



# Kansas Trans Reporter

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## Pupil Transportation or Public Transportation?

Guidelines for public transit providers who transport students to and from school



by Pat Weaver

A common refrain heard from Kansas public transportation providers is the increasing demand for transit services—and pressure on their budgets to support those services. Transportation needs associated with welfare reform, community-based mental health and employment-support services for persons with disabilities are creating growing transit markets in the state. As we get closer to full employment in Kansas—with workers who need to get to work at all

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## How to Get 'Em, How to Keep 'Em

by Arin Gustafson

Do you want to decrease your employee turnover rate? Are you losing your best employees to other companies? This article will describe tips for how to attract, hire, and retain good employees.

In the 1999 *Thomas Staffing Survey on Employee Retention Issues*, 21 percent of respondents indicated that employee retention is a problem in their company. Ream Lazaro, a consultant for Lazaro & Noel in Johnstown, Pa., agrees that employee retention is a problem for transit agencies, but that recruitment is the

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## **Pupil or Public Transportation,** *continued from page 1*

hours of the day and night—transit providers face new challenges. And now there is another market Kansas transit providers may be asked to fill—pupil transportation.

This article is written in response to questions from a Kansas transit provider. This provider is being asked to provide pupil transportation in a school district that offers no transportation services for children in the district except for student activities special needs students. The transit provider wants to meet the needs of the community, but has neither the capacity nor the resources to respond to all the requests the agency is receiving. Some of the parents state that their children are part of the general public and should be allowed to use public transportation services to get to school. The community needs a solution.

To develop a response to the school district, the community and parents, it is important to be familiar with the relevant laws and regulations associated with both public transit and pupil transportation services. Let's look first at the *Kansas State Statutes and Administrative Regulations*.

### **Changes in Kansas school bus regulations last year**

A change in the Kansas State Statutes associated with pupil transportation took effect on July 1, 2000. It states that a [school district] "governing body may contract with the operator of a mass transportation system to provide school transportation for its students." (*Kansas Administrative Regulation 91-38-10, Use of Urban Mass Transportation Buses*, July 1, 2000).

State requirements of mass transportation providers in contracting for

this service include documenting vehicle maintenance, providing on-board emergency equipment, and documenting driver qualifications such as age, valid and appropriate driver's license, criminal and driving record, physical condition, and training.

Regulations governing pupil transportation do not require school districts to provide transportation. However, if they provide transportation at all, the districts are required to provide or contract for transportation for students who live more than two and one-half miles from the school building (K.S.A. 72-8302). School districts are responsible purchasing those transportation services, but could contract with public transit agencies as long as the service doesn't violate Federal Transit Administration regulations. We'll discuss these regulations in the next section.

The change in the state regulation removes some barriers to transportation coordination that have existed in Kansas for agencies wishing to collaborate with school districts. That's the good news. However, there are still some concerns and questions to be answered for successful partnerships.

### **What FTA has to say about pupil transportation**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) partially funds rural public transportation services in Kansas and regulates the use of public transit vehicles in providing pupil transportation. The FTA circular providing regulatory guidance to the Section 5311 non-urbanized transit program includes specific language on school bus transportation.

Section 5323(f) prohibits the use of FTA funds for exclusive school bus transportation for school students and school personnel. The

implementing regulation (49 C.F.R. Part 605) does permit regular service to be modified to accommodate school students along with the general public.

For the purpose of FTA's school bus regulation, Head Start is a social service, not a school program. FTA recipients may operate vehicles that meet the safety requirements for school transportation, but may not provide exclusive school service. Head Start and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA) have guidelines that apply to transportation of pre-school children.

### **What about the "National Standards for School Buses and Operations?"**

The National Standards for School Buses and Operations are standards that establish minimum guidelines for pupil transportation services. These standards include school bus design considerations such as rollover protections, seat design, bus color and markings. School districts that provide transportation or contract for regular school bus service must use vehicles that comply with the National Standards. However, when school districts contract with public transit agencies, they are exempted from the specific requirements of the National Standards, according to Debbie Romine with Pupil Transportation in the Kansas Department of Education.

### **Do any Kansas school districts contract with public transportation agencies?**

In researching this article we did not identify any school districts in Kansas that contract directly with a public transit agency.

U.S.D. 428 in Great Bend is an example of a school district that has made the decision not to provide any

route-based pupil transportation. They provide only activity trips, field trips and transportation to sporting events, according to Sharon Jenkins, transportation coordinator for the District. Jenkins indicates that parents with children living two and one-half miles or more from the school are reimbursed for mileage at the end of the year based on an allocation formula from the Kansas Department of

as possible, with the school riders treated as general public riders.

Topeka Transit does not contract with their school districts to provide pupil transportation, but does offer route-based service to school-age children, according to Paul Patterson, planner for Topeka Transit. Students pay a single half-price fare for a trip, reducing a one-way trip cost from 80 cents to 40 cents. As an alternative,

enter into a contract to help pay for additional costs of this service.

In communities that operate fixed routes with excess capacity, the partnership may be an easy one. However, in communities that operate only demand-response service operating at or near capacity, accommodating a high volume of school transportation may be extremely difficult. An important first step is for



## The change to the state regulation removes some barriers to transportation coordination that have existed in Kansas for agencies wishing to collaborate with school districts. That's the good news...

Education. The change to a mileage reimbursement system was made several years ago at the request of parents who were unhappy with the bus service, Jenkins stated.

One of the general public transportation providers in Great Bend, a demand-response transportation service, reports that they get many calls from parents of school-age children who need transportation to school. Sarah Crom, transportation coordinator of Sunflower Diversified Services, Inc., believes that there are many rides they are unable to provide since they are operating at capacity and the demand for pupil transportation is so concentrated at specific times of the day.

