



# Kansas Trans Reporter

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The Newsletter for Kansas Rural and Specialized Transportation Providers • The University of Kansas Transportation Center

## Getting Inside Section 5309

New handbook outlines the what, why, and how of funding transfer and maintenance facilities in Kansas

by Pat Weaver



**W**as your mechanic outside in the snow changing the oil and servicing your agency's buses last winter? Have your vehicles been vandalized because they are stored in an unsecured location? Do you send all your vehicles out for servicing because your agency has no maintenance facilities? Building a maintenance or transfer facility for your transit agency may seem like an ideal solution to

these problems, but an impossible task because it is too expensive or too complex a project for your transit agency to assume.

Some Kansas agencies are finding out that, at last, it is possible to con-

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## New Directory Provides Updates on Kansas Providers








by Arin Gustafson

**T**he Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC) have been working together to create a new version of the *Transit Provider Directory*. This publication provides basic information about public transportation providers in Kansas.

It has been five years since the last directory was issued, and a lot of information has changed during that time. Some transit agencies have

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struct maintenance and transfer facilities or make other capital acquisitions with financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5309 Capital Investment Program. A new handbook developed at the Kansas University Transportation Center, commissioned by the Kansas Department of Transportation, will provide guidance to Kansas agencies interested in applying for funding.

**What is the Capital Investment Program?**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides financial assistance for a variety of projects under the Section 5309 Capital Investment Program. Financial assistance is available for the purchase of vehicles

must go through an application process to develop a fundable project approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This application includes a completed feasibility study and preliminary environmental analysis (for facility projects). Vehicle acquisitions are not subject to the preliminary environmental analysis requirement.

For the past several years, the Kansas Public Transit Association has taken the lead in submitting requests to secure Section 5309 discretionary funds. The Association submits these requests to the Kansas Congressional delegation on behalf of Kansas agencies. Several agencies have received funding for purchase of new vehicles and construction of transit facilities. Vehicles have already been purchased; the agencies that received an earmark for facilities are currently preparing applications.

Section 5309 funding can be

projects" that involve a public/private partnership. These types of projects must enhance the effectiveness of a transit project and must be related "physically or functionally" to the transit project, or they must establish new or enhanced coordination between transit and other forms of transportation.

**Who can apply?**

Public bodies and agencies may apply for Section 5309 assistance. Eligible public bodies include states, municipalities, and other political subdivisions of states, public agencies and instrumentalities of one or more states, and certain public corporations, boards, and commissions established under state law.

Although any of these entities may apply for Section 5309 assistance, it is helpful, particularly for rural agencies, to designate KDOT as the grantee (direct recipient of the funding). KDOT is equipped to fulfill FTA requirements by electronically filing applications with FTA through the TEAM process, as well as handling other procedural matters that may be more difficult for local organizations. The local agencies then become a sub-grantee to KDOT.

**What's covered?**

Typical types of capital covered under Section 5309 appear in the box at right. In addition, there are several other categories related to capital programs for which Section 5309 funds can be used. These include:

*Education and Training.* Capital Program funds may be used for education and training purposes.

*Innovative Financing.* Grant applicants—especially applicants wishing to undertake major projects—are encouraged to explore alternative and innovative methods

## Section 5309 covers capital projects—and other types, too, like education.

and vehicle-related equipment (fareboxes, computers, etc.), facility construction and facility renovation.

The Section 5309 program is a discretionary program, not a formula program like the Section 5310 and 5311 programs. That means securing an allocation from this funding source requires submitting a request for funding through the Kansas Congressional delegation for an "earmark" in the annual federal transportation appropriations bill. If successful, specific projects are identified in the annual transportation appropriations bill for the federal fiscal year beginning October 1 of that year.

This earmark means the funds have been set aside for an identified project; however, the applicant still

used for a variety of capital needs, such as:

- Capital costs for coordinating transit with other transportation such as linkages to an airport or to inter-city passenger rail or bus services;
- Capital projects needed for efficient and coordinated transportation systems;
- Introduction of new technology such as alternative-fuel buses or ITS applications;
- Projects that meet special needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities;
- Transportation projects that enhance urban economic development or incorporate private investment, including "joint development

## What kinds of capital can be purchased or developed?



Although not an exhaustive list, the following are typical projects eligible under the “vehicle and related facilities” category of the Capital Program.

- buses and other rolling stock;
- ancillary equipment (wheelchair lifts, maintenance equipment, computers, etc.); and
- construction of bus facilities (i.e., maintenance facilities, garages, storage areas, waiting facilities and terminals, transit malls and centers, transfer facilities, and intermodal facilities). This category also includes park-and-ride facilities, bus rehabilitation and leasing, parking lots associated with transit facilities, and bus passenger shelters.

Facility development projects must meet program requirements before they can be approved. These include a feasibility study, a preliminary environmental analysis and an assurance of inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

of financing their transit projects. Alternative financing can involve combining multiple nontraditional sources of funding—federal, state, local, and private—in support of transit capital and operating needs. Some approaches grant applicants might investigate include: leasing arrangements, joint development, state economic development or revolving loan funds, exchanges of real property, and in-kind contributions. Capital Program funds may be used to pay for costs incurred to secure or initiate an innovative financing technique.

