



Kansas Trans Reporter

January 2005

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

Difficult...to...DANGEROUS

Tips for preventing, responding to, and recovering from workplace violence

by Courtney Hansen

At the mention of workplace violence, most people imagine dramatic and rare situations from the news—an enraged gunman shoots eight of his co-workers despite the best efforts of police, for example. However, workplace violence can include any physical assault, threatening behavior, or



verbal abuse occurring at work or on duty, making it a far-reaching and common problem.

Luckily, there are ways to help manage potentially violent situations and people, making these difficult situations less threatening to the lives, emotions, and health of everyone.

Advance knowledge of this information is necessary, so you will be prepared when a situation arises. Make time to read and share the procedures necessary to prevent, respond

Go to page 2

Are you ready for coordination?








by Pat Weaver

In the April 2004 issue of this newsletter, we featured an article on the *Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services* developed for the Transit Cooperative Research Program. It is a comprehensive, “full immersion” guide to coordination. But what if you want to stick your toe in the water before you dive in? We’d like to recommend another tool, just for you.

If you are not quite sure where to start with coordination in your com-

Go to page 6

Inside:

 <p>New drug and alcohol resources Page 3</p> <p>Fatigue and the transit driver Page 5</p>	 <p>Driver fatigue test Page 7</p> <p>Newspaper inserts get the word out Page 8</p>	 <p>“Way to Go!” bus buddies program Page 9</p>	 <p>Is it time to hand over the keys? Page 10</p> <p>Buying a database Page 12</p> 	 <p>Thumb drives Page 13</p> <p>Calendar Page 14</p> <p>Resources Page 15</p> 
---	--	---	---	---

Difficult and dangerous,

continued from page 1

to, and recover from incidents of workplace violence. We'll give you a head start by providing some food for thought in this article.

Fending off difficult situations

The ability to respect others' differences will go a long way toward understanding and dealing with problems in the workplace. Respect for all people is a key part of successful interaction with others, regardless of culture, background, physical appearance, thoughts, ideas, expressions, attitudes, or beliefs. Treat others with dignity, and don't classify them or act according to assumptions or stereotypes.

Communicating effectively is another obvious part of interaction with others, but it is one that is often overlooked. In addition to behaviors such as maintaining eye contact and giving people their space, it is important to remember to use cooperative

language without criticism, accusations or making light of the situation. Communicating as an equal is essential to establishing mutual respect between people.

Above all, though, it is necessary to remain calm in potentially difficult situations. Being threatening yourself is certainly not going to diffuse any tension, and may provoke violence in situations that could be handled in a calm, controlled manner.

What is a difficult situation?

A difficult situation is when a person has directed his frustration and anger at you or your agency, but is not a direct threat to anyone's safety. Two strategies for dealing with difficult

situations are *avoiding* and *diffusing*.

Avoiding is a technique in which you decide to take no action because taking action may be more costly than overlooking the situation. Only avoid a situation if it is minor or inconsequential or will quickly go away on its own. Avoidance is not a first choice, but one that should be used when other approaches are unlikely to succeed. A situation should never be avoided if the conflict could escalate or if the person persists in pressing the issue.

Defusing the situation is a technique that uses communication to engage a difficult person and help resolve the conflict. Acknowledge the person's feelings in a respectful tone of voice, and paraphrase his own words rather than saying "I understand," which may come across as patronizing. Ask open-ended questions to help keep the situation



Make sure to give your emergency contact as much relevant information as possible to ensure an appropriate response.

from becoming emotional. Offer help by breaking down big problems into smaller problems, if possible, or offer to call in additional resources, such as someone outside the situation and/or a person in a superior position.

Giving the person a choice, with consequences, can be a more forceful but still cooperative way to modify a difficult situation. In a non-threatening tone, present two choices and their consequences, ending on a positive note. Here's an example: "Sir, company policy prohibits you from playing your radio while on the vehicle. If you continue to play the radio we will not move, or you can turn it off and take a seat and you can get to where you want to go."

What is a dangerous situation?

A dangerous situation is one in which a person poses an immediate threat to the safety of you or others. In a dangerous situation, your priority should be preserving your own safety, because you cannot call for assistance or help others if you are injured. Use common sense and know your limitations. Take time now to become familiar with your agency's emergency and self-defense procedures and laws; they won't do you any good if they're filed away unread in the back of a drawer.

Most important, do not try to deal with a dangerous situation alone. Call for help, if possible. Make sure to give your emergency contact as much relevant information as possible to ensure an appropriate response. Identify yourself with your first and last name, including your ID or badge number if appropriate. Give your exact location, including room

number if you are in a building, and driving directions to your location if you are on the road. Be specific about the type of assistance you need, and explain the situation with any information that might be helpful to those trying to help from outside the site.

Warning signs of violence

Most violent behavior follows a period of warning signs, which are often ignored until it is too late. However, not all "warning signs" indicate a future violent act; as such, you should not label those who exhibit them as "dangerous." If you notice warning signs of possible violent behavior, tell a supervisor or other person of

Go to page 4

New Resources from FTA

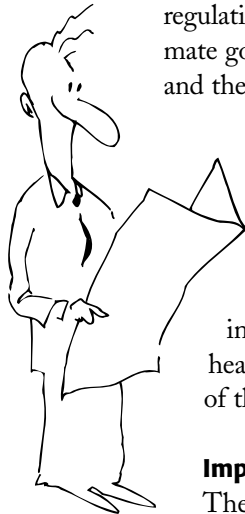
FTA provides a variety of tools to assist agencies in complying with drug and alcohol testing.

.....
 by Courtney Hansen

In response to passage of the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991, FTA published two regulations in February 1994, prohibiting drug use and alcohol misuse by transit employees and requiring that transit agencies test for prohibited drug use and alcohol misuse. These regulations were updated on August 1, 2001, and consolidated into one regulation, called *Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations*, which incorporates guidance previously issued by FTA.