The City of Great Bend Commission on Aging also provides general public transportation within the city limits. Director Rosy Tomlin states that transporting school-age children to and from school is part of their regular service. Their minimum age for children unaccompanied by an adult is four years old.

While there is significant demand for pupil transport, Tomlin says they try to provide as many rides

they may purchase a unlimited-ride monthly pass for \$15, a discount from the full pass cost of \$22 per month.

Topeka Transit routes go past all Topeka high schools and middle schools, and include two "tripper" routes daily (routes designed to meet the needs of a specific population) from the Transit Transfer Center to Topeka High School. Children under age five ride free when accompanied by an adult, but there is no other age restriction for children. About 10 percent (approximately 132,000) of Topeka Transit's annual trips are classified as student trips. Not all of these trips are taken to get to or from school; however, some of the service is used for this purpose.

### Implications for transporting pupils in the public transportation system

To recap, Kansas transit providers are able to contract for public transportation services as long as it is not exclusive school service. School districts are reimbursed for transportation of students two and one half miles from individual attendance centers, so it is reasonable that a school district could

all stakeholders to come to the table to understand constraints under which each party operates and what is needed to solve the problem.

The next step is to identify specific public transportation needs of the community and what is required to meet them. If pupil transportation services are provided within the normal service of a demand-response program without a special contract, all riders must follow the same scheduling procedures.

A transit agency also has the right to set a policy for minimum age requirements for children traveling alone, typically set at age 12 or 14. Agencies that include pupil transportation services within their services should include a description of those services in the annual application for funding to the Kansas Department of Transportation.

For more information, agencies may obtain a copy of the *Kansas School Transportation Regulations, Standards, Statutes and Guidelines* from the Kansas Department of Education. Call 785/296-3551 to request a copy, or go to:

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## Good Employees,

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bigger problem. Lazaro believes that recruitment is especially difficult for transportation agencies because transit drivers are required to have a commercial driver's license (CDL). CDL holders are able to work for trucking companies that pay higher wages than nonprofit transit agencies. Lazaro stresses the importance of looking for applicants who want jobs that add value or meaning to their lives, and who are not motivated solely by their paychecks.

Lazaro stresses that the key to hiring quality employees is to target individuals who want to "join a value-based team...committed to serving the community through mobility." These individuals are often looking for part-time employment, such as students, retired persons, or parents who want to re-enter the work force.

To decrease employee turnover, your agency's hiring process should allow for careful selection rather than rapid hiring due to employee shortages or employee turnover. Lazaro encourages managers to plan ahead, so that they are not tempted to lower their standards and hire someone who is inappropriate for the job. This just "buys problems," says Lazaro—problems that are likely to result in low performance, poor attitude, and even more important, lack of attention to passenger safety.

People Solution Strategies, a Chesterfield, Mo.-based consulting company, outlines key aspects of hiring quality employees in addition to planning ahead:

- Your agency's selection process must begin with the creation of an effective marketing plan for attracting the right employees. Explore what the applicant is looking for in a job. If it is money and not a sense of

## Workshops on Employee Retention

Several workshops on employee retention are available to transit agencies. People Solution Strategies, based in Chesterfield, Missouri, offers many workshops including "Selecting New Employees—Not Just Hiring Them." They custom-tailor their workshops for your agency. To find out more about People Solution Strategies, visit their web site at [www.thepeoplesolution.com/](http://www.thepeoplesolution.com/), or call them at (877) 736-7535.

Deliver the Promise offers a variety of workshops for employee retention. The Retention Master Class provides a self-paced, comprehensive overview of the main issues in employee retention. Deliver the Promise also offers one-day public seminars, on-site workshops, and consulting tailored to meet your agency's needs. Visit their web site at [www.deliverthepromise.com](http://www.deliverthepromise.com) to find out more about their workshops.

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worth or value, he or she is probably not the right person for the job. Include probing questions in the interview process designed to reveal an applicant's motivation, dedication, integrity, and their ability to get along with others.

- Listen carefully to the applicant. You should spend the majority of the interview time listening, not speaking.

- Use screening tools and reference checks, such as calling the applicant's previous employers and conducting a criminal background check. Pre-employment drug tests are required for all safety-sensitive positions, such as drivers of vehicles funded by the FTA.

- Streamline the application and interview processes so that qualified applicants are selected and hired quickly.

- After being hired, an employee orientation should be developed that introduces new employees to company values and traditions.

- Invite your employees who will be working with the new employee to participate in the hiring and orientation process. For example, have a current worker give the applicant a tour of the agency.

### How to keep them

Most managers only think about retention after a good employee resigns. However if you have worked hard to hire a good employee, you must work hard—from "day one"—to retain her or him. Employee retention is centered on respect, open communication, and participation and involvement in the workplace.

*Respect.* Employees need to feel respected by managers, coworkers, and customers. When employees feel respected, they tend to be more loyal to their agency and more committed to its success. Mutual respect between workers and their managers also leads to open communication.

*Open Communication.* Open communication should be two-way. Solicit

opinions from all employees to discover aspects of the agency that need to be changed, abolished or implemented. Managers can participate in the dialogue by responding to employees' ideas and by giving positive feedback and constructive coaching.

**Participation.** Managers should hold monthly meetings with work teams at all levels to compare experiences. Meetings can provide updates on plans, finances, customers, and new developments within the agency. These meetings should have an open and participatory approach to problem solving and conflict management. If you involve employees in decisions, it gives them a sense of ownership in the company—important in employee retention.

Managers should discuss with each employee how their job fits into the big picture. Involve each employee in customizing their job so that it can fulfill more of their personal needs, interests, and goals.

