4 percent of the state's population, compared to 4.6 percent in 1990.

Iowa's population became more urban. The state actually declined slightly in non-urbanized population. Meanwhile, Ames surpassed the 50,000 mark to become a new urbanized area, and all the existing urbanized areas grew.

Iowa Transportation Map – did you know that...

- the latest edition of one of Iowa's most popular publications, the Iowa Transportation Map, is available at welcome centers, Iowa Department of Transportation district offices, and driver's license stations.
- the Iowa Division of Tourism distributes about 500,000 maps a year, with many of those going to tourists who stop at Iowa's 21 welcome centers.
- the map can be viewed online at iowadotmaps.com.
- the 2003 map contains more than 335 revisions to the previous edition, which was printed in 2002—updates include the bypasses at Cascade, Plainfield, New Hampton and Mount Pleasant, and the new Iowa 5 south of Des Moines.
- the map shows all state highways, major county roads and major streets in the state's 16 largest cities — it also shows a legend listing the cities shown on the map and their populations according to the 2000 census, airports and rail lines, and a chart to find mileage between selected Iowa cities.
- the physical size of the map is 26.5 inches by 37.5 inches.
- the success of the 2002 large print edition of the map was a major factor in deciding to print all two million maps in 2003 as the large print version.
- the cover of the map features a design that is consistent with tourism publications of the Iowa Department of Economic Development's Office of Tourism—the publication also includes a message from Governor Thomas J. Vilsack and Lt. Governor Sally J. Pederson.

Information on tourism or copies of the Iowa Transportation Map can be obtained by calling the Iowa Tourism Office at 800-345-IOWA.



Donna Johnson is Talking Transit

Iowa Public Transit had a display booth at the Iowa State Fair August 7-17. We hope you had an

opportunity to visit our booth in the Varied Industries Building to learn more about public transit in Iowa, receive our latest brochures, and a free transit activity book for your children or a pen or things-to-do pad for yourself. Many folks stopped by to ask questions or share comments about the service they have in their local area. Our new display, "Wherever life takes you, ride with us," that represents people from all walks of life received many favorable comments. Our thanks to those of you that helped staff the booth in an effort to promote public transit in Iowa.

The University of Milwaukee, under a Rural Transit Assistance Program, provided Passenger Assistance Training to over 40 participants in Iowa recently. Two train-the-trainer classes were held with participants from across the state learning proper securement procedures for wheelchairs and scooters, lift operation, seat-belt cutting and evacuation maneuvers, and sensitivity training when transporting riders with special needs. Waterloo MET of Black Hawk County hosted the first session

July 28-30, and the city of Fort Dodge 'Dodger Area Rapid Transit (DART)' hosted the second session July 31-Aug. 2. Our thanks to both our host agencies for helping us out with this training session.

The Western Alliance of Rural Transit Systems (WARTS) headed east on June 13 to visit with Caroline Cooper of C.J. Cooper and Associates, as well as tour the Express Analytical Laboratory, both located in Marion, Iowa. The group had the opportunity to see first hand how the Federal Transit Administration's drug testing program works from the scientist's point of view at the lab. After a fairly comprehensive tour, each person came away with a better understanding of how urine specimens are tested for specific drugs, and what precautions are taken to ensure accuracy and confidentiality. Both C.J. Cooper and Associates and Express Analytical Laboratory are certified under the state's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program.

Over 50 mechanics representing 18 public transit systems attended Braun Lift Maintenance Training in February this year. Three transit systems hosted the training: Marshalltown Transit (MT); Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) serving Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Story, and Warren counties; and East Central Iowa Transit (ECIT) serving Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties. Boone County Public Transit, a provider of service under contract to HIRTA, and Linn County LIFTS, a provider of service under contract to ECIT, along with MT, welcomed mechanics from around the state and offered them a chance to visit their maintenance garages while taking part in the training provided by Rick Jacobs of Braun Manufacturing. Attendees found the training to be worthwhile and appreciated the opportunity to learn first hand the best way to maintain wheelchair lifts for optimum operation. Our thanks to these host agencies for allowing maintenance folks from around the state to visit their maintenance shops while receiving this specialized training.