*Capital Cost of Contracting.* Also included as an eligible project cost is the “capital cost of contracting;” that is, when a grantee contracts with another party for service, the depreciation and interest costs related to the facilities or equipment used by the contractor to provide the service are considered eligible for capital assistance by FTA, provided the services are obtained through competitive procurement. The eligi-

ble capital component is limited to the capital consumed in the contracted service. Capital consumed in the provision of service outside the transit portion of the contract, such as for charter or school bus service, is not eligible.

*Leasing.* When a grantee leases tangible capital assets from another party, leasing costs are eligible for capital assistance, provided leasing is more cost-effective than purchase or construction. Leasing costs eligible for capital assistance include finance charges, including interest, and ancillary costs such as delivery and installation charges.

### How do agencies secure Section 5309 funds in Kansas?

In the first quarter of each year, the Kansas Public Transit Association, in cooperation with individual providers interested in securing Section 5309 funding, typically prepares a list of projects for funding consideration to the Kansas Congressional delegation. Once

these requests have been made, the Congressional delegation contacts the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) to respond in general terms to the feasibility of the proposed projects. To assist KDOT in responding in a positive and informative manner on each proposal, public transportation operators are asked to prepare and submit a concept statement to KDOT, as early as mid-January, but prior to their visit with the Congressional delegation. This concept statement can be used to provide an estimate of needs for buses and bus facilities to KDOT, the FTA Regional Office, and the Congressional delegation.

A format for this concept statement is available as part of a *Section 5309 Application Handbook* prepared by the KU Transportation Center under contract to the Kansas Department of Transportation.

The timeline for a completed application necessary before being able to expend Section 5309 funds includes the following “rules:”

- 1) Each Congressional authorization for Section 5309 funds has a three-year life (two years plus one year carryover);
- 2) All funds must be obligated by September 30 at the end of the third federal fiscal year; and
- 3) An application for funding requires an estimated six months for FTA processing. Applications must be received no later than March of the third year to avoid loss of funding, but applicants are encouraged to submit applications well in advance of this deadline.

The *Section 5309 Application Handbook* can assist agencies in completing applications for Section 5309 funds. It contains recommended formats for the application, the assurances, the feasibility study and the preliminary environmental assess-

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ment. KDOT will make this handbook available to all agencies anticipating participation in the Section 5309 program.

A session at the Kansas Public Transit Association Annual Meeting to be held in September 2001 will provide additional information on the Section 5309 program and procedures for applying for funds. A copy of the *Kansas Section 5309 Handbook* is available on the Kansas RTAP web site, *www.kutc.ku.edu*.

For more information, contact Pat Weaver at the KU Transportation Center, (785) 864-2595. ▲

**Transit Provider Directory**  
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opened their doors while others have closed, and agency staff have come and gone as well.

Information for the directory was collected during KDOT's Public Transportation Annual Project Review of transportation providers who receive Section 5311, 5310 and/or 5307 grants from KDOT.

The directory contains information useful to government officials, transit operators, planners, civic leaders, and others interested in public transportation. The directory has one page for each Kansas transit agency that includes contact information, service area, service hours, fares, clientele, type(s) of funding, and a brief description of the agency.

The KUTC and KDOT will distribute the directories this summer. All transportation providers who receive funding from KDOT will receive a copy in the mail. All others may request a copy from the KUTC at (785) 864-5658. ▲

# Testing Administrator Fields Frequently Asked Questions

.....  
by Pat Weaver and Tim Harris  
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**W**e asked the Kansas Drug and Alcohol Testing administrator what kinds of questions his staff receives from transit agencies. Tim Harris of the Mental Health Consortium, Inc., polled his staff and their consensus is that most questions are about pre-employment, post-accident, and reasonable suspicion testing.

To let you know how they have responded to others, we've prepared a list of those frequently-asked questions and the answers—to help refresh your knowledge.

**When do pre-employment drug tests have to be done?**

Under 49CFR Part 653.41, Pre-employment Testing:

- (a) An employer may not hire an applicant to perform a safety-sensitive function unless the applicant takes a drug test with a verified negative result administered under this part (i.e., it must be a DOT test).
- (b) An employer may not transfer an employee from a non-safety-sensitive function to a safety-sensitive function until the employee takes a drug test with a verified negative result administered under this part.
- (c) If an applicant or employee test is canceled, the employer shall require the employee or applicant to take another pre-employment drug test.

**When can a reasonable suspicion drug test be conducted?**

Under 49CFR Part 653.43, Reasonable Suspicion Testing:

- (a) An employer shall conduct a drug test when the employer has reasonable suspicion to believe that the covered employee has used a prohibited drug.
- (b) An employer's determination that reasonable suspicion exists shall be based on specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of the covered employee. The required observations must be made by a supervisor who is trained in detecting the signs and symptoms of drug use.

**When can a reasonable suspicion alcohol test be conducted?**

Under 49CFR Part 654.37, Reasonable Suspicion Testing:

- (a) An employer shall require a covered employee to submit to an alcohol test when to employer has reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee has violated the prohibitions in this part.
- (b) The employer's determination that reasonable suspicion exists to require the covered employee to undergo an alcohol test shall be based on specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech or body odors of the employee. The required observations shall be make by a supervisor who is trained in detecting the symptoms of alcohol misuse. The supervisor who makes the determination that reasonable suspicion exists shall not conduct the breath alcohol test on that employee.