Recognize and reward desired work behavior with ceremonies, bonuses, and promotions. Make recognition public, and note specifics, so that it is clear to employees which behaviors are desirable. Recognition in a newsletter, plaques or driver-of-the-year programs are good ways of recognizing excellent employees.

Your agency would do well to promote continuous learning. Well-educated and well-trained employees are assets to your agency and are essential in providing quality services. For example, encourage your drivers to attend vehicle maintenance or safe driving seminars. Give your employees sufficient training to perform their jobs.

One last tip: The workplace should be fun. Smile, laugh, and relax! Enjoy your job, and give others a chance to enjoy their jobs, too. When employees feel good about working for your agency, they will

look forward to coming to work.

Lazaro refers to the "culture of the organization" as the main key to employee retention. The agency's culture reflects its values, and it is shown through listening and caring for your employees. Lazaro also suggests flipping the organizational chart upside down, so that employees who are on the front line and see customers daily know that they are important assets of the organization. This leads to a sense of loyalty and ownership in the agency that will result in employee retention.

**Sources**

1. "Staff Retention: Involving Staff in Their Environment," *The Non-Profit Times*, August 2000.
2. Meridian Group home page at [www.meridiangrp.net/](http://www.meridiangrp.net/)
3. [www.florida-speakers.com/harris-paper.htm](http://www.florida-speakers.com/harris-paper.htm)
4. People Solutions home page at [www.thepeoplesolution.com](http://www.thepeoplesolution.com)
5. [www.solutionskeptsimple.com](http://www.solutionskeptsimple.com)
6. Deliver the Promise home page at [www.deliverthepromise.com](http://www.deliverthepromise.com) ▲

## Prescription Drugs and Over-the-Counter Medications: New FTA Recommendations

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 by Janet Blue and Pat Weaver  
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A recurring topic of discussion in the transit industry is the use of prescription and over-the-counter drug by rural transit drivers—and any possible effects of these medications on safely transporting passengers. A related topic is whether and how transit managers should monitor use of medications by drivers.



While use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs certainly is not limited to older persons, it is true that elderly individuals use prescription drugs approximately three times as frequently as the general population. "The use of over-the-counter (OTC) medications by this group is even more extensive," according to a report

in the *Psychiatric Times*, April 1999.

A high percentage of rural transit drivers are over the age of 65. Also, the general population is more predisposed to take over-the-counter medication than at any other time in history. These considerations require that drivers, their doctors, and their managers be aware of any possible use, overuse or interactions that would interfere with a driver's ability to drive safely.

The purpose of this article is to address recent recommendations made by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and to suggest components to consider in creating an agency policy on prescription and OTC drugs.

**FTA forwards recommendations to transit agencies**

In May 2000 the Federal Transit Administration Acting Administrator, Nuria Fernandez, sent a letter to all the states addressing prescription and over-the-counter drug policies in transit agencies. This letter has

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## FTA Guidelines on OTC Drugs, continued from page 5

spurred reviews of existing policies by transit agencies throughout the country. KDOT's Drug and Alcohol Program Coordinator, Janet Blue, has received numerous requests for information on how to address these recommendations.

Fernandez's letter recommended that agencies develop policies on prescription and OTC drugs. Although not a requirement of already-existing drug and alcohol programs, the FTA is strongly encouraging this action to promote safety.

### Suggested prescription/OTC program components

There are several program components to consider in developing prescription/OTC policies:

- Consider requiring safety-sensitive employees to enter into a dialogue with their prescribing physician regarding the side effects of prescription or OTC medications and to inquire into alternative treatment options.
- Consider requiring safety-sensitive employees to report prescriptions/OTCs to the transit system medical department or MRO for review. Transit systems without medical staff commonly require their employees to obtain a release to work statement from their prescribing physician.
- Consider issuing a medical disqualification to individuals taking prescriptions/OTCs that may jeopardize their ability to safely perform their safety-sensitive job function for as long as they are taking the medication.
- Include in employee training programs information about the risk of

*The Merck Manual, Home Edition* provides a checklist for over-the-counter drugs:

## Guidelines for Choosing and Using Over-the-Counter Drugs



- Make sure that a self-diagnosis is as accurate as possible. Don't assume the symptoms are for "something that's going around."
- Select products on the basis of rational planning and ingredients, not because they're labeled with a familiar brand name.
- Choose a product with the fewest appropriate ingredients. Remedies that attempt to relieve every possible symptom are likely to expose people to unnecessary drugs, pose additional risks, and cost more.
- When in doubt, check with a pharmacist or doctor for the most appropriate ingredient or product.
- Have a pharmacist check for potential interactions with other drugs being used.
- Read the label carefully to determine the proper dose and precautions. Find out what conditions would make the drug a poor choice.
- Ask the pharmacist to write down possible adverse effects.
- Do not exceed the recommended dose.
- Never take an OTC drug longer than the maximum time suggested on the label. Stop taking the drug if symptoms get worse.
- Keep all drugs, including OTC drugs, out of the reach of children.

Source: [www.merck.com/pubs/mmanual\\_home/sec2/13.htm](http://www.merck.com/pubs/mmanual_home/sec2/13.htm), *The Merck Manual of Medical Information, Home Edition*, Section 2, Drugs, Chapter 13.

using prescriptions/OTCs and a list of potential problem medications. Training for drivers should also include knowing to check the alcohol content of medications, reading warning labels and taking the medications exactly as prescribed. Employees must be informed of the disciplinary consequences when prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs are used in violation of the policy.

### Help is on the way

The Consortium, Inc., and KDOT will be holding several training workshops across the state in 2001

for collection site managers and agency drug and alcohol program managers. These workshops will be two-day sessions with ample time for questions and answers, and will include advice on setting up a prescription and OTC drug policy.