They are here! Transit activity books have been developed and are ready for sharing with children of all ages. "Buster the Bus" has messages for children to unscramble, pictures to color, word searches, and word and picture mazes that will keep children busy while learning the fundamentals of



"Buster the Bus"

transit, "Everyone rides, even kids!" Activity books can be ordered by calling our office 515-239-1875 or visiting our Web site at iaintransit.com to download the file.

Carriers understand value of amenities to traveler

Many carriers feel improving amenities at their depots and stops adds to customer satisfaction. It is their hope that the positive feelings these improvements add to a person's ride will translate into increased ridership.

Ron Moore, president of Burlington Trailways, feels amenities are very important. He noted when riders are not comfortable in the terminal and have trouble finding food or restrooms, it negatively impacts upon their experience. Moore says, "We have worked hard to develop comfortable terminals with all the conveniences our passengers may need." These amenities include a safe, comfortable environment with nice benches, affordable and fairly priced food and snacks, and clean restrooms.

Ron understands the importance of taking pride in the image his company projects. This is reflected from the uniforms his drivers wear to the cleanliness of his buses to his traveler-friendly terminals.

Other carriers, such as Jefferson Lines, have worked to locate terminals at airports to provide a good location for their terminals to boost ridership and take advantage of the passenger-oriented facilities. The environment at an airport is generally safe and offers comfortable seating. Food and restrooms usually exist to meet the needs of the passengers in those locations. Bonnie Buchannan, marketing



The intercity bus office is part of the new MLK transportation center in Sioux City. This photo was taken at the ribbon cutting ceremony in April.

director for Jefferson Lines, says that, "Airports have worked out great for Jefferson Lines and their customers."

Eugene Hibbs, agency sales manager for Greyhound, says, "It is important to make trips easier." This involves placing terminals at a centralized location to meet customers' transportation needs. This also includes access to food and other services.

At its Des Moines terminal, Greyhound has created a small convenience store. The store carries everything from antacids and diapers to soup and sandwiches.

Eugene also likes the ground transportation center (GTC) concept because the shared resources allow them to offer better services when they work with others. These GTCs are located in centralized locations and can provide a comprehensive travel experience to the rider.

There is a new facility that just opened in Sioux City, and a new facility will be built in Iowa City next year.

In Eugene's opinion, Sioux City is one of the nicest and most impressive facilities in Greyhound's national network. It is a good, safe location that offers the opportunity to connect with a city bus, taxicab, or another intercity bus line. Because the GTC is located in the center of the city, the riders have a variety of choices of amenities available to them in the terminal and downtown area.

Eugene feels a nice bus terminal raises the customers' level of expectation and satisfaction. When they know their ride originates at a first-class facility this should help increase ridership.

Communities in Motion

Public transit clearly benefits those who use it, but even larger benefits accrue to all citizens in the form of economic development, reduced congestion, more livable communities, and cleaner air.

Public transportation's role in our communities allows people from all walks of life access to opportunities, and helps them accomplish what is important to them. It makes a real difference in the lives of individuals and is vital to the quality of life of all citizens. Public transportation helps lead the nation toward its goals and policies of protecting the environment, conserving energy, and providing for the health, safety and security of its citizens, as well as making our communities stronger and more vibrant.

"Communities in Motion" is a two-year-old program developed by the American Public Transit Association (APTA) to commemorate public transportation and showcase how transit benefits communities by providing personal opportunity to individuals.

On Oct. 16, 2003, those associated with transit will celebrate Communities in Motion. Public transit systems will be calling upon all citizens to join them in this nationwide effort to promote public transportation's benefits, and take an active role in education and advocacy efforts to promote the vital role that public transportation plays in Iowa and across the United States. Mark Oct. 16 on your calendar now and look for ways to join in the celebration in your community.

Transit Spotlight

Martin Luther King Center Dedication

The Martin Luther King Jr. Transportation Center dedication and grand opening ceremony was held in Sioux City April 4. More than 100 people were present for the celebration and to hear special speakers such as Sioux City Mayor Craig Berenstein; Mokhtee Ahmad, Federal Transit Administration regional administrator; Suzan Boden, Transportation Commissioner; Richard Hayes, NAACP representative; Todd Moss, Siouxland Chamber of Commerce; Bob Koza, project architect, Clark Enerson & Associates; Rex Holtze, president, Holtze Construction Company; and several others.