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# Is it me?...

## or are people difficult around here?

Maybe it is you, at least in part.

.....  
 by James C. Holland  
 .....

Providing transportation can be stressful and hectic. Some days the least little nuisance may cause you to fantasize about starting an old-fashioned “Brooklyn brawl.” According to Sandra A. Crowe, president of Pivotal Point Training and Consulting Inc., and author of *Since Strangling Isn't an Option*, what you cannot eliminate you must learn to deal with.

Successfully dealing with difficult people may very well begin with yourself: your actions, your attitudes, and your responses. If you are not willing to compromise, the situation will likely escalate. The more information and awareness you have, the more control you will have over the situation (as opposed to control over the other person).

There are four important steps to take in dealing with difficult people:

- 1) examine the challenge,
- 2) understand others' actions,
- 3) evaluate your reaction, and
- 4) learn to gracefully handle unavoidable situations.

### Examine the challenge

Once you've concluded that Person X is annoying, find out if she provokes anger in everyone or just you. You could be so focused on yourself, you can't see the problem is not with



Dealing with difficult people starts with you. Examine your actions and attitudes.

person X but with you. If co-workers react negatively to Person X, determine what behaviors of hers ignites those negative responses. They might be different from what you experience.

### Understand others' actions

The backgrounds of co-workers generally affect the way they are and the way they behave in the workplace. For instance, a rough childhood may lead to insecurity in adult life. Such influences may teach a person to blame others for shortcomings, and/or to take credit for the work of others. Once the source of the hostility can be identified, the situation

is generally easier to understand and confront.

### Evaluate your reaction

A good strategy for handling disputes is to observe yourself. Be vigilant about body language, tone, and word choice. Notice how, when, and why you are reacting with automatic responses, such as cursing, or making insulting or passive-aggressive remarks. As you replay the exchange in your mind, note it in a journal. You may find that you are dismissing someone before an interaction ever takes place. A change in your behavior during an interaction—and change in your attitude before an interaction—will allow control of your own feelings. Once you can control your own feelings, your perceptions of the other person will likely change, as well.

### Learn to gracefully handle unavoidable situations

Finally, when talking with person X, redirect the conversation to a positive end, giving him or her encouraging words. When it is difficult to work the matter out, saying “Here's my perception of the situation,” or “For the sake of this job, I'd like to work it out” will generally make the situation much smoother.

### Source

“What a Pain!,” edited by Rebecca Meany, *Successful Meetings*, February 2001. ▲

**Drug & Alcohol FAQs,**

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(c) Alcohol testing is authorized by this section only if the observations required by paragraph (b) of this section are made during, just preceding, or just after the period of the work day that the covered employee is required to be in compliance with this part. An employer may direct a covered employee to undergo reasonable suspicion testing for alcohol only while the employee is performing safety-sensitive functions; just before the employee is to perform safety-sensitive functions; or just after the employee has ceased performing such functions.

d) (1) If a test required by this section is not administered within two hours following the determination under paragraph (b) of this section, the employer shall prepare and maintain on file a record stating the reasons the test was not promptly administered. If a test required by this section is not administered within eight hours following the determination under paragraph (b) of this section, the employer shall cease attempts to administer an alcohol test and shall state in the record the reasons for not administering the test.

(2) No longer applicable.

(3) Notwithstanding the absence of a reasonable suspicion alcohol test under this section, an employer shall not permit a covered employee to report for duty or remain on duty requiring the performance of safety-sensitive functions while the employee is under the influence of or impaired by alcohol, as shown by the behavioral, speech, or performance indicators of alcohol misuse, or shall an employer permit the covered employee to perform or continue to perform safety-sensitive functions, until;

(i) An alcohol test is administered and the employee's alcohol

concentration measures less than 0.02 percent; or

(ii) The start of the employee's next regularly scheduled duty period, but not less than 8 hours following the determination under paragraph (b) of this section that there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee has violated the prohibitions in this part.

(4) Except as provided in paragraph (d)(2), no employer shall take any action under this part against a covered employee based solely on the employee's behavior and appearance in the absence of an alcohol test. This does not prohibit an employer with the authority independent of this part from taking any action otherwise consistent with law.

**When is post-accident drug testing to be performed?**

Under 49CFR part 653.45, Post-Accident Testing:

(a) (1) *Fatal accidents.* As soon as practicable following an accident involving the loss of human life, an employer shall test each surviving covered employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident. The employer shall also test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

(2) *Nonfatal accidents.*

(i) As soon as practicable following an accident not involving the loss of human life, in which the mass transit vehicle involved is a bus, electric bus, van, or automobile, the employer shall test each covered employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident unless the employer determines, using the best information available at the time of the decision, that the covered employee's performance can be completely discounted as a con-

tributing factor to the accident. The employer shall also test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

(ii) As soon as practicable following an accident not involving the loss of human life, in which the mass transit vehicle involved is a rail car, trolley car, trolley bus, or vessel, the employer shall test each covered employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident unless the employer determines, using the best information available at the time of the decision, that the covered employee's performance can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident. The decision not to administer a test under this paragraph shall be based on the employer's determination using the best available information at the time of the determination that the employee's performance could not have contributed to the accident. The employer shall also test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