For more information regarding developing prescription/OTC drug policies and providing training to drivers, several information hotlines and on-line sources are available. One resource is the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. Their web site is

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# CD Brings New Dimension to Transit Driver Training

.....  
 by Dawn Jourdan  
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These days it seems like almost everything can be done on a personal computer. Recent technological advances have simplified both personal and work-related functions. Recently, the San Diego Transit Authority has developed a computer training program that will enable transit agencies to provide on-screen driver training.

Their program, entitled *The Professional*, is a CD-ROM computer program designed to assist transit

notes that the program is especially effective because concepts taught in the first portion of the program are integrated throughout. This assists users with long-term retention of the information.

One potential criticism of computerized training that it is impersonal. No teacher is present to answer questions or test understanding. However, these obstacles may be easily overcome. The Bi-State Transit Authority has come up with two

Windows 95. The monitor must have 640x460 resolution in order to fully support the visual component of the package. Additional technological requirements include a sound blaster, 4X CD-ROM and a key board and mouse. Knicker suggests that a high quality sound blaster and video card will contribute to the enjoyable use of the program. If you are unfamiliar with any of this computer jargon, Renee Haider, at NTI, will be glad to translate these requirements before



At Bi-State Transit Authority, an instructor monitors the progress of trainees and is available to answer questions—adding a human touch to the driver training process.

agencies with educating new and existing drivers. It covers a number of topics, including pre-trip inspections, customer service, and driver health and well-being. It is available for purchase from the National Transit Institute (NTI) at 732/932-1700.

Nathan Kniker, Director of Safety and Training of the Bi-State Transit Authority in St. Louis, says that his agency uses this software, along with other supplemental materials, to instruct new drivers. Kniker maintains that the program works well for his agency because it allows drivers to work on their own. He

solutions to put the human element back into computerized training.

First, an instructor monitors the progress of trainees who use the program and is available to address questions. In addition, the agency conducts a face-to-face assessment with newly-trained employees to determine the level of understanding derived from the computerized training process.

*The Professional* may be operated on a 486DX2/66 personal computer with at least 8 MB of Ram and 60 MB of free disk space. The program will run under either Windows 3.1 or

you purchase the software. She can be reached at (732) 932-1700 ext. 23.

Technological advancement is inevitable and should be embraced. If your agency is reconsidering the way training is provided to drivers, *The Professional* might be the solution you are seeking.

**Source**

“CD-ROM Training Program Meets Needs of Both Large and Small Agencies,” *NTI Transitions*, National Transit Institute. ▲



# Tips for Helping Riders Who Have Cognitive Disabilities

“Disabled” doesn’t only mean loss of mobility. The American Disabilities Act (ADA) defines individuals with disabilities as those with “...a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment” (CFR 49 Subtitle A, et al). Cognitive disabilities are covered under the ADA.

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by Gerri Doyle  
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Imagine being in another country where the language is different than your own. You are in the train station and need to catch the train. Schedules and maps are available, but they are printed in a language you can’t read. You ask people for help, but they don’t understand what you are trying to say, they treat you like a lost child, they point with annoyance at that map you can’t interpret, and... Well, you get the idea. When it comes to transportation, the ability to use it requires a certain level of communication that most of us take for granted.

Most people can read a map to orient themselves. But many people with cognitive disabilities can’t. They may find standard transit maps with their small print and thin intersecting lines confusing or unreadable. Or they may encounter transit personnel who can’t clearly explain system information or who speak to them in a condescending manner. Understanding the needs of individuals with cognitive disabilities can help transit agencies provide better and more respectful service.

## How to recognize cognitive disabilities

Individuals with cognitive disabilities have difficulty with basic skills such as thinking, awareness, orientation, processing information, and communication. Several conditions and diseases may cause a cognitive dysfunction, including Alzheimer’s or a traumatic head injury. The use of clear, simple language by your staff could go a long way toward making your services more accessible.

## Keep it simple

The Arc of the United States, described on their web site as “the nation’s leading organization on mental retardation,” has prepared a training program for fixed route bus operators designed to enhance communication with individuals having cognitive disabilities. These methods are simple and can be translated to other types of transit systems with only minor adjustments. They recommend a three-step, “people first” process to enhance communication:

### • Step 1—Be an active listener.

Notice if the individual is having difficulty expressing thoughts, responding to questions, or is repeating a question over and over.

• **Step 2—Adjust the communication process.** This may mean using simpler words, adding gestures while speaking, showing how to perform a task, writing information, drawing a simple picture, repeating the information more than once, or simply speaking slowly and clearly.

### • Step 3—Check for comprehension.

Asking “Do you understand?” is not the best way to check for comprehension. It’s better to ask specific questions about what he or she wants to do, beginning your questions with “who,” “what,” and “where.”

These steps, coupled with respect and treating an adult as an adult, can make a transit system easier to use for individuals with cognitive disabilities. Any project designed to make a system more accessible to the disabled will benefit from clear communication between passengers and providers. Working together, solutions can be found to make transit systems more accessible to riders with a variety of needs.

## Sources

1. “Improving Bus Accessibility Systems for Persons with Sensory and Cognitive Impairments,” FTA/DOT, 1993.
2. “Serving Passengers with Cognitive Disabilities,” Project ACTION, 1995.

Project ACTION publications may be ordered by phone at 800/659-NIAT. There may be a fee for postage and handling. ▲





## Picture Your Audience in Their Underwear!

and other ideas for effective public speaking

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by Dawn Jourdan  
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**D**o you have nightmares about speaking in public or suffer from butterflies before making a speech in public? There is no need to be ashamed. Speaking in public is a daunting experience! One of the techniques speech teachers often pass on to nervous students involves imagining the audience in their underwear. The idea is that the speaker will not be intimidated by

The desire to speak perfectly, especially at a moment's notice, is unrealistic. One way to combat this fear is to lower your standards. On short notice, it is perfectly acceptable for the speaker to talk from notes for a brief period of time while citing a few sources. But this does not entitle the speaker to be totally unprepared.