The \$11.6 million transportation center will serve both local and national transit needs. The facility allows for coordination of bus connections between Sioux City Transit, Southern Union County Transit (a South

Dakota carrier), Greyhound Lines and Jefferson Lines. Sioux City Transit will share its lobby with Greyhound Lines and Jefferson Lines, and operate its central transfer point out of the King Center. There is a public parking ramp built above the lobby and inside bus lanes. Dan Jensen, general manager of Sioux City Transit, said, "There will be room for taxicabs, and bicycle racks will be located inside the building. We see this as an opportunity to connect intracity and intercity bus transportation and complement each other's services." The transportation center is located in the heart of downtown Sioux City, giving the public access to retail stores and local businesses as well.

This center is the fourth of its kind in Iowa. In April 1983 Cedar Rapids dedicated Iowa's first ground transportation center, followed by Davenport and Waterloo. Sioux City's facility completes implementa-

tion of feasibility studies the Iowa DOT and (what is now called) the Federal Transit Administration funded in 1979 under the Carter Administration.

DART celebrates 20 years of service in Fort Dodge

Last November Dodger Area Rapid Transit (DART) celebrated 20 years of service to the city of Fort Dodge. Many residents came out early to the central transfer point to partake in free doughnuts, juice and coffee. Mayor William Patterson stopped by to extend his support and was interviewed on their local radio station. Cliff Weldon, DART manager, spearheaded the event with several staff members helping out. This was an all-day event with free rides on the public transit fixed-route system. Over the noon hour hot dogs, chips and sodas were provided, and

followed up with hot, fresh popcorn at midafternoon. People of all ages turned out for the event. When asked why they rode public transit, comments varied from, "I've been riding transit for 20 years, since DART first began. I don't drive and don't have any reason to as I can get wherever I want to go by bus," to, "I take the bus to get to school, shopping and doctor appointments." Many favorable comments were offered in regard to DART's service and this special celebration. Congratulations, DART, on 20 years of transit service to your community.

[Transit Spotlight](#), see next page



Transportation Commissioner Suzan Boden speaks at the MLK transportation center dedication ceremony in Sioux City



Fort Dodge residents enjoy refreshments as part of a special celebration



Passengers enjoy hot coffee, juice and rolls prior to heading out to work or school in Fort Dodge.

Transit Spotlight, from previous page

25 year anniversary celebration in Cedar Rapids

Five Seasons Transportation and Parking (FST&P), which provides public transit services to Cedar Rapids, celebrated its 25th anniversary April 24, 2003. Michelle McEnany, director of the Office of Public Transit, was one of the key speakers for the event. Her comments focused on three significant themes of Cedar Rapids' success in its efforts to redesign how public transit services are provided in Cedar Rapids, Marion and Hiawatha. As a native of Cedar Rapids, McEnany noted that community leaders have partnered with FST&P management to implement innovative strategies to

address local challenges using a successful outreach program. In particular, it was noted that FST&P has partnered with the Montessori School, private sector businesses—notably cab owners, the local utility company, bus manufacturers, and agricultural associations to address community issues. As a result, FST&P has facilitated job creation and revitalization in downtown Cedar Rapids. McEnany also commended FST&P for its efforts to reduce bus exhaust emissions and dependence on non-renewable diesel fuel through use of methyl soyate, ethanol and electric powered buses. Mayor Paul Pate, Past Mayor Canney, FTA Regional Administrator Mokhtee Ahmad, and prior FST&P Manager Ray Bagley, also gave congratulatory speeches. Nearly 200 people attended the anniversary celebration.



FTA Regional Administrator Mokhtee Ahmad speaks at FST&P 25 year celebration

Many thanks go out to Bill Hoekstra, FST&P director, for his continued support of public transit in Iowa and the exemplary manner in which the people of Cedar Rapids are served.

Iowa transit systems' environmental initiatives

Iowa's public transit system officials have taken several concerted initiatives to improve air quality, conserve non-renewable energy, reduce dependence on foreign energy sources, and increase their use of value-added agricultural products.