(b) An employer shall ensure that a covered employee required to be tested under this section is tested as soon as practicable and within 32 hours of the accident. A covered employee who is subject to post-accident testing who fails to remain readily available for such testing, including notifying the employer or the employer representative of his or her location if he or she leaves the scene of the accident prior to submission to such test, may be deemed by the employer to have refused to submit to testing.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of nec-

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# Rural Roads are Tough on Buses

One county responded by toughening-up their bus design.

by Arin Gustafson

Frequent brake applications, dirt roads and less stable maneuverability describe a typical day in the life of a rural transit agency. These factors lead to the need for a better rural vehicle design, one that can stand up to the special requirements of rural transit. Ride Solutions in Putnam County, Florida, set out to meet the challenge of providing a vehicle that meets those needs.

bus needs to be retrofitted with a platform wheelchair lift. All of the above conditions can cause rural transit agencies to settle for a vehicle that does not meet their needs.

As Boyd Thompson, Director of Operations for Ride Solutions knows, it can be difficult to find a vehicle that meets all of these conditions. Thompson set out to develop a vehicle specifically designed to meet the needs of his and other rural paratransit agencies. Thompson purchased a used 1975 35-foot RTS bus that had a wheelbase one foot short-

was replaced because it was soft due to moisture being trapped between the floor and the frame. The contractors also installed a back door and a platform wheelchair lift.

When the conversion was completed Thompson had shorter, heavy-duty bus better suited to rural environments.

Thompson said the biggest challenge was getting the money to finance the project, which was about \$50,000.

Clients have reacted favorably to the new bus, according to



Numerous brake applications, dirt roads and less stable maneuverability describe a typical day in the life of a rural transit agency.

Rural environments demand that vehicles be able to handle persistent driving hours on dirt and gravel roads and perform numerous brake applications. Parts such as shocks, transmission, and motor mounts need to be dependable and long lasting. Rural transit agencies may look for vehicles with a shorter wheelbase to have better maneuverability on dirt and gravel roads.

The standard 30-foot bus is often too large for rural transit agencies that serve lower-density areas. Large buses with few clients give the impression to local businesses and community members that the transit service is inefficient. And a standard

er than similar buses. He chose a shorter wheelbase because it would make maneuvering on the dirt roads much easier.

After he selected the bus Thomson arranged for a "30 foot standard conversion" in which one five-foot module was removed from the frame of the bus. Then the engine and body were remanufactured and the bulkheads and radiator were replaced to strengthen the bus and give it structural integrity. The radiator was removed from the bottom of the bus and put on the front to minimize problems with road dust.

The original plywood flooring

Thompson. It is a nicer, more modern bus, the entrance is more accommodating and it is easier for drivers to maneuver on the dirt roads. He recommends other rural transit agencies look into this type of conversion.

Sources:

"New Vehicle Innovation for Rural and Flex-Route Agencies," *TD Connector*, Spring 2000;

James Van Sickle, Program Manager, KDOT Office of Public Transportation, 785/296-5194. ▲



# Creative Sales Promotions Grab Attention

*Reprinted with permission from "Marketing Ideas to Get You There" by the West Virginia Division of Public Transit.*

**S**ales promotions add a different dimension to your marketing effort by making it easier or cheaper for riders to buy your tickets or increasing your system's visibility in an interesting way.

- *Giveaways and discounts.* When reaching out to new riders or launching new services, free or discounted tickets are an effective no-cost way to build ridership. For example, many transit systems offer free rides for the first week or month of a new service or free ride coupons in print ads for "Try Transit Week." If you have ride coupons printed, make sure they cannot be duplicated. The KRT system in Charleston has passes printed with a unique hologram that cannot be easily copied.

- *Weekly/monthly passes.* Discounted weekly and monthly passes make it easier and more convenient for passengers to pay fares. Because customers will often buy more merchandise when it's offered to them, encourage your employees to tell riders the advantages of buying passes over buying individual tickets.

- *On-site mobile ticket sales.* Regularly scheduled on-site mobile fare sales can provide a convenient way for riders at retirement homes, courthouses, medical clinics, senior cen-



*On National Hugging Day, January 21, you could offer discounts for rides to visit loved ones.*

ters, schools and large employment sites to purchase transit passes.

- *Special ticket promotions.* Community events present opportunities for transit systems to boost ridership with shuttles or expanded schedules. Special tickets are a great way to promote the service. Special shuttles to local fairs and festivals, sports events, Christmas light displays and shopping destinations can extend your ridership while providing customers with an affordable and convenient outing. Clarksburg's CENTRA system has developed a special "Quality of Life Pass" for welfare recipients. The West Virginia DHHR subsidizes the cost of the

special passes, which are made available to welfare clients looking for work or holding entry-level jobs.

- *Promotional items.* The fact that people love to get something for free is a basic rule of marketing. Low-cost giveaway items with your system's name and phone number are an effective way to keep your name out in the community and promote your system or new services. For adult bus riders, consider lapel pins, plastic rain bonnets, folding umbrellas, t-shirts, shopping bags, coin purses and pencils. For children, choose coloring books and school supplies such as rulers. Give-away items need not be expensive. Use your imagination and always be on the lookout for off-beat opportunities.

- *Radio promotion.* Contests, giveaways and live remote broadcasts can help increase listener involvement in commercial radio. Stations are particularly open to running promotions with their advertisers.