*Determine Your Objective.* After setting realistic goals for what kind of presentation can be accomplished, the presenter must determine an objective. One basic question comes

might they have? These simple questions will further determine and limit the scope and content of your speech.

*Create Three Key Points.* Speakers sometimes fail to be effective because their message is too complicated or jumbled together. Experts recommend that speakers limit themselves to three points. Audiences will be unable to retain more information. A speaker may further assist the audience by introducing the three points to be made at the beginning of the speech, again as each point is made and then reviewing the points at the end of the talk. While this may seem overly repetitious to you, audiences appreciate reminders of what they have heard.

### One of the best tips is the tried-and-true scouting motto: "Be Prepared."

his or her audience if the audience, too, is in a vulnerable position. Techniques like this reduce anxiety.

There are, however, other ways to overcome speech-related anxieties. According to Ken Scudder, Vice President of Virgil Scudder & Associates, preparation, even if done on short notice, is the key to effective speech making.

#### **Eight steps to preparing a speech....on short notice**

*Lower Your Standards.* One of the biggest roadblocks to effective speech making is the presenter's fear of appearing incompetent in front of peers. No one wants to appear a fool.

to mind: For what purpose have I been asked to speak? For instance, if you have been asked to speak to your CTD about a new program your agency has developed, focus all of your remarks on that program. Extraneous information will only confuse your audience.

*Ask Yourself Questions.* After limiting the scope of your discussion to a particular topic, you should ask yourself a series of questions so that you may fully connect with your audience and provide them with information that they want to hear. These questions might include: Who is my audience? What are their priorities? What will they want to know? What concerns

*Get Back-up Information.* Sometimes you will not have the opportunity to conduct full-scale research when preparing a speech on short notice. Therefore, you must rely on what you know and on sources of information available to your audience. Ask your staff to help you in your research. Whatever you do, confirm all evidence and cite the source in your presentation so that others might check it for themselves. Don't ever guess.

*Prepare an Outline.* The next step in effective speech making is preparing an outline. It should contain the following components: introduction, three points with citations, and

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# Check Up Before You Check Out

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 by James C. Holland  
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As a result of changes in vehicle bidding procedures over the past few years, Kansas rural and specialized transit providers purchasing vehicles with funding from KDOT or the FTA have become responsible for inspecting vehicles at the time of delivery from the vendor. According to Jim Van Sickel, program manager for the Office of Public Transportation, it's been about five years since this responsibility shifted from KDOT personnel to transit agencies.

Since inspection is an infrequent responsibility for most agencies, perhaps only once every five or six years, the delivery inspections have been a daunting task, particularly for smaller agencies. More important, staff not trained on how to conduct a thorough inspection can risk missing essential operational components. They might accept and pay for a vehicle that does not meet all specifications.

This article will describe the three different types of vehicle inspections that help agencies assure proper operation of new vehicles and continued good service once they are in use.

## Types of inspections

Proper vehicle maintenance requires the three types of inspections: the delivery inspection, the pre-trip inspection and the annual inspection.

✓ **Delivery inspection.** The delivery inspection should occur when a vehicle is delivered to your agency by the manufacturer or the vendor. At this

point, you should specifically check to make sure the vehicle meets all the specifications. The vendor should give you a complete tour of the new vehicle, as well as provide training for any unfamiliar vehicle operations. If the vehicle fails to meet the require-



ments set forth in the specifications, the vehicle should not be accepted.

Before the new vehicle arrives, your agency should study the vehicle specifications and devise a list of questions regarding any unfamiliar operations—so that no questions are left unanswered during the delivery inspection.

A comprehensive delivery checklist is available from the KDOT and is typically sent to the agency prior to placing an order. This checklist is designed to assist the agency in making sure the manufacturer has complied with all requirements of the vehicle specifications and that the vehicle is in good working order when you receive it. The checklist also helps ensure that you and your staff know how to operate the vehicle and its special equipment.

There are many key elements to look for when performing a delivery inspection: Start inside the cab and test the parking brake to verify that the brake indicator functions and that the vehicle doesn't move when the brake is on.

Next, inspect the vehicle's mirrors. Verify that the buzzer system is activated when the vehicle transmission is engaged in reverse and continues while the vehicle is being backed up.

Now check the driver controls. Verify that when all circuits are off, the interior lights, brake lights and horn remain working. Afterward, test the exterior lights with an assistant outside the vehicle inspecting the brake lights, backup lights, rear license plate lights, marker lights, turn signals and head lights. Also, verify that all lamps illuminate at the doorways, including where the lift is installed. When the doors open, the light should provide adequate visibility for safe boarding.

Your van should come equipped with one or more wheelchair stations. Each station's restraint system must have two ratchet belts, two cam buckle belts and four snap-in track sections that complete the four-point restraint system. Make sure that each wheelchair position is equipped with a pelvic-high lap belt and shoulder harness. Each regular seat should also have a lap or shoulder-lap belt.

Check for the fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, blood borne pathogen kit, seat belt cutter, fluorescent triangle set and a drag blanket for all emergency purposes. If applicable, check the emergency exit or emergency roof vent to be sure it can be operated from both inside and outside.

Finally, inspect the wheelchair lift, if specified for this particular vehicle. The following ADA requirements must be met: the lift must be hydraulically-powered, with a hand pump for power failure, and the

platform must be at least 32 by 48 inches, with a band of color running the full width of the lift. Be aware that the wheelchair lockout system will not allow the lift to move without the parking brake being set.