To assist agencies in implementing these regulations, FTA and the US DOT have developed a complement of technical assistance tools including written materials, workshops, videotapes, and Web-based resources. Central to this technical assistance effort is FTA's publication of the following three publications: 1) *Implementation Guidelines for Drug and Alcohol Regulations in Mass Transit* ; 2) a best practices manual; and 3) *Drug and Alcohol Regulation Updates*, a quarterly newsletter.

In addition to explaining the drug and alcohol regulations, these publications provide covered employ-



ers with the necessary information to become and remain compliant with the regulations. The ultimate goal for FTA and the transit industry is to achieve a drug- and alcohol-free work force in the interest of the health and safety of the public.

Implementation Guidelines.

These guidelines were written in 2003 to assist employers in developing compliant programs based on the revised FTA and DOT rules. Employers with well-established drug and alcohol testing programs can also use the guidelines to assess their level of compliance, validate policies and procedures, and identify areas that require modification based on the revised FTA and DOT rules.

The guidelines explain the various elements of a compliant program and contain examples of documents, checklists, forms, and procedures that may be used by individual transit system employers in formulation their programs. The following required elements of a drug and alcohol program are discussed:

- policy and procedure development;
- employee and supervisor education and training;
- testing categories;
- drug testing procedures;
- alcohol testing procedures;

How to Read Regulatory Text

Statements in the drug and alcohol regulations that contain the words “shall” or “must” [for example: “A substance abuse program shall include a policy statement...”] refer to required program elements.

Elements not explicitly required by regulations, but suggested as an integral part of successful implementation are generally addressed using the word “should.”

Optional elements, or those program features that have several acceptable alternatives, are normally expressed by use of the word “may.”

- substance abuse professionals; and
- record keeping and reporting.

All FTA-covered employers are required to comply with the revised DOT procedures for drug and alcohol testing and the FTA regulations on the prevention of alcohol misuse and prohibited drug use. These requirements were unaffected by the size of the transit agency, the number of vehicles in the fleet, or the number of employees. All employees who perform FTA safety-sensitive functions must be covered in the employer's drug and alcohol program.

Transit employers may go beyond these requirements to incorporate additional features, such as Employee Assistance Programs and additional testing circumstances that are not mandated by FTA regulations. Additional provisions that go beyond the regulatory requirements must be clearly represented as features included under the authority of the transit agency and not the FTA-mandated program. For example, if

Go to next page

Drug and alcohol,

continued from page 3

you test for drugs other than the specific five that FTA requires, you must make the employees aware that they are being tested under the authority of the agency, not FTA. A separate specimen must also be collected to analyze the additional drugs.

Best Practices Manual. This manual was published in 2002 to supplement the implementation guidelines by providing examples of “real world” policies, procedures, sample forms, and narrative descriptions of approaches that have been successfully used by transit employers to effectively manage their drug and alcohol testing programs.

Quarterly newsletter. Given the dynamic nature of the drug and alcohol testing industry and the practical insights obtained following implementation of the regulations, it is expected that additional clarifications, corrections, explanations, and procedural guidance will be necessary over time to supplement the *Implementation Guidelines* mentioned above. Consequently, FTA publishes a quarterly newsletter which keeps covered employers informed of regulatory clarifications, corrections, and any new FTA interpretations. The newsletter is a continuance of the guidelines, and as such, each page of the newsletter references the section of the guidelines to which it relates.

Where to obtain the resources

The entire text of the *Implementation Guidelines for Drug and Alcohol Regulations in Mass Transit* is available as a 15 MB PDF at <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Publications/default.asp#substance>.

The 8.7 MB PDF of the *Best Practices Manual* is available at

<http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Publications/safety/BestPractices/BestPractices.pdf>.

Issues of the *Updates* newsletter can be downloaded from <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Safety/DATesting/Newsletters/default.asp> or obtained by contacting RLS & Associates, Inc. 3131 South Dixie Hwy, Suite 545. Dayton, Ohio 45439, phone: (937) 299-5007, fax: (937) 299-1055, e-mail: rlsasc@mindspring.com

For questions specific to the Kansas Transit Drug and Alcohol Testing Program, contact Sandy Flickinger, KDOT Drug and Alcohol Program Manager at (785) 368-7091 or at sandyf@ksdot.org.

Adapted from the FTA's *Implementation Guidelines for Drug and Alcohol Regulations in Mass Transit*, revised November 2003. ▲

Difficult and dangerous,

continued from page 2

authority so that existing issues can be solved before they escalate.

Warning signs include an unusual interest in weapons or violence, increased depression, increased problems at work such as absenteeism or overreacting to criticism, or signs of violence at home. Other concerns are sudden emotional outbursts, unwarranted anger, threats, or intimidation.

Getting help

Workplace violence has a detrimental effect, of course, on its victims, such as physical or psychological injury, increased fear or stress, absenteeism, and disruptions in personal or family life. However, even those who are not direct victims are still negatively affected. Employees who know the victim(s), work in the same facility, or

work in similar circumstances can also suffer from psychological trauma and increased fear and stress, resulting in loss of productivity.

The primary impact of workplace violence, on a broad scale, is stress. Stress can be expressed physically; a person may experience difficulty in breathing, elevated blood pressure, or sweating and chills. Manifested emotionally, stress surfaces as fear, panic, guilt, depression, grief, or irritability. Psychological symptoms of stress include hypersensitivity, paranoid thoughts, poor concentration, and disorientation or confusion. Stress may even cause some people to withdraw from society or experience interrupted sleep patterns or substance abuse.

If workplace violence affects you or someone you know, it is important to seek help. Managers or supervisors, human resources representatives, union representatives, family members and friends, support groups, and medical providers are all good places to seek assistance. Addressing the impact of workplace violence is critical for employee morale, and may even help prevent violence in the future.