- *Holiday tie-ins.* The public is always looking for new and unique ways to celebrate holidays. This type of promotion can help tie your services to the many holidays and special observances throughout the year. See the calendar that follows for some common and not-so-common holidays you can tie in with your promotions.



## Creative Ride Promotions

### January

- 1 New Year's Day
- 2 Betsy Ross's Birthday
- 4 Trivia Day
- 8 Elvis Presley's Birthday
- 15 Martin Luther King's Birthday
- 21 National Hugging Day

—January is:

March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month; National Volunteer Blood Donor Month

### February

- 1 Freedom Day
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 5 National New Idea Day
- 6 Mid-Winter's Day
- 7 National Inventor's Day
- 12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- 14 St. Valentine's Day
- 20 Student Volunteer Day
- 22 George Washington's Birthday

—February is:

American Heart Month; Black History Month; Canned Food Month

### March

- 2 Young Artist Day
- 5 Go Fly a Kite Day
- 6 Save Your Vision Day
- 8 International Women's Day
- 13 Good Samaritan Day
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 Earth Day- Spring Begins
- 22 National Goof-Off Day

—March is:

Nutrition Month; Red Cross Month

### April

- 1 April Fool's Day
- 5 Safety First Day
- 7 World Health Day
- 13 Thomas Jefferson's Birthday
- 15 Income Tax Deadline Day
- 18 Keep America Beautiful Day
- 22 Professional Secretaries Day
- 23 William Shakespeare's Birthday
- 28 Kiss Your Mate Day

—April is:

National Humor Month; Do-It-Yourself Month; Cancer Control Month

### May

- 3 Older Americans' Day
- 5 Free Advice Day
- 6 National Nurses' Day
- 10 Mothers Day (2nd Sunday in May)
- 17 Transportation Day
- 18 Visit Your Relatives Day
- 21 Red Cross Founded
- 25 Memorial Day (last Monday in May)

—May is:

Older Americans Month; Blood Pressure Month

### June

- 4 Entrepreneur Day
- 5 World Environment Day
- 6 Family Day (1st Sunday in June)
- 11 Good Humor Day
- 14 Flag Day
- 15 A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed Day
- 16 Father's Day (3rd Sunday in June)

—June is:

Dairy Month

### July

- 4 Independence Day
- 5 Recreation Day (for the disabled)
- 11 National Cheer Up the Lonely Day
- 28 Two-for-One Day
- 31 Tell a Joke Day

—July is:

National Anti-Boredom Month

### August

- 1 National Clown Day
- 3 Twins Day
- 9 Family Day
- 15 National Relaxation Day
- 18 Watermelon Day
- 19 Orville Wright's Day
- 23 Friendship Day
- 26 Women's Equality Day
- 29 National Neighborhood Day

—August is:

National Water Quality Month

### September

- 1 Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
- 11 National Grandparent's Day
- 17 National Farmer's Day
- 20 World Peace Day
- 21 World Gratitude Day
- 23 Autumn Begins
- 26 Johnny Appleseed Day

—September is:

National Sight Saving Month

### October

- 4 Child Health Day (1st Monday of October)
- 11 Eleanor Roosevelt's Birthday
- 12 Columbus Day
- 15 National Grouch Day
- 16 World Food Day
- 16 National Boss's Day
- 17 Sweetest day (3rd Saturday in October)
- 23 Mother-In-Law Day
- 31 Halloween

—October is:

Mountaineer Heritage Month; National Apple Month

### November

- 3 Sandwich Day
- 7 Sadie Hawkins Day (usually 1st Saturday in November)
- 10 US Marines Day
- 11 US Veterans' Day
- 19 Great American Smokeout
- 20 Make A Wish Day
- 21 Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday of November)

—November is:

International Creative Child and Adult Month

### December

- 5 Volunteer Day
- 7 Pearl Harbor Day
- 16 Ludwig van Beethoven's Day
- 21 Crossword Puzzle Day

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# Just in Case: Safety Procedures to Live By

.....  
 by Ira Allen  
 .....

It's almost noon, and the sun streaming through the dispatch office windows is prompting you to take off for lunch. You pick up the ringing phone and somebody is already talking more quickly than you can follow. You are able to piece together a story: one of your buses has been in an accident on Elm Street; several windows have been shattered and the driver appears to be unconscious. The caller is unclear on how the accident happened and you can hear an ambulance arriving in the background. What do you do?

Fortunately, major transit accidents and emergencies are rare in Kansas. However, it is still important to have a plan for dealing with such situations calmly and effectively. Do you make sure that accidents and emergencies are dealt with appropriately, with minimal or no injury to passengers or drivers? Do you protect your agency and employees from fraudulent or excessive liability claims? Do your emergency procedures comply with regulatory requirements such as post-accident drug and alcohol testing? This article details a set of procedures you can use to handle an accident or other emergency situation with confidence.

## Plan ahead, in writing

It is important that you establish a written set of agency policies and procedures for on-board emergencies and accidents. Procedures should address a variety of situations, especially vehicle accidents, on-board emergencies such as passenger illness

or violence, foul weather, and natural disasters such as flooded roads, tornados and blizzards.