✓ **Pe-Trip inspection.** Being able to spot a potential problem with your vehicle can prevent many roadside breakdowns. That is why a pre-trip inspection of your vehicle should be conducted daily. This also helps prevent major repair costs.

To conduct a pre-trip inspection, walk around the vehicle looking for any kind of body damage and also any dents or cracks in the windshield or mirrors. Look underneath the vehicle and inspect the ground for evidence of leaks and check the undercarriage for loose parts.

Now start the engine and turn on the headlights and the four-way flashers; this should turn on all exterior lights. Check to see that the dash lights are on and both the high and low beams on your headlights are working. Again, walk around the vehicle to check each lamp.

Check the conditions of all tires, including the spare. Afterward, check under the hood. Turn off the engine and report any item requiring maintenance immediately. Now, check the battery (unless it is maintenance free), the fluid levels, the cable connectors, and post connectors. Examine the belts and hoses for cracks and excess wear and any spongy, or hard to squeeze, or cracked hoses.

The final step of the pre-trip inspection takes place inside the vehicle, where you should check for loose objects and cleanliness. Make sure that seat belts and safety restraints are available and functioning. Check all equipment to make sure that it is not only in place, but also functional. Make sure the lift runs smoothly throughout its entire cycle.

If any problems are noticed, they should be reported immediately to the agency's director and the vendor.

✓ **Annual inspection.** The final form of inspection—annual inspection—is performed by KDOT, and will help ensure that the vehicle is safe and long-lasting. In the annual inspection, the state inspector will examine the vehicle for unusual wear and tear, particularly brakes, tires, wheelchair lift (if equipped), lights, and general engine condition.

While inspections will prove useful in determining the condition of your transit vehicle, other factors should also be considered. The safety of a vehicle may also be determined through the examination of maintenance records; records which include information regarding the dates of oil, filter and brake changes and any other maintenance work performed on the vehicle. More commonly-identified problems during an annual inspection are oil leaks, wheel chair lifts needing repair, marker lights that do not function and cracked windshields.

A regular maintenance log should be kept on each vehicle to show routine maintenance conducted on the vehicle.

By conducting these three inspections, your transit agency can help prevent roadside breakdowns and lengthen the life of your fleet. Most important, preventive maintenance checks ensure that the services provided are safe and reliable. After assuring a thorough delivery inspection, you must continue to perform careful examinations of your vehicles prior to each trip, and annually.

### Source

*Small Transit Vehicle Inspections: Delivery, Pre-Trip and Annual Inspection Procedures*, K.U. Transportation Center, 1997. ▲

## Public Speaking,

*continued from page 9*

concluding remarks. The outline can be detailed or sparse, as needed. You might even want to photocopy and distribute the outline to the audience so that they can follow along.

*Find Enhancements.* Visual representations, like charts, graphs, pictures and outlines, are very persuasive and also help bolster the effectiveness of presentations. They can make a presentation prepared on short notice look more impressive. Make sure that the enhancements communicate your message effectively and that they are simple enough for the audience to understand with limited explanation. Make sure they are clear enough to read from a distance.

*Rehearse.* Before you give your speech, give yourself some time to clear your mind and rehearse. You can do this on your own or with a trusted co-worker. Just make sure that the practice is conducted in a place that is distraction-free. Don't worry if your rehearsal is not perfect. Few rehearsals are.

When you are called to speak, let your fears go. Don't apologize to your audience. Simply share your message with them. After all, you are the expert. That's why they called upon you to speak.

These steps are certainly easier said than done. They do offer, however, some realistic advice on how to prepare a professional presentation on short notice—one that will be memorable and effective.

### Source

"You're On in Thirty Minutes!—How to Meet the Challenge," *Presentations*, November 1999. ▲



## E-Commerce:

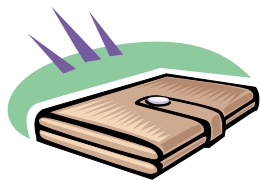
Could it be a funding tool for you?



by Stephanie M. White

The Internet is opening up a whole new arena for fund-raising and for marketing of nonprofit agencies. With Web sites like *GreaterGood.com* and *IGive.com*, nonprofits are able to connect with potential donors, advertise and seek funding for their services, and sell agency-related merchandise.

“E-commerce,” the term coined for the process of buying, selling, trading and fund-raising on the Internet, has become increasingly popular. Nonprofits worldwide are using the four following strategies to generate funds for their agencies:



### 1. Partner with for-profit commercial Web sites

Several for-profit businesses that use Web sites to sell merchandise are donating a portion of their proceeds to various charities. These sites, known as “shop-for-a-cause sites,” claim to have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for nonprofits, and work in one of two ways.

One method is for the site to offer products to socially-minded consumers. Once a consumer makes a selection, he or she is linked to a supplier to make the purchase. Part

of the price the consumer pays is donated to nonprofits that participate in the site’s revenue sharing program.

The alternative method is for a site to provide a referral to a particular vendor’s Web site, and the site making the referral gets a commission in return. A percentage of this commission goes to participating nonprofits. *iGive.com*’s hope, as stated on their Web site, is “that in the near future, all consumer transactions contain a percentage that benefits causes close to home. We’re using the Internet to its fullest potential to realize that goal.”

The following is a list of some sites that use E-Commerce to raise money for nonprofits:

- [www.4charity.com](http://www.4charity.com)
- [www.charityweb.com](http://www.charityweb.com)
- [www.GreaterGood.com](http://www.GreaterGood.com)
- [www.iGive.com](http://www.iGive.com)
- [www.mycause.com](http://www.mycause.com)
- [www.shop2give.com](http://www.shop2give.com)

To partner with potential for-profit Web sites, nonprofits should begin by contacting local businesses and larger Web sites like the ones listed above. Many businesses have a commitment to do some degree of philanthropic work but either do not have the time to spend volunteering or are leery of providing outright donations. Partnering with a nonprofit organization is an easy way for them to meet their philanthropic commitment while also showing their customers they care about the community.