Helpful resources

The Employee Guide to Workplace Violence, produced by the National Transit Institute, is an excellent pocket guide to assist employees in recognizing potential workplace violence, with tips for managing difficult and dangerous situations. To obtain a copy of the pocket guide, see page 15 of this newsletter. To receive multiple copies for distribution to your employees, go to the NTI Web site at www.ntionline.com/products/asp and place your order.

Source: *Employee Guide to Workplace Violence*, National Transit Institute, 2003. ▲



Fatigue and the transit driver

by Pat Weaver



Avoiding fatigue is far more preferable than looking for strategies to deal with it once it occurs.

It is one of the most unnerving experiences that can happen when driving a transit bus: You got up early this morning to take three passengers to doctor's appointments at the medical center 75 miles away. The sun is coming up over the horizon and is getting in your eyes. It's a little warm in the bus, and the passengers aren't talking much, mostly dozing as they bounce along in their seats.

You've been on the road about 30 minutes. The highway is long, smooth and monotonous. You didn't get a lot of sleep last night. You worked late and when you got home you just couldn't fall asleep until about 2:30 in the morning. The

Go to next page

Fatigue behind the wheel is a very real danger, even if you've never experienced it firsthand. Here are some tips for staying awake while you're driving:

- An obvious cause of fatigue is lack of sleep. If you haven't received seven or eight hours of sleep the night before, you're courting fatigue. Get enough rest. Driving is hard work, and you need to be fresh and alert to perform your job safely. If you know you're too tired to drive, treat it just as if you were sick; you are not fit for duty in this condition.
- Avoid being scheduled for early morning shifts just after driving a late evening or night shift. If you are transporting passengers across state lines or live in a state that regulates hours of service for intrastate transportation, you may have hours of service restrictions. Be sure that, at a minimum, you comply with these requirements. Kansas does not have hours of service limitations for intrastate public transportation, so your minimum standard will be set by your agency policy.
- When driving into the early morning sun, be sure to wear a good pair of sunglasses to protect your eyes and avoid the need to squint or close your eyes to avoid discomfort.
- Adjust your vehicle's environment so that it helps keep you awake and alert. Keep the temperature cool with air conditioning in the summer and frugal amounts of heat in the winter.
- Do not use cruise control; keep your body involved with the driving.
- Watch your posture. Drive with your head up and your shoulders back. Tuck your buttocks against the seat back. Legs should not be fully extended, but flexed at about a 45 degree angle.
- Take frequent breaks. Stop periodically in a safe place (gas station, convenience store or rest stop, for example) to allow yourself and passengers a chance to get out and stretch. Exercise fights fatigue. Stop long enough to make sure you're not too drowsy to continue. If drowsiness occurs on an in-town route, ask your supervisor for a 15 minute break between passengers to allow you to refresh yourself. If that's not enough then you may need to consider asking to be relieved for the day. It may be an inconvenient request, but avoiding inconvenience is no justification for risking an accident because of fatigue.

Safe driving demands your full attention. If you feel your eyelids getting heavy, your next actions may not simply determine whether you'll stay awake—they might determine whether you and your passengers stay alive.

Driver fatigue,

continued from page 5

radio isn't holding your attention, and neither is the driving. You stare straight at the miles of road ahead. You start to feel your shoulders sag, and your eyes slowly... start... to... close.

You hear a shout. Abruptly, you open your eyes, jerk up in your seat. You've started to drift out of your lane and a little off the road, enough that a passenger noticed and yelled out in time. You steer your vehicle back into the lane, take a few deep breaths, and realize, fearfully, what just happened. You were asleep, and a tragedy was narrowly averted.

Fatigue on the road can be a killer. It happens frequently on long drives or when other conditions (like inadequate rest the night before) are present. Some of the warning signs were probably there: back tension, burning eyes, shallow breathing, inattentiveness, and any kind of erratic driving, such as drifting, abnormal speed, tailgating, or failure to obey traffic signs.

Thirty-seven percent of drivers have nodded off for at least a moment or fallen asleep while driving at least once in their driving career. Eight percent have done so in the past six months. While there are no good statistics on the number of transit drivers who have dozed off while driving, the potential is always there if you don't take adequate precautions.

The consequences for a drowsy transit driver are tremendous. Falling asleep with passengers on the vehicle could lead to injury or death of you as the driver, one or more passen-

gers, or others in your path. It might lead to substantial property loss for your agency. And finally, just one report of your nodding off at the wheel, even if no accident occurs, could mean the loss of your job.

One cause of fatigue is alcohol consumption. Alcohol is a depressant, and a driver doesn't have to be drunk to fall asleep at the wheel.



If you go to bed late and wake up early to an alarm clock, you are probably building a sleep debt.

Even one drink can be enough to induce fatigue. Another cause can be prescription or over-the-counter medications. Just because the medications are legal doesn't mean that taking them is safe to do so when driving a vehicle.

Another culprit is the nature of modern highway driving. Most vehicle interiors have a comfortable driver's seat in a reasonably temperature-regulated environment. Many vehicles have "cruise control." Most major roads have been engineered to eliminate sharp curves, hills and bumps. Ironically, these designs for

comfort contribute to falling asleep at the wheel. And, if your passengers are sleeping during an early morning or late night trip, there won't even be talking to help keep you alert.

Dull landscapes, the droning of tires and engines, and the repetitive patterns of oncoming headlights, trees, poles and highway center lines can lead to a dangerous, trance-like

state known as "highway hypnosis," which deadens drivers' senses and slows their reaction time.

What can you do? First, take a few moments to complete the driver fatigue quiz on the next page. Next, read the tips on page 5 for staying awake while you are on the road. Driver fatigue is a serious issue, and deserves your serious attention.

Source: Adapted with permission from the National Safety Council, *Driver Fatigue Fact Sheet*, April 13, 2004, <http://www.nsc.org>. ▲

Ready for coordination?, continued from page 1

munity, consider using *A Framework for Action*, a self-assessment tool for communities created by a panel of experts from around the country that convened in August 2003.