The initial responsibility for crisis management on a bus rests with the driver of the vehicle, assuming that the driver is not incapacitated. A suggested set of procedures for drivers to follow in any situation is described in the sidebar. While these procedures will be valuable, you will need to come up with your own, more detailed guidelines. Use these procedures as a starting point, and tailor them to best fit your agency, giving particular attention to the

vehicle. That way, in the event the driver is incapacitated in an accident, passengers have "something in the vehicle to tell them who to call." Passengers are accustomed to the presence of safety cards in the seat pockets on planes; perhaps it is time to see them more frequently on buses, although the driver need not run through a safety presentation at every stop.

OCCK, Inc. in Salina, KS, for instance, distributes passenger handbooks regularly, which offer information on safety procedures among other things. A card with instructions



Your dispatcher plays a critical role in providing guidance, support, and instructions during an emergency.

types of incidents your agency is most likely to encounter. Establishing procedures will be worthless, however, if your staff and riders don't know about them.

## Communicate your procedures to staff and riders

There are several ways to communicate your procedures to staff and riders. Your efforts will probably center on two areas—written policies and training. A checklist for passengers to read on board can be helpful. Kathy Marion, Program Coordinator for KDOT, suggests laminating an emergency card and posting it in the

on the operation of a two-way radio may be posted near the radio. This may not apply in all cases, of course, as some providers carry passengers who would have difficulty following these instructions.

## Reinforce the procedures

Because the driver is the most important safety resource on the bus, driver safety education and orientation should be a priority for transit providers. Some steps toward this end include regular safety drills, instructional handbooks, and mandatory driver training. Gary Rohr, of OCCK, says, "Once a month drivers

time the length it takes to get passengers off the bus and accounted for,” as in the event of an engine fire or tornado. OCCK also mandates 21 hours of driver safety training, as well as a commercial driver’s license.

An employee achievement recognition program can be a positive reinforcement for drivers who are safety-conscious. The National Safety Council can, for a minimal fee, provide you with a safe driver award kit including certificates, patches, pins, and other items. Placing a high priority on driver awareness of emergency procedures—including evacuation procedures, first aid, CPR, and other technical skills—can save lives, and can also help to protect your agency from fallout in the aftermath of a vehicular accident.

Consider holding monthly or bi-monthly safety meetings with all staff and volunteers to make sure everyone is “thinking safety.” This is one of the best ways to ensure you and your staff have the time to formally discuss safety practices and experiences. Procedures should be reinforced on an ongoing basis. Emergencies are generally infrequent, so it is not enough to offer training only once. Safety meetings are an ideal way to reinforce the content and importance of your agency’s safety procedures.

If your agency requires post-accident drug and alcohol testing, it is useful to have a flow sheet to help determine when such testing is necessary, and what level of testing is appropriate. OCCK Inc. has developed such a flow sheet to help them coordinate their agency’s drug and alcohol testing guidelines with requirements imposed by KDOT. To order a sample of their flow sheet, turn to page 15.

You may also want to consider dispatcher training. One of the first actions a driver takes in an emergency is to contact the dispatcher. It

## Four Step Crisis Plan for Drivers

If you are involved in an emergency, you should follow procedures defined by your transit agency. These procedures are designed to create agency-wide consistency in handling incidents and they help maintain a high safety standard. They also decrease the risk of injury and liability. We recommend four basic steps for drivers to follow:

- *Keep calm.* This is your first responsibility in any crisis. You must be able to make rational and informed decisions, as these decisions will affect the safety of everyone on the bus. When you stay calm, even if frightened yourself, passengers and others around you tend to remain calm as well. Staying calm helps everyone handle an accident or emergency in a professional and responsible manner.
- *Contact the dispatcher.* Your dispatcher plays a critical role in providing guidance, support, and instructions during an emergency. He or she can also contact the police or hospital if necessary. Contact with the dispatcher allows the agency to send supporting personnel to the emergency location if they are required, and keeps the agency abreast of the situation as it unfolds. It is important to stay in contact; this helps the agency provide as much assistance as is needed. Obviously, if your vehicle is not equipped with on-board communication, alternate policies should be adopted.
- *Protect your passengers, yourself, and the vehicle.* This means doing whatever is necessary to guard against injury, discomfort, and further damage, and is primarily up to your judgment. You must remain aware of circumstances around you, and be sure that passengers are in a safe location and do not wander into danger. Distribute witness cards if required. In certain types of emergencies, steps 2 and 3 listed here may be switched in priority. For example, if your bus has an engine fire, you should ensure the safety of your passengers and yourself before contacting the dispatcher.
- *Complete the required reports.* It’s important to complete reports concerning accidents, emergencies, and incidents before you leave work on the day of one of these situations. This is because memory will not be sufficient if an accident goes to court and you are called to the witness stand. Your written reports will be used by those who weren’t there and do not know what happened; it is to your advantage that they get an accurate account of what transpired.

is important that the dispatcher have the correct information, and it’s very helpful if s/he also has some measure of hands-on experience with the driver’s emergency procedures. The dispatcher should be able to visualize the actions being taken by the driver. For this to be possible, training is essential.

### Talking with the media

Even if everything is handled appropriately, talking with the media or other agencies needs to be carefully considered. Be prepared to communicate with a number of groups and individuals during or shortly after a crisis situation. Plan in advance who

Go to page 13



## When Lightning Strikes

Don't get zapped by inadequate protection

.....  
by Lisa M. Harris  
.....