Ethanol-blended gasoline (gasohol)

Iowa's 35 transit agencies began using gasohol in most of the statewide gas-fueled transit vehicle fleet even prior to enactment of Senate File 545 in 1991. SF545 established a legal mandate in Iowa that any public vehicle fueled with gasoline must use gasoline blended with at least 10 percent ethanol (gasohol). Gasohol is being used by Iowa's transit systems to fuel 713 vehicles. This translates to an estimated annual consumption of nearly one million gallons of gasohol, or about 100,000 gallons of ethanol by Iowa's public transit systems.

One of the best examples of ethanol use is that of the Des Moines Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) Central Iowa Rideshare. Central Iowa Rideshare (CIR) presently operates 66 vanpools. These vanpools are projected to use almost 100,000 gallons of fuel per year.

This means that the 600 plus participants in MTA's van pooling program collectively use 10,000 gallons of ethanol per year while saving about 400,000 gallons of non-renewable gasoline. If participants of MTA's van pooling program were to operate personally owned vehicles for their daily work-trip commute, non-renewable energy consumption by this group would almost certainly exceed 500,000 gallons per year.

Ethanol injection

Three of Iowa's public transit systems have demonstrated that diesel-powered transit vehicles can be equipped with auxiliary injection systems that introduce an atomized hydrous ethanol mist during acceleration to reduce exhaust emissions. An Iowa-based firm, Mirencos, developed this device. Mirencos specializes in combustion management and emission mitigation in commercial vehicle fleets. Cedar Rapids' Five Seasons Transportation and Parking (FST&P), as well as Des Moines MTA, participated in evaluating the benefits of Mirencos's (then Fosseen Manufacturing and Development) hydrous ethanol injection technology on heavy-duty buses from 1986 to 1989 over several million miles of operation, and in Iowa's challenging climatic conditions.

Officials in Cedar Rapids have decided to continue using this renewable fuel, coupled with Mirencos's injection equipment, to reduce engine emissions during the acceleration mode in its diesel-powered vehicles. Due largely to budgetary constraints, officials of Des Moines MTA elected to phase out use of hydrous ethanol injection in its fleet, deciding instead to purchase new buses with cleaner burning engines equipped with catalytic converters to reduce exhaust emissions. During the 15 years it has used hydrous ethanol injection (1987 to 2002), FST&P estimates that it has used 200,000 gallons of ethanol. It has combined this ethanol with 300,000 gallons of deionized water to supplant using over half a million gallons of petroleum-based, non-renewable diesel fuel. Benefits to the environment of reduced emissions from not burning these 500,000 gallons of diesel fuel are significant. And, emissions from burning the 200,000 gallons of ethanol in conjunction with using biodiesel (B20 or B10), when methyl soyate prices have been affordable, are far less toxic than emissions from buses fueled with even the cleaner grades of low-sulfur diesel fuel.

Sioux City Transit (SCT) has also equipped seven light-duty buses with this same Mirencos hydrous ethanol injection system. SCT's demonstration project, funded under Iowa's Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP), did not result in any significant emissions reductions or reduced diesel fuel consumption. However, SCT's seven buses had been reengineered by Ford to meet 1996 EPA requirements. As such, perhaps it was too much to expect that SCT's project would result in any significant emission or fuel economy improvements using the hydrous ethanol injection on seven of its light-duty buses used for paratransit services. Nevertheless, SCT's project demonstrated that conventional diesel fuel could be partially replaced in fueling small buses by an agricultural co-product that is produced in Iowa.

Watch for additional information on this topic in our next issue of Transit Connections where we will feature an article about the use of biodiesel fuel in Iowa.

A special Father's Day reunion / a model coordination effort

Paul Decker, 56-year old Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and resident of

ManorCare Health Services, wished to return home to Fort Madison for Father's Day. River Bend Transit, Burlington Trailways, and Southeast Iowa Transit Authority (RTA) headquartered in Burlington came together and made his "Heart's Desire" come true.

The Heart's Desire program gives residents of ManorCare in Davenport and at ManorCare's 350 other facilities nationwide the chance to fulfill their greatest wishes or desires. Hundreds of wishes have been granted, including a ride on a Harley Davidson, milking a cow, a reunion with long lost family, and singing with a band.

On Friday, June 13, 2003, at 9:45 a.m., Decker departed ManorCare on a River Bend Transit bus to board a Burlington Trailways bus at the ground transportation center. The bus took him to Burlington, where the Southeast Iowa Transit Authority picked him up and transported him to his home in Fort Madison around 12:30 p.m. His wife, Beth, and daughter Lori Vitek greeted him.