This publication is a tool communities can use to identify areas of success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation.

To download the complete

Framework for Action and facilitator's guide, visit the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) Web site at <http://www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www/index.html>.

If you don't have access to the Internet, you can order a hard copy of the self-assessment tool from the Kansas RTAP. See the order form on page 15. ▲



Driver fatigue quiz

It's important to know whether or not the information you have about sleep and sleep debt is accurate. Knowing about sleep debt may save lives. The following are some statements about sleep and sleep debt. Circle the answer you think is the most correct.

1. Coffee overcomes the effects of drowsiness while driving. (T or F)
2. I can tell when I'm going to go to sleep. (T or F)
3. Rolling down my window or singing along with the radio will keep me awake. (T or F)
4. I'm a safe driver so it doesn't matter if I'm sleepy. (T or F)
5. You can stockpile sleep on the weekends. (T or F)
6. Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night. (T or F)
7. Being sleepy makes you misperceive things. (T or F)
8. Young people need less sleep. (T or F)
9. Wandering, disconnected thoughts are a warning sign of driver fatigue. (T or F)
10. Seeing little green men in the middle of the road may mean I am too tired to drive. (T or F)
11. On a long trip, a driver should never take a break but try to arrive at the destination as quickly as possible. (T or F)
12. A micro-sleep lasts four or five seconds. (T or F)

Answers:

1. FALSE. Stimulants are no substitute for sleep. Drinks containing caffeine, such as coffee or cola, can help you feel more alert, but the effects last only for a short time. 2. FALSE. Sleep is not voluntary. If you're drowsy, you can fall asleep and never even know it. You cannot tell how long you've been asleep. 3. FALSE. An open window or the radio has no lasting effect on a person's ability to stay awake. 4. FALSE. The only safe driver is an alert driver. Even the safest drivers become confused and use poor judgment when they are sleepy. 5. FALSE. Sleep is not money. You can't save it up ahead of time and you can't borrow it. But, just as with money, you can go into debt. 6. TRUE. The average person needs seven or eight hours of sleep a night. If you go to bed late and wake up early to an alarm clock, you are probably building a sleep debt. 7. TRUE. One of the warning signs of a drowsy driver is misjudging surroundings. 8. FALSE. Young people need more sleep than adults. Males under 25 are at the greatest risk of falling asleep. Half of the victims of fatigue-related crashes are under 25. 9. TRUE. If you are driving and your thoughts begin to wander, it is time to pull over and take a break. 10. TRUE. Seeing things that are not there is a good indication it is time to stop driving and take a rest. 11. FALSE. Driving, especially for long distances, reveals a driver's true level of sleepiness. To be safe, drivers should take a break every three hours. 12. TRUE. During a "micro-sleep" of four or five seconds, a car can travel 100 yards, plenty of time to cause a serious crash.

How many did you get right? How many did you miss? Remember, knowing the truth about driver fatigue—and acting on it—may save your life, the lives of your passenger or those of drivers and pedestrians around you.

Source: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safetyprogs/fatigue/fatiguequiz.htm>.



Newspaper inserts help get the word out

by Courtney Hansen

For spreading awareness of your agency's mission in a cost-effective and efficient manner, few other options can beat insert advertising. Free-standing inserts (FSIs), also called preprints, are advertisements placed in the fold of a newspaper. FSIs are printed and provided by the agency that paid for the advertising. Easter Seals has been using inserts to create national awareness for years, but the process can also work on a local scale.

Inserts, like any form of advertising, can serve to draw donors into your program. Putting a face to an agency through visual advertising can help those who receive the ad gain a connection with a program and its work. The public in general, as well as potential donors, can benefit from this increased awareness, which may help spread positive



information to people who had little prior knowledge of your agency.

Placing an insert in a newspaper rather than simply buying an advertisement printed in the paper can save you money. On average, the cost is much lower for the size of the

Kansas newspaper insert prices

City	Newspaper	Circulation	Cost per thousand
Wichita	Eagle	Up to 185,500	\$46.25
Kansas City	Star	Up to 700,000	\$67.71*
Lawrence	Journal-World	Up to 20,500	\$39.00
Hays	Daily News	Up to 13,000	\$64.60
Dodge City	Daily Globe	10,000	\$53.25
Liberal	SW Daily Times	15,000	\$83.00

[* Price for weekday distribution of 150,000. Higher distribution carries a lower price per thousand.]

advertisement, which allows your agency to draw attention using larger graphics and pictures.

Tips for reducing costs

Partnering with similar-minded businesses can be a great way to bring down the cost of advertising. For example, if your agency specializes in paratransit, you might contact a wheelchair distributor in your area

with a local newspaper. Often, newspapers will give discounts to repeat customers, as well as to nonprofits. Repeat customers may also be able to gain knowledge of, and placement in, special editions that focus on issues pertinent to transit.

Unfortunately, the world of insert advertising doesn't give you a focused target for your efforts. If your sole goal is to locate donors,

Partner with other businesses to lower costs. If your agency specializes in paratransit, you might contact a wheelchair distributor in your area for sharing the space on the insert—and the cost.

for sharing the space on the insert. That way, people who notice the advertisement because of the wheelchair company will also see that your agency is a potential source of transportation. Both partners in this type of agreement will benefit from an expanded market.

Another way to reduce costs and create an ongoing public outlet for your agency is to form a relationship

direct mailing may be a better way to go, because you can narrow down your audience from the broad swath of newspaper readers. In addition, make sure that the paper in which you advertise doesn't have too many other inserts, which may drown out your message.