### 2. Create a simple, secure web page

If you have difficulty establishing a for-profit partnership or if you have modest on-line fund-raising goals, you might want to consider having a simple, secure Web page specific to your agency to raise funds. By providing a secure Web page with a basic on-line donation form, your agency can collect credit card donations directly over the Internet.

Making one-page fund-raising sites secure enough to accept credit cards is relatively easy as long as you follow these instructions suggested by JP Frenza and Leslie Hoffman in the July/August 1999 issue of *Nonprofit World*. When establishing your Web site, ask your Internet Service Provider to set up a separate folder on the server and make that folder secure. After setting up the site, register your organization on-line. You will then receive verification that you are able to receive secure credit card information over the Internet.

Several companies provide this type of service, with varying costs. Check with your current Internet Service Provider and compare with others to find the best price.

After you are verified to accept credit cards on-line, set up a one-page donation form on your Web site with spaces for name, address, and credit card information. Include a brief description of your organization and possible ways the donation may be used.

When someone decides to donate to your organization, the Web browser will notify him or her that a secure connection is taking place.

After they fill out the form and press "Send," the order is sent to you.

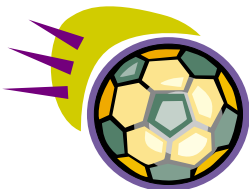


### 3. Use Internet shopping carts

A third E-Commerce opportunity for nonprofit organizations is to sell agency-related merchandise like T-shirts, coffee mugs, or publications on a Web site.

A creative way to sell items on Web sites is by using virtual shopping carts. The idea behind the carts is to allow individuals to browse a site catalog, clicking on items that they are interested in purchasing. While browsing, these items are tracked in the virtual shopping cart and are tallied up when the individual is ready to "check out. Consumers provide their credit card and billing information on the secure site.

If you are interested in using an Internet shopping cart, contact your Internet Service Provider for easy shopping cart packages. Prices for such packages vary, with most being between \$75 and \$100 a month. However, this fee will likely drop drastically as the use of E-Commerce increases over time.



### 4. Use Internet auctions

Nonprofits can also participate in Internet auctions, some of which emphasize philanthropy. One search engine, Yahoo!, offers four auctions, one of which is a charity auction

geared toward 501(c)3s of all sizes.

Here's an example of a fund-raising effort through a Yahoo! auction: CARE USA, an international relief organization, put three soccer balls up for auction, each signed by a different team. The soccer ball auction raised a total of \$350 for the agency and all that CARE had to do was provide a logo, their mission statement, a description and picture of the item to be auctioned, and a small banner ad that Yahoo! circulated for free throughout its pages.

When an auction is finished, usually within a few weeks, Yahoo! contacts you with the winners. Since the auction site's inception in September 1998, Yahoo! claims that it has raised over \$100,000 for charitable organizations.

### Is E-Commerce practical for small, local agencies?

Some might think that only large, nonprofit organizations would be able to raise money on the Internet. Not so. Small, local agencies are able to tap into Internet funding resources as readily as large agencies; it is merely a matter of knowing where to begin.

Philanthropic Web sites like *charityweb.com* encourage nonprofit organizations of all sizes to use their resources. In fact, *iGive.com*, which generally sends about five percent of its online sales to the (certified) nonprofit of the customer's choice, includes organizations from all over the United States. These include small, community-based nonprofits like school marching bands, Little Leagues, and local auxiliary organizations. *iGive.com* has more than 45,000 members who have raised more than \$289,000 for 4,445 causes since it was established in 1997.

To become a member, nonprofit organizations merely need to contact the Web site provider with whom they are interested in partnering.

Contact information is provided on the individual sites. Most sites only require proof of nonprofit status, a contact person and brief descriptions of the organization and the project for which funding is being sought.

On other sites, like *MyCause.com*, you can search for virtually any tax-deductible organization registered with the IRS. If an agency is not listed, MyCause has an agency registration page that allows anyone (whether they are directly related to the organization or not) to request that a specific cause be listed on the site. All that MyCause requires on its registration page is an organization name, address, and the name of the person requesting the listing. MyCause then ensures that the organization is either a tax-deductible organization registered with the IRS or that it is an organization to which MyCause can make tax-deductible donations. Once this assurance is made, the organization will be listed on MyCause and will be eligible for donations.

For example, Cat Network based in St. Louis is an all-volunteer organization made up of individuals who rescue and care for stray cats and cats that would otherwise be euthanized at a shelter. In about the first six months that the Network was listed as an eligible nonprofit organization on *iGive.com*, they received checks totaling about \$150. Although this is not a great deal of money, it was raised almost effortlessly while also letting individuals accessing the Web know more about their agency.