On Saturday his family reunited to celebrate Father's Day and his birthday, and

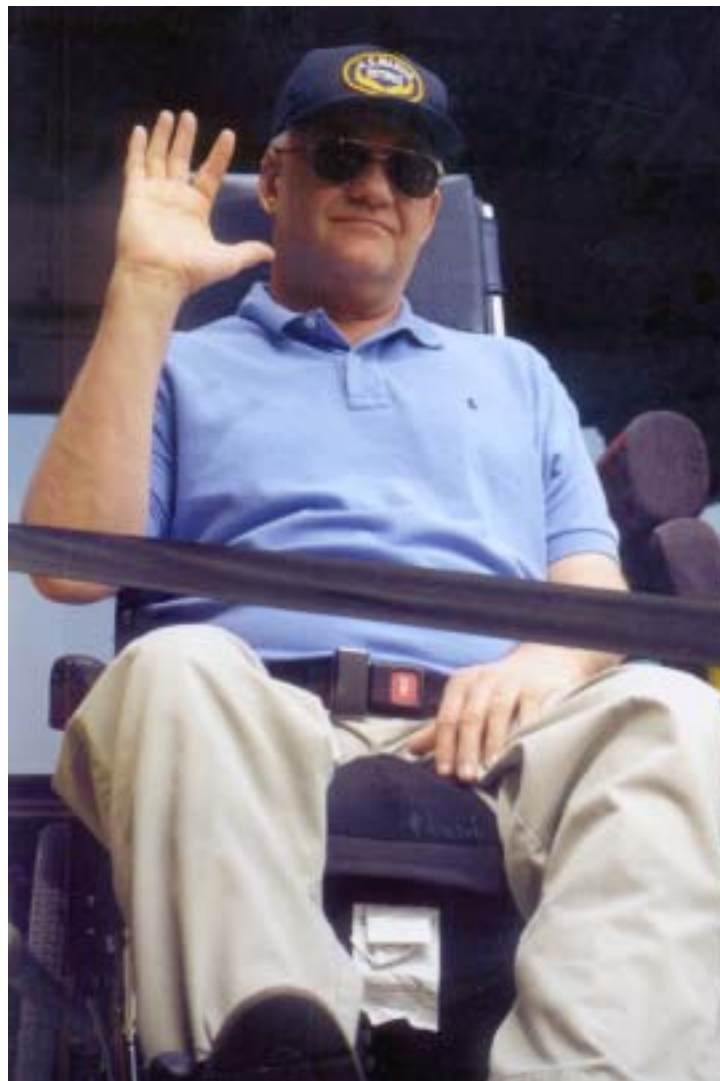
"Having him home was a special gift for him, his family and his friends. We hope to utilize your services on a monthly basis so that Paul can enjoy more special weekends in the future at home."

Beth Decker

enjoyed a home-cooked meal of fried crappie, morel mushrooms, potato salad, baked beans and chocolate pie. Decker then repeated the same journey to return to ManorCare on Sunday, June 15, 2003.

Beth Decker later commented that, "Having him home was a special gift for him, his family and his friends. We hope to utilize your services on a monthly basis so that Paul can enjoy more special weekends in the future at home."

Editor's note: River Bend Transit and Southeast Iowa Transit Authority are public transit systems. Burlington Trailways is a private intercity bus operation. Public and private transit coordinated efforts to make one man's Hearts Desire a reality.



(Top) Passenger Paul Decker headed to Fort Madison to visit friends and family (Bottom) Bus operator assists Paul Decker in meeting his family

Winners of annual bus roadeo headed for national competition



A bus operator competes in the state bus roadeo while judges score contestants

Two Iowa transit vehicle operators are bound for a national competition after their driving skills earned them top honors in Iowa's 17th Annual Public Transit Roadeo held in Spencer June 21. The first place winners in each of the three categories listed will compete at the national level.

At this year's roadeo, 34 bus operators from 15 transit systems displayed their skills. Each operator performed a series of maneuvers that represent many of the actual situations they face as they carry out their daily duties. Some of the maneuvers included: pulling up to the curb at a bus stop closely flanked by parked cars; making left and right turns in narrow lanes that might be created by parked cars along a route; stopping short of an obstacle; and backing into parking stalls.