How to place an insert

Once you've decided to use insert

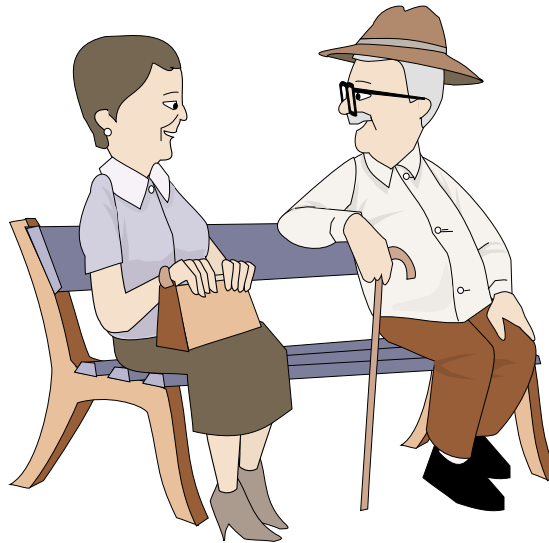
advertising, you need to design an insert. In general, the size of an insert is restricted to the size of the paper: Most newspapers, folded, measure roughly 14 by 11 inches. If you would like to print an insert larger than this, you can fold it to fit within the paper, but you will probably be charged a bit more for having more than one "page."

Once the insert has been designed, you need to decide how many copies to print. For many agencies, this number is restricted by a budget. Most newspapers with a Web site have a "rate card"—a listing of advertising rates, posted online; however, you can also call the newspaper and speak with a representative from the advertising or business office about the rates and restrictions for insert advertising. The newspaper may require a minimum number of inserts, or may only allow distribution of small numbers of advertisements on certain days. Also, keep in mind that not all inserts submitted are guaranteed distribution, due to machine or human error inevitable with mass circulation.

Depending on the size of the newspaper, the deadline for submitting the finished inserts is usually about a week in advance. However, some newspapers do not accept submissions on certain days, and deadlines can change for periods with higher circulation or advertising demand, such as the holiday season. Many newspapers also charge for last-minute changes or late insert submissions, so it's always a good idea to plan well in advance.

Source: "Extra! Extra! Inserts can provide cost effective ads," page 15, *NonProfit Times*, July 15, 2004. ▲

"Way to Go!" program provides bus buddies



.....
by Courtney Hansen
.....

Getting a driver's license is a milestone for independence, but not everyone can or should drive. Seniors who no longer drive, and persons with disabilities who do not drive, may be isolated. Seniors who don't drive may go out of the house two times per week while those do drive may average seven times per week. For many individuals, independence and quality of life may be drastically diminished if they don't drive or take advantage of the transportation systems available to them. "Way to Go," in Monroe County, Indiana, is a new program that encourages independence for those without a license.

Monroe County has three public transportation alternatives: Rural Transit, Bloomington Public Transit, and Bloomington Transit's BT ACCESS. But some potential riders

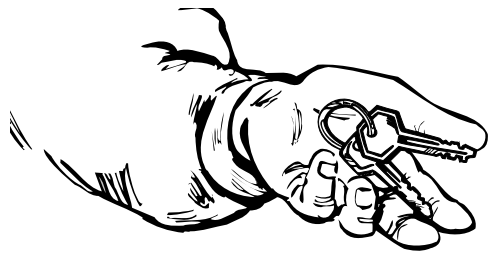
do not use these services. Inexperience and lack of knowledge seem to be the main reasons for not using the buses.

"Way to Go" will offer senior citizens and persons with disabilities training and bus buddies to travel with them until they feel comfortable using the bus.

A name and logo were developed for "Way to Go," and three focus groups were held for senior citizens. A

month later, a Bloomington Transit bus trip introduced these seniors to the possibilities of riding the bus to the west side of Bloomington and other locations, with a buddy. Training will be presented to seniors who have requested a bus buddy. Then, after an assessment process, both the rider and the volunteer bus buddy will develop a plan to take a trip to a location chosen by the rider. The bus buddy will accompany the rider on this trip until he or she feels comfortable doing it alone. Transfers between buses will be explained and encouraged.

For more information, download the source for this article: the second 2004 issue of the *Indiana Dispatch* at www.indiana.edu/~rtap/RTAP%20May%2004.pdf. ▲



Is it time to turn in the keys?

.....
by Nishtha Mehta
.....

Age brings many changes, including changes in vision, physical fitness, and reflexes. These changes can influence driving ability. This article provides information on what can be done to improve and maintain good driving skills as we age. It also provides necessary information regarding when to finally turn in the keys and what alternate resources are available for seniors.

People over 65 years of age are the fastest growing population in the United States. In 2000, there were 18.9 million registered drivers age 65 and older; by 2020, this number is expected to increase to 40 million. Research shows that older drivers have a higher risk of being involved in a collision for every mile they drive and that, typically, this rate increases further after the age of 65. In 2001, people aged 65 and older made up 13 percent of all traffic fatalities, a rate that is disproportionately high compared to the number of miles they drive. Health issues, such as a stroke or a disability, can increase the risk of injury in the event of an accident. This raises the question of when to give up driving.

How can you tell?

The AARP provides resources for older drivers to determine if it is time to put the keys away. The AARP's involvement in driver improvement education for older Americans began

in 1969. Last year the organization began to teach the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course to older Americans across the nation.

In Kansas this course is organized by Associate State Coordinators (ASC) and taught by qualified volunteers. Kansas is divided into eight zones, with each zone having its own coordinator. In 2003, this course yielded approximately 6,000 graduates statewide.

Shirley Smith, coordinator for Zone One, which includes 12 counties in the Northeastern region of the state, organizes approximately 100 classes held through the year. The cost to attend the course is set at \$10, with AARP subsidizing the remaining expenses. These classes are held mostly from March to October in key locations for all counties.

This course instructs senior drivers on how to drive safely and reviews the various laws and rules associated with driving. There are no tests or exams required to complete the class.

Kansas State Law states that anyone who takes the AARP defensive driving course is eligible for an insurance discount. Under this law, all automobile insurance companies are required to provide appropriate premium reductions to graduates of the course.