Reprinted from *pc-trans magazine*,  
Winter 2001.

Some of us are not protecting our computers as well as we should. Here's proof: When electricity surges through lines during summer storms, computer repair shops also receive a surge of calls about fried hardware. And some of that equipment was attached to surge protectors.

This fact from an article by Carlene Hempel in the *Raleigh News and Observer* certainly got my attention. Here's more information from that article.

All surge protectors are not alike. The more expensive models come with a guarantee of service. Cheaper models are less resistant to the stress of surges and can burn out faster. You won't know they're not working until it's too late.

The best protection for your computer is to plug it into a surge protector that has a guarantee of service—and replace the surge protector before the guarantee expires.

That's a good first step. But electrical outlets are not the only source of damage from lightning. Nowadays most computers have more than one connection to the wall—they also connect to a telephone or cable jack for internet and email access. These connections are also susceptible to damage from lightning strikes. "They're the ones

### Protect your gear

Here's what you can do, short of unplugging everything—including the phone line from the computer and the cable wire from the tele-vision—during a storm.

- Make sure both your electrical and phone systems are properly grounded.
- Buy a good surge protector. Cheap protectors have to be replaced every couple of years, because they can only take so many surges. Good ones—\$40 and up—generally come with a warranty and a guarantee that, short of a direct lightning hit, your equipment won't be ruined.
- Phone lines need to have surge protectors, too. They hook straight into the jack. There are protectors that cover both the phone and the sockets.
- Cable TV lines also need surge protectors.
- Unless the equipment is in a "cluster"—or plugged into the same outlet strip, in which case one quality surge protector will take care of it—protectors would be installed on any outlet that has electronics attached to it. Never plug electronics directly into an outlet.
- And finally, there's a chance that the electrical code will be changed to address the problem. One remedy might be lowering the minimum threshold for what's called the accepted "resistance to ground."

Source: *Raleigh News and Observer*

getting smacked," said Hempel.

Damage can occur whether the computer is on or off. And you don't need to see lightening or hear thunder to be in danger. "Sometimes there won't even be a storm around and there will be a crazy amount of

surges," said Jason DeChicco from Intrex Computers in Raleigh, N.C.

Even a slight surge can damage delicate modern electronics such as computers, fax machines, PDAs and more, said Hempel. Most people are unaware of these minor surges

because major electrical appliances (ovens, toaster ovens, refrigerators) are generally unaffected by them.

“Electronic equipment is more susceptible to ‘transient voltages,’” said Terry Pope, electrical inspector for the City of Raleigh. “When lightning strikes a telephone pole or a power transmission line, that volt-

## Surge protectors are not all alike.

age floods the system. It travels in all directions on the line, trying to get off. And if your house is in its path, watch out.”

Buildings need to be grounded, said Hempel. She explained that there are generally two main electrical feeds entering a building from the street—each leg carrying 120 volts. A third wire, the grounding wire, provides an alternate path for current to travel. Houses built before the late 1960s may have two wires instead of three, and while one acts as a ground, it might not provide adequate protection from a major surge.

Don’t get zapped! Review the tips on page 12 to be sure your equipment—at home and at work—is protected. ▲

## Creative Sales Promotions,

from page 9

22 Winter Begins  
25 Christmas Day  
31 New Year’s Eve

Source:

“Marketing Ideas to Get You There,”  
*West Virginia Transit Manual*,  
January 2001. ▲

## Safety Procedures, from page 11

in your agency will have authority to speak publicly about the accident or incident. For obvious reasons, you will probably not want the driver to talk to the media. This should be made clear to drivers in training sessions and safety meetings.

Community Transportation Online has an article concerning media-relations that may be a useful resource; this can be found at [www.cta.org/ct/mayjune99/press.html](http://www.cta.org/ct/mayjune99/press.html).

There are a number of ways to enhance safety awareness and skills within an agency, and several of them have been outlined in this article. If you wish to do more for safety at your agency, consider safety enhancement training programs by such organizations as the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). You can check for more information at [www.ctaa.org/training/pass](http://www.ctaa.org/training/pass) and [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com). The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has information on safety. Their website can be found at [www.ink.org/public/kdot/](http://www.ink.org/public/kdot/). Janet Blue, KDOT Drug and Alcohol Testing Program Coordinator, can be contacted at (785) 296-0826.

Safety awareness is one of the greatest responsibilities of transit providers, and in this case, a good defense is the best offense. Although everyone hopes that their fleet will escape accidents and emergencies, serious mishap can befall even the most careful drivers. Because of this, it is vital that you have procedures for dealing with emergencies, and that these procedures are familiar to your drivers, and hopefully your passengers as well. Only you know if your standards are up to scratch. Only you can make the changes necessary to

ensure safety for your passengers, drivers, and other employees. Because of this, it’s vital that you do your best to be prepared, just in case.

Sources:

Risk Management for Rural Transit Systems Resource Handbook, U.S. DOT, FTA, RTAP National Program, 1993;

SCDHPT Public Transportation Vehicle Operator Safety Manual and Resource Guide, published by the South Carolina Department of Health and Public Transportation, 1988. ▲

## Drug & Alcohol FAQs,

from page 6

essary medical attention for the injured following an accident or to prohibit a covered employee from leaving the scene of an accident for the period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident or to obtain necessary emergency medical care.