### E-Commerce in Kansas

MyCause currently sponsors three Kansas nonprofit transit agencies: Mid-Kansas Transit District in Anthony, Northeast Kansas Transit Council in Hiawatha, and Northwest Kansas Area Transit Coordinating Council in Hays. These agencies have

*Go to page 14, column 3*

## Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

**May 20-25, 2001**  
Community Transportation Association of America's Annual Rodeo and Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah  
Contact Charles Dickson, CTAA, at 202/661-0208  
[www.ctaa.org/expo](http://www.ctaa.org/expo)

**January 7-11, 2001**  
TRB Annual Meeting in Washington, DC  
Contact Transportation Research Board  
At 202/334-2934  
[www.4.nationalacademies.org/trb/annual.nsf](http://www.4.nationalacademies.org/trb/annual.nsf)

**January 21-23, 2001**  
South West Transit Association 21 Annual Conference & Expo in Oklahoma City, OK  
Contact Carol Ketcherside at

South West Transit Association at 210/967-6446  
[www.swta.org](http://www.swta.org)

**January 30, 2001**  
Medical Transportation Conference in Baltimore, Maryland  
Contact Jessica McMann, Community Transportation Association at 202/624-1722  
[www.ctaa.org/ntrc/medical](http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/medical)

**March 2-7, 2001**  
10<sup>th</sup> National Conference and Exhibition on Transporting Students with Disabilities and the Preschool Population in Phoenix, Arizona  
Contact Roseann Schwaderer, Serif Press, Inc.  
At 703/465-5222  
[www.serifpress.com](http://www.serifpress.com)

**April 1-4, 2001**  
Transit Trainer's Workshop 2001: Seeking Solutions at the Speed of Change in St. Louis, Missouri  
Contact National Transit Institute, 732/932-1700

**April 2-5, 2001**  
Managing and Planning for Rural and Small Urban Systems in Milwaukee, Wisconsin/  
Contact University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center of Transportation Education and Development at 414/227-3337

**May 2-4, 2001**  
Exploring Rural Transit Services for Your Community In Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Contact Paula or Karen at

Oklahoma State University at 800/772-4678

**May 20-25, 2001**  
Community Transportation Association of America's Annual Rodeo and Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah  
Contact Charles Dickson, Community Transportation Association of America at 202/661-0208  
[www.ctaa.org/expo](http://www.ctaa.org/expo)

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Editor's Note: To include meetings or workshops in our calendar section, please send information to Kansas Transit Reporter, KUTC, 2011 Learned Hall, Lawrence, KS 66045

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### Pupil Transport, from page 3

[www.ksbe.state.ks.us/schoolbus/safety/html](http://www.ksbe.state.ks.us/schoolbus/safety/html).

Another useful web site contains the list of Kansas statutes from Kansas Legislative Services. The web site address is [www.ink.org/public/legislative/statutes/statutes.cgi](http://www.ink.org/public/legislative/statutes/statutes.cgi).

Requirements of the FTA and the Kansas DOT are included in *Kansas Rural Transit Provider Handbook*, listed below.

#### Sources

1. *Kansas Rural Transit Provider Handbook*, Kansas University Transportation Center, 2000.
2. *Kansas School Transportation Regulations, Standards, Statutes and Guidelines*, Kansas Department of Education, Rev. October 1, 2000.
3. *Federal Transportation Administration Section 5311 Circular*. ▲

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### FTA Guidelines on OTC Drugs, continued from page 6

[www.health.org/govpubs/](http://www.health.org/govpubs/) or call them 800/487-4889. Check page 15 for a list of other publications that might be useful in developing a prescription and over-the-counter drug policy.

#### Sources

1. *FTA Drug and Alcohol Regulation Options*, Issue 16, page 2, Fall 2000.
2. "Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication Can Affect Fitness to Drive," *Tap In*, Issue 3, 2000.
3. "Use and Abuse of Psychoactive Prescription Drugs and Over-the-Counter Medications," National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, [www.health.org/govpubs/BKD250/26f.htm](http://www.health.org/govpubs/BKD250/26f.htm) ▲

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### E-Commerce, from page 10

recently been listed by patrons without the knowledge of the agencies themselves.

To help support these agencies, connect to *MyCause.com*, search the site using the key words "transit and Kansas" and then click on to the organizations. Then follow the directions on the screen. By clicking on the sponsor Web sites, you can automatically support the organizations. You can also register your transit agency and begin to reap the benefits of E-Commerce.

#### Sources

1. "Fund-raising on the Internet: Three Easy Strategies for Nonprofits," *Nonprofit World*, July-August 1999.
2. "E-Commerce Revenue: Consumers Buy/Sell/Donate," *Nonprofit Times*, May 15, 1999. ▲

## Resources Order Form

THESE RESOURCES are distributed free of charge, unless noted otherwise, as a service of the Kansas Rural Transportation Assistance Program. Please use the order form on this page to order the publications and videos described here. Videos are available for two-week loans; please request no more than two videos at a time.



- Using Over-the-Counter Medication Wisely.** FDA Consumer Magazine, DHHS, 5 pages.
- Give 'Em the Facts: Prescription & Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse.** National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information., 4 pages.
- Over-the-Counter Drugs.** The Merck Manual Home Edition. 14 pages.
- Use and Abuse of Psychoactive Prescription Drugs and Over-the-Counter Medications.** National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. 3 pages.
- Developing a Vehicle Maintenance Program.** (2 pages). Kansas University Transportation Center.



- Safe Transport of the Public Under the Americans with Disabilities Act.** (30 min). FTA/RTAP/University Research Corporation & Take One Productions, 1993. Provides an overview of the basics of the ADA, stressing good passenger relations and focusing on the driver's responsibility for learning safe and courteous responses to varied circumstances.
- Preventive Maintenance for Rural Transit.** (7 min). Kansas University Transportation Center, 1989. Stresses the need for good preventive maintenance practices for rural transportation programs due the unique circumstances under which they operate.
- Small Transit Vehicle Inspections: Delivery, Pre-Trip and Annual Inspection Procedures.** (18 min). KUTC/KDOT, 1997.

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The *Kansas Trans Reporter* is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Kansas Department of Transportation. The purposes of the program are to: 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

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Please send us the inside form with corrected address information, or fax your changes to 785/864-3199.

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- Computer database searches
- Telephone consultation
- Referral services
- Training development
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- Program planning assistance

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