In addition to the financial incentive to take this course, there are many safety reasons to enroll in the program. The course is taken over two days and lasts four hours each day. It teaches senior drivers self-

assessment. On the first day the course helps the driver do a self assessment to evaluate his/her driving skills (see box on next page). The instructors focus on understanding and evaluating the reaction times of drivers to difficult situations, the ability to understand and follow driving directions, and near-accident and crash preventive measures.

The course covers physical changes that occur with age, including distorted depth perception and color perception. There is special emphasis on the frequently encountered trouble spots for elderly drivers, including parking in shopping mall lots, distractions, and dealing with blind spots. Issues associated with increasing road rage and aggressive driving are also discussed. All discussions are conducted as informal talks to increase comfort and convenience for the participants.

Day two is geared towards dealing with how to maintain and operate a vehicle safely. The instructor familiarizes the students with different features of a vehicle including air bags, anti-lock brakes and safety belts. The importance and the function of each of these is discussed in detail. The participant is also reintroduced to the function of different types of traffic signs and signals. The purpose and the action associated with each type of sign and signal are reviewed, for example, stopping at a stop sign. Concepts associated with right-of-way and left turns at intersections are covered as well. Instructions regarding driving on the

The AARP asks these questions in their driving self-assessment:

- Do I have less confidence while driving?
- Do I have difficulty turning around to see over my shoulder while backing up or changing tires?
- Do I take more time to respond to situations on the road?
- Do I get physically exhausted while driving?
- Do I have trouble judging gaps between vehicles?
- Do I keep riding the brake?
- Do I get easily distracted while behind the wheel?
- Do my thoughts wander while driving?
- Are people constantly honking at me?
- Do I perceive signals incorrectly?
- Do I forget to give the appropriate signal?
- Do I hit curbs while parking?
- Do I fail to notice activities at the side of the road?
- Have I had any near-misses recently?
- Do I move into the wrong lane?
- Do I display bad judgment when making left turns?
- Do I get confused at exits?
- Do my friends and family members avoid riding with me?

AARP's self assessment can be taken online for free at the Web site <http://www.aarp.org/life/drive/>.

freeway are also an important part of the course.

According to the course manual, driving on freeways should be avoided by the elderly, and alternative routes should be located and used. Entry and exit on the freeway can often be confusing to the senior driver.

Most elderly drivers have driven for the past 20-30 years and revisiting and revising traffic rules and regulations is a way to enhance their driving ability and safety behind the wheel. This course can prepare senior drivers to drive more safely and confidently.

Even after taking this course, taking general precautions such as avoiding driving at night and on freeways, are important defensive steps. If elderly drivers are concerned about their own safety and that of

other drivers, alternative means of transportation can be explored, like public transit.

Find an alternative

There are often many ways of getting around a community without using a car. Public transit options, including buses or vans, can provide another way to reach destinations. Looking into resources provided by local agencies is a positive step towards finding alternate means to maintain independence. Family and friends can also assist with transportation.

Seniors can find information about the local community transportation services from many sources, including The Eldercare Locator. This is a nationwide directory assistance service designed to identify local resources for the elderly. Calling

800-677-1116, or visiting the Web site www.eldercare.gov can help seniors identify local alternate transportation means available for them.

Information regarding public transportation can also be found on the Kansas Department of Transportation Web site at www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/other-mds/pubtrans.html.

The Kansas Department on Aging can also help locate local community transportation services geared towards assisting seniors. Contact the Department on Aging at (800) 432-3535 or through their Web site at www.agingkansas.org/kdoa/ (click on "Information for Seniors").

With the help of these resources and assistance from local agencies, senior residents can live an independent, social and community-based life without having to drive.

Sources:

www.highwaysafety.org/safety_facts/fatality_facts/older_people.htm;

AARP's Driver Safety Program Briefing Paper and Driver Safety Program Student Workbook, Edition 5;

www.aapublicaffairs.com/Main.asp?SectionID=&SubCategoryID=38&CategoryID=3&ContentID=255&

Driving For Life: A Guide for Older Drivers and their Families, Michigan DOT, 2004.

"Why Are Older Drivers at Risk?," American Medical Association, 2004.

For more information, contact Shirley Smith, 5231 W 87th St., Prairie Village, KS 66207, Phone 913-648-0727. ▲



Kicking the tires is not enough

What you really need to know before driving your new database off the lot.

.....
by Courtney Hansen
.....

A database is like that old beat-up car you had as a teenager: you can complain all you want about how ugly it is, but when it stops working, you'll notice how much you really rely on it.

Your agency can easily avoid having to call AAA on your database by re-evaluating its effectiveness and ability to keep up with your agency in the future. Through consideration of the cost, source, and capabilities of a database system, you can choose a database that will help you accomplish your goals.

Databases are extremely useful for organizing information such as donor data, employee or volunteer information, and data on various transit vehicles. Databases work much like spreadsheets, in that they can organize data in categories such as "name," "department," or "address." However, databases have many capabilities that are difficult or impossible to perform in spreadsheets. For example, databases can help you search for records than contain certain criteria, update groups instead of individual records, and cross-reference records in different tables or sets of information.

Trading up

Every good database should be viewed as a productivity tool and an investment on which the returns can be enormous. Sticking with spreadsheets or even index cards is like riding a bicycle from Topeka to

Ask your staff

Before you start shopping for database software, get an assessment from your staff:

1. What can you do easily with the current system?
2. What takes more time than it should?
3. What types of reports or information can't our system provide easily?
4. What can't be provided at all?
5. What are the basic limitations of the current system?
6. What future development or initiatives are being planned?
7. What database capabilities will be needed for those efforts?
8. How many records do we currently have on the system?
9. How many records do we ideally want to handle?
10. What are the top 10 capabilities you want in the new system?

From the *NonProfit Times*, May 1, 2004.