## When is post-accident alcohol testing to be performed?

Under 49CFR Part 654.33, Post-accident testing:

(a) (1) *Fatal accidents*. As soon as practicable following an accident involving the loss of human life, an employer shall test each surviving covered employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident. The employer shall also test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

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## Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

July 29-31, 2001  
South West Transit  
Association Planning Seminar  
In Kansas City, KS  
Contact Carol Ketcherside,  
South West Transit  
Association  
Phone: 210-967-6446  
Fax: 210-967-6442  
cketcherside@swta.org

July 29-August 2, 2001  
International Symposium on  
Transportation Technology  
Transfer  
In St. Petersburg, FL  
Contact University of Florida  
Phone: 352-392-2371,  
ext. 223

Fax: 352-392-3224  
chris@ce.ufl.edu  
http://t2.ce.ufl.edu

August 19-21, 2001  
ITE Annual Meeting  
In Chicago, IL  
Contact Institute of  
Transportation Engineers  
www.ite.org

September 23-25, 2001  
Annual Meeting of the Kansas  
Public Transit Association  
In Topeka, KS  
Contact Steve Feigenbaum,  
KPTA  
Phone: 913-492-9092  
www.kstransit.com

Sept. 30-October 4, 2001  
American Public Transit  
Association Annual Meeting  
In Philadelphia, PA  
Contact APTA  
Phone: 202-848-4040  
www.apta.com

Fall 2001  
RTAP Driver Training  
Workshop/RTAP Transit  
Manager's Workshop:  
October 2 in Salina, KS  
October 10 in Wichita, KS  
October 17 in Topeka, KS  
Contact Rose Lichtenberg, KUTC  
Phone: 785-864-2594  
Fax: 785-864-3199  
rosemary@ku.edu

Fall 2001  
RTAP Driver Training Workshop:  
October 3-4 in Hays, KS  
October 4 in Great Bend, KS  
October 9 in Dodge City, KS  
October 11 in Emporia, KS  
October 23 in Chanute, KS  
October 24 in Manhattan, KS  
Contact Rose Lichtenberg, KUTC  
Phone: 785-864-2594  
Fax: 785-864-3199  
rosemary@ku.edu

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Editor's Note: To include meet-  
ings or workshops in our calen-  
dar, send information to  
Kansas Trans Reporter, KUTC,  
1530 W. 15th St., Room 2011,  
Lawrence, KS 66045

### Drug & Alcohol FAQs, from page 13

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#### (2) *Nonfatal accidents.*

(i) As soon as practicable following an accident not involving the loss of human life, in which the mass transit vehicle involved is a bus, electric bus, van, or automobile, the employer shall test each covered employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident unless the employer determines, using the best information available at the time of the decision, that the covered employee's performance can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident. The employer shall also test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

(ii) As soon as practicable following an accident not involving the loss of human life, in which the mass transit vehicle involved is a rail car, trolley car, trolley bus, or vessel, the employer shall test each covered

employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident unless the employer determines, using the best information available at the time of the decision, that the covered employee's performance can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident. The decision not to administer a test under this paragraph shall be based on the employer's determination, using the best available information at the time of the determination, that the employee's performance could not have contributed to the accident. The employer shall also test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

(b) (1) If a test required by this section is not administered within two hours following the accident, the employer shall prepare and maintain on file a record stating the reasons the test was not promptly administered. If a test required by this paragraph is not administered within eight hours following the accident,

the employer shall cease attempts to administer an alcohol test and shall maintain the same record. Records shall be submitted to the FTA upon request of the Administrator.

(2) No longer applicable.

(d) A covered employee who is subject to post-accident testing who fails to remain readily available for such testing, including notifying the employer or employer representative of his or her location if he or she leaves the scene of the accident prior to submission to such test, may be deemed by the employer to have refused to submit to testing. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention for injured people following an accident or to prohibit a covered employee from leaving the scene of an accident or to obtain necessary emergency medical care.

For additional questions, call Janet Blue, KDOT Drug and Alcohol testing coordinator at 785-296-0826 or the Mental Health Consortium, Inc. at 785-232-1196. ▲

## 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.

### Publications

- Complying with Federal Regulations: A Primer for Rural Transit Providers** (15 pages). RTAP TA Brief, 1996.
- Flow Sheet for Post-Accident Drug and Alcohol Testing**, OCCK, Inc.
- Making New Technologies Work for Rural Transportation.** (11 pgs). RTAP, 1996. This InfoBrief (#4) describes some of the more popular new technologies used in rural transit and how they improve service.
- Working With Difficult People**, KTR Fact Sheet, 2001.

### Videotapes

- Emergency Procedures for Rural Transit Drivers.** (32 min.) International Support Services. Discusses preparing for sudden emergencies and shows how to avoid an emergencies by taking some very small precautionary measures.
- Essential Skills for Dispatching.** (34 min.) University Research Corporation & Mobile-Video Productions. Discusses the responsibility of the dispatcher, including coordinating the system and communicating with drivers.

### Where to Send Order Form

Fax your completed order form to 785/864-3199 or send it by mail to:  
Lending Library Request/Transit  
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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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- Telephone consultation
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- Program planning assistance

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