Large bus division first place winner Paul Klimesh will represent Iowa in the American Public Transit Association's International Bus Operator's Roadeo, conducted in conjunc-

tion with its annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, in September. Jean Dalsing, first place winner of both the van and small bus divisions, will represent Iowa in the International Paratransit Roadeo sponsored by the Community Transportation Association of America's meeting in Seattle, Wash., next May.

The DOT and Iowa Public Transit Association, with funding from the Federal Rural Transit Assistance Program, jointly sponsored the annual roadeo held at the Spencer Municipal Airport. RIDES, a nine-county regional transit system in northwest Iowa, hosted this year's event. The roadeo's purpose is to promote and provide recognition for safe driving skills by Iowa's public transit vehicle operators. Staff of DOT, transit systems, and local community volunteers provided judging for the competition. Top-ranking competitors received awards and cash bonds.

And the winners are . . .



Large Bus Division

First Place - Paul Klimesh, City of Ames, CyRide

Second Place - Robert "Bobby" Sanderson

University of Iowa, CAMBUS, Iowa City

Third Place - Dan Sorce, Johnson County SEATS; contract service provider for East Central Iowa Transit that also serves Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Coralville



Van Division

First Place - Jean Dalsing, Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson County Regional Transit Authority, Dubuque

Second Place - Dennis Cary, River Bend Transit, Davenport

Third Place - Cindy Lovell, Ottumwa Transit Authority, Ottumwa



Small Bus Division

First Place - Jean Dalsing, Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson County Regional Transit Authority, Dubuque

Second Place - Paul Klimesh, City of Ames, CyRide

Third Place - Ron Schneider, Johnson County SEATS, contract service provider for East Central Iowa Transit that also serves Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Coralville

2003

September

Sept. 23, Iowa Public Transit Association Legislative Meeting, Des Moines (Bev Thomas, 515-440-6057)

Sept. 26-27, International Bus Rodeo, Salt Lake City, Utah (For more information contact APTA's Lynn Morsen, 202-496-4853.)

Sept. 28-Oct. 2, APTA's Annual Meeting & Expo, Salt Lake City, Utah (For more information contact APTA's Cara Reeve, 202-496-4874, or Anitha Tharapatala, 202-496-4839.)

November

Nov. 2-5, APTA's Bus Equipment & Maintenance Management Workshop, Indianapolis, Ind. (Please see APTA's Web site for contact information closer to this date.)

Nov. 17-19, FTA Regional Conference, Kansas City, MO. (For more information contact Shannon Graves at 816-329-3926.)

December

Dec. 3-5, Iowa Public Transit Association Mid-Year Meeting, West Des Moines (Bev Thomas, 515-440-6057)

For more detailed conference listings see the following Web sites:

http://www.apta.com/conferences_calendar

<http://www.ctaa.org/events>

<http://www.fta.dot.gov/library/intro/calendar/cal.html>

Transit training library feature CD-ROM training "System Security Awareness for Transit Employees"

"System Security Awareness for Transit Employees" is a National Training Institute (NTI) CD-ROM course that is targeted for front-line employees and supervisors who have direct contact with the public or vehicles and facilities used by the public. The course has several skill sets and quizzes on observing, determining and reporting people and/or things that are suspicious or out-of-place.

The goals of this course are:

- define their role and responsibility in system security;
- recognize suspicious people, activities, packages, devices, and substances;
- observe and report relevant information; and
- minimize harm to themselves and others.

This NTI training CD can be used in a variety of settings, in its entirety or sections. Modules can be incorporated into new operator training or used to develop individual and group retraining. Depending on the job function of the course participants and level of detail a participant wants to cover, the time needed to take the course ranges from two to four hours. With the focus on common sense, and initial priorities, this training will be of particular interest to all vehicle operators and staff that have contact with the general public.

The Office of Public Transit has a large selection of training resources available to loan at no charge to public transit systems and other passenger transportation providers. To borrow this video or obtain a complete listing of available training materials, call Melissa Davis-Oviatt, Office of Public Transit, 515-239-1875, or melissa.davis@dot.state.ia.us.



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.

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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."

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