Lawrence; sure, you'll save on gas money, but it simply takes too much time to be a viable solution.

Having a good database system can free up valuable staff time, allowing a database to pay for itself in increased productivity. For example, a database can be used to update a group of information with one click; when using a spreadsheet, this kind of update may have to be done tens or even hundreds of times to individual records. There is no reason to allot staff time for organizing data when employees could be focusing on more creative endeavors such as fund raising or planning—things a database cannot do for your agency.

Avoiding sticker shock

Buying a database is just like anything else; you get what you pay for. However, this doesn't mean you need to buy the most expensive system out there. The least expensive databases most likely won't have enough fea-

tures to justify their purchase; however, the most expensive systems are likely to build unnecessary features into the price, making them almost as inefficient as the cheaper systems.

When in doubt, use a logical approach to purchasing a database. Go for the compact car; you can trade it in for the eight-passenger SUV when (and if) you need it. Make sure you get what you need, but don't allow your agency to be sucked into paying for extraneous bells and whistles.

The price of a database can go up significantly with extra features like training and support. Make sure to ask about additional costs, and consider everything you will need to take your database from its box to full operation.

Regardless of how great your database is, it won't run itself. Consider the money and staff time needed to learn to operate and maintain the database. Look for a vendor

who will allow for long-term, gradual training; it will be much more effective than a few days of overwhelming your staff with information. Also consider whether you will need to train employees to deal with technical aspects of the system, such as troubleshooting or upgrades, or whether it is manageable for employees with standard computer skills.

The Hyundai factor

Getting the best value for the money often means purchasing a database that's a little off the beaten path. Choosing the "best known" or "industry-leading" database doesn't necessarily equate to choosing the one that will work the best for your agency. If the software company has been around for at least five years, and has been offering the database you are considering for greater than 18 months, you can be fairly certain that the company will be there farther down the road.

Indeed, a smaller company may even be able to provide you with better service. The most important thing to consider when choosing a company is its ability to help out should an emergency arise. For example, can the company train new staff if necessary? Will the company continue to support older versions of the software rather than forcing your agency to purchase expensive upgrades? Are real, live humans available for support? Finally, is the company willing to help with problems even if they aren't directly related to their software, but to the workstation in general? If the answers to these questions are consistently in the affirmative, there's no reason not to choose a smaller company.

Database types

There are two basic types of databases: *desktop* and *server*. Desktop data-

Go to next page

Check out this little wonder

.....
by Craig Damlo
.....

Thumb drives offer portable, easy-to-use electronic file storage.

Have you been bitten by the USB drive bug? Here are some tips for buying of one of these handy little drives.

A USB drive is a memory chip protected by a small plastic housing with a USB connection on one end; and usually with a clip to attach to a key ring or lanyard on the other end. USB drives are also called thumb drives or Flash drives. They are commonly used for transferring files between computers. Files can be added and deleted from the drive as you wish, within the drive's capacity.

Over the years, various file storage devices have come and gone. What's the appeal of the thumb drive? The first reason is speed; while CDs cheaper and usually hold more data, file transfer is much slower, and even re-writable disks have a finite number of uses, unlike the thumb drives. The second reason is greater compatibility. Zip disks, from Iomega, came close to replacing the standard floppy disk, but to use to use a Zip disk you needed a Zip drive. Thumb drives only require that a computer have a modern operating system such as Windows 98, Mac OS X or later and a USB plug. Almost 100 percent of all computers made in the last four years meet both of these requirements.

Thumb drives come in many capacities, ranging from as little as

32 MB which would hold a few word documents along with a dozen pictures or so, to 512 MB and beyond, which will hold very large documents or presentations with many pictures. While the lower end of 32 MB seems small, it can still hold more data than 22 floppy disks.

What size do you need? If you need to make larger transfers for files such as PowerPoint presentations with lots of graphics, I



Photograph by Lisa Harris

Typical costs for thumb drives	
Size (MB)	Cost range
8	\$7-15
16	\$10-20
32	\$10-25
64	\$20-50
128	\$30-100
256	\$35-120
512	\$60-200

suggest you get a minimum size of 128 MB, and even think about purchasing a 256 MB model for future expansion. A larger size such as 512 MB, which costs about \$175, probably only needs to be purchased by individuals who need to transfer very large files such as multi-media files.

The final thing to ask is: What brand of thumb drive should I buy? While brand name drives usually cost more, the memory inside is all built by the same factory in Asia, so saving \$20 on a non-brand is not a bad thing. The only reason to possibly pay more for a brand name is the

Go to next page

Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

January 9-13, 2005
 TRB 84th Annual Meeting
 Washington, DC
 Contact Linda Karson, TRB,
 Phone 202-334-2934
www.trb.org

January 23-25, 2005
 South West Transit
 Association 25th Annual
 Conference & Expo
 Houston, TX
 Call 210-366-1436 or register
 on-line at www.swta.org

March 5-8, 2005
 2005 Mobility Planning
 Services Institute
 Washington, DC
 Contact Karen Wolf-Branigin,
 Easter Seals Project Action

Phone 800-659-6428
<http://projectaction.easterseals.com>

January 27-29, 2005
 HealthAction 2005: 10th
 Annual Grassroots Conference
 Washington, DC
 Contact Families USA
 Phone 202-628-3030
www.familiesusa.org

February 9-10, 2005
 Professional Dispatching and
 Scheduling (PDS)
 Olympia, WA
 Contact Anna Broadhead,
 Washington State Transit
 Insurance Pool,
 Phone 360-586-1800
www.wsttc.org/calendar.asp

April 2005
 Kansas Transit New Manager
 Orientation
 (Specific dates and locations
 to be announced.) A one-day
 orientation and training work-
 shop is being planned for new
 transit managers to assist in
 management of Kansas
 Department of Transportation
 projects. Watch for further
 announcements in early 2005.

May 21-27, 2005
 2005 Community
 Transportation Association
 EXPO
 St. Louis, MO
 Contact CTA, www.ctaa.org,
 Phone 800-891-0590

Editor's Note:
 To include meetings or
 workshops in our calendar,
 send information to:
 Kansas Trans Reporter, KUTC,
 1530 W. 15th St., Room 2160,
 Lawrence, KS 66045.
 Email: weaver@ku.edu

Buying a database, continued from page 13

bases, which are priced from \$100 for a very basic package to \$1,000 on the very high end, are mainly designed for use by one user at a time with uncomplicated database needs.

Popular desktop databases are Microsoft Access and the program-mable FoxPro (www.microsoft.com), Filemaker Pro (www.filemaker.com), Paradox (www.corel.com), and Lotus Approach (www.lotus.com).

The more powerful and more expensive server databases range from \$1,000 for basic software to \$10,000 for packages with just about every feature imaginable. Server databases are designed for high-end use, and require considerable technical knowledge.

Popular server database manufacturers are Oracle (www.oracle.com/database), Microsoft (www.microsoft.com/sql), IBM (www.ibm.com), Postgres

(www.postgresql.com), and Sybase (www.sybase.com).

Standard features

Regardless of what you choose, your database should come equipped with a few basics. Most important, the database should be able to track and sort your information for a variety of purposes. Ask your staff what they wish they could do in terms of sorting information; your needs may be different from other agencies. The key here is to improve productivity.

Because your agency has specific needs, your database should be customizable. Productivity relies on having a flexible database that will work with your staff, not the other way around. Also, make sure you can easily generate the reports you need. Establish that the functions of the database are simple, not overwhelming or confusing, and that training or re-training is easy and cost-effective so that your new database will be with you for the long haul.

Source: "Setting the Record Straight: Does your organization know the truth about database software?" by Barbara L. Cicone, *NonProfit Times*, May 1, 2004. ▲

Little wonder, continued from page 13

look. And not all thumb drives are designed equal: some come built into pens or fashion accessories. For those with a hot tub in the office, water-proof drives are even available! Many come with lanyards to wear around your neck.

So go ahead and get the drive you think looks best with your agency's color scheme, or your outfit, or whatever, because once you start using it, your little wonder will be going everywhere with you. ▲

Resources Order Form

Use this order form to order the resources described here. Feel free to keep the publications. **Send the order form to:** KUTC Lending Library, 1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2160, Lawrence, KS 66044. Or fax the form to 785/ 864-3199.

Publications

- The Employee Guide to Workplace Violence** (brochure). This guide provides a definition of workplace violence and how to deal with “different,” difficult or dangerous people.
- Implementation Guidelines for Drug and Alcohol Regulations in Mass Transit**, November 2003. Available online at http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Publications/substance/ImplementationGuidelines/ImplementationGuidelines_rev_11_2003.pdf. Hard copies are available by faxing your request (include title and your mailing address to Alison Thompson at 617-494-2684).
- Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System—A Self Assessment Tool for Communities**. (FTA, 2004), 19 pages. A comprehensive evaluation and planning tool to help state and community leaders and agencies improve or start coordinated transportation systems.
- Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System—Facilitator’s Guide**. (FTA, 2004), 31 pages.

Web sites

- Kansas Safekids**
<http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us/safekids/>.
This year, one child in four will suffer a preventable injury that is serious enough to require medical attention. Kansas SAFE KIDS is charitable organization affiliated with the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. The designated lead agency is the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.
- Beverly Foundation Resource Store**
<http://www.beverlyfoundation.org/stor.cfm>.
Provides written materials prepared by the Beverly Foundation for public, private and nonprofit organizations as well as professionals in health, aging and transportation, and communities nationwide.
- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety’s Senior Driver**
<http://www.seniordrivers.org/home/toppage.cfm>.
Provides information targeted to individuals and families, drivers and nondrivers, transportation providers and researchers on issues of older drivers.
- AARP Driver Safety Program**
<http://www.aarp.org/life/drive/>. Resource site on older drivers, training and other resources.

Name Title

Agency Phone

Street address Email address

City State Zip + 4 Date materials needed

.....

Kansas Trans Reporter

The *Kansas Trans Reporter* is an educational publication published quarterly by the Kansas University Transportation Center. The newsletter is distributed free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service.

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.

January 2005, Volume 18, Number 1. Copyright © Kansas University Transportation Center. All rights reserved. Reproduction of material appearing in the *Kansas Trans Reporter* requires written permission.

.....
How to reach us

For a free subscription to the *Kansas Trans Reporter* or to contact one of our faculty or staff, call toll-free **800/248-0350** (in Kansas) or **785/864-2595** (outside Kansas). Send correspondence to *Kansas Trans Reporter*, Kansas University Transportation Center, 1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2160, Lawrence, KS 66045. Send e-mail messages to Patricia Weaver at weaver@ku.edu or Lisa Harris at LHarris@ku.edu. Visit our Web site at **www.kutc.ku.edu**

.....
Address incorrect?

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

.....
Other services



In addition to publishing the *Kansas Trans Reporter*, the Kansas RTAP program offers a variety of other educational services. Following is a partial list of these services:

- Publication dissemination
- Technical assistance
- Telephone consultation
- Training development
- Web site
- Program planning assistance
- Video lending library
- Computer database searches
- Referral services
- E-mail discussion group

.....
Kansas RTAP staff

Assistance can be obtained by contacting a *Kansas Trans Reporter* staff person at the numbers or address above.

Project Director Pat Weaver
Editor Lisa Harris
Contributors Courtney Hansen, Nishtha Mehta
..... Craig Damlo

Co-sponsored by the Kansas DOT  and the Federal Transit Administration 

.....

University of Kansas
Transportation Center
Kansas Trans Reporter
1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2160
Lawrence, KS 66045-7609

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lawrence, Kansas
Permit No. 65

Return Service Requested