



# Kansas Trans Reporter

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

## Fitting the pieces together for intrastate transportation regs

What do these regulations mean for transit agencies traveling within Kansas?

by Pat Weaver

For many years, Kansas transit agencies were considered exempt from regulation by the intrastate motor carrier regulations of the State of Kansas. More recent changes in federal interstate regulations, which were then



adopted by the State of Kansas for intrastate carriers, suggest that some transit agencies are not exempt from the safety provisions of these regulations. This article explores which agencies fall under the jurisdiction of the Kansas Corporation Commission for the transportation of passengers within the State, and

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## Roll out the welcome mat

Making transit senior-friendly

by Nishtha Mehta

Between the years 2000 and 2030, the number of older persons in United States is expected to *double*. Transit agencies will need to be prepared to provide services to this increasing senior population. This article will describe short-term and long-term measures transit agencies can employ to meet the particular needs of seniors.

In a previous article on senior mobility issues we mentioned that

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## Intrastate regulations,

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how to get into compliance if the regulation applies to your agency.

In the 2003 Kansas Legislative session, Section 5307, 5310 and 5311 agencies were exempted from the economic regulations of intrastate transportation having to do primarily with specifying levels of insurance and tariffs, as enforced by the Kansas Corporation Commission (K.S.A. 66-1,109). However, the safety regulations remain in place, and partici-

but is not operated for hire<sup>2</sup>.

If you fit this description, then read on.

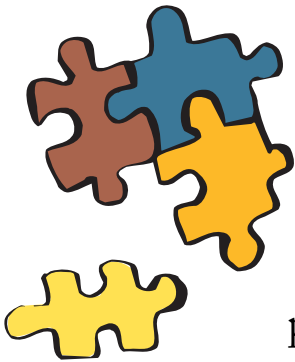
### Which agencies must comply?

The next fact to consider is the type of organization you operate. Kansas State Statutes provide an exemption for regulation of the safety standards if the vehicle is *government-owned*, i.e., operated by the United States, the District of Columbia, any state, any municipality or any other political subdivisions of this State (K.S.A. 66-1,129(c)). In other words, if your

### The next step: registering with the KCC

If you've determined that you fall under these regulations, you will need get a copy of the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC)'s *Procedures for Safety Compliance* and get to work. The handbook provides a complete list of instructions for compliance and some checklists to follow.

The next step is to obtain your Motor Carrier Safety number by registering with the KCC. If you are operating in Kansas only, this number comes with a -KS suffix. You may



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Whether your agency is regulated depends on a number of factors.

pation in these federal transit programs does not exempt an agency from compliance with the intrastate safety regulations. Whether your agency is regulated depends on some other factors which we will identify in the next section.

### Some important terminology

What are the classifications of motor carrier? There are two classifications of motor carriers (i.e. operators) identified in the Kansas safety regulations: the *common motor carrier* and the *private motor carrier*. A common motor carrier includes a passenger transportation service that is open to the general public. A private motor carrier is a transportation service using a commercial motor vehicle<sup>1</sup>,

vehicles are titled to a city or county, your agency is *not* bound by the intrastate safety regulations. However, a *private* not-for-profit agency that operates a vehicle of at least 10,001 pounds or one that is rated to carry 16 passengers or more (including the driver) do fall under these regulations.

obtain this number online by going to [www.usdotnumberregistration.com/quest1.asp](http://www.usdotnumberregistration.com/quest1.asp). Select the "intrastate" option and follow instructions.

If you have difficulty with the online process or do not have access to the internet, you may get assistance by contacting the KCC. Contact information is provided at the end of this article.

<sup>1</sup>A commercial vehicle has a GVWR of 10,001 pounds or is rated for 16 or more passengers, including the driver.

<sup>2</sup>The interpretation from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has been that a service is "for hire" if compensation is either direct (such as fares) or indirect (such as grant funds).

### What else is required?

In general, in addition to obtaining your Motor Carrier safety number, you'll need to: 1) establish a driver qualification file; 2) comply with hours of service requirements; 3) maintain records of inspection, repair and maintenance; and 4) maintain an accident record file.

**Intrastate passenger service requirements for private not-for-profit transit providers**

	1-6 passengers	7-15 passengers	16+ passengers
Register with the KCC?	no	no	yes
Maintain records of duty?	no	yes <sup>a</sup>	yes
Comply with all State safety regs?	no	no	yes
Comply with FMCSR? <sup>1</sup>	no	no	yes
Carry minimum insurance coverage at \$100,000/ \$300,000/ \$50,000? <sup>b</sup>	yes	yes	yes

Training for interpreting intrastate regulations is available. See page 14.

<sup>1</sup>FMCSR stands for Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

<sup>a</sup>per KAR 82-4-1 (c) 3.

<sup>b</sup>\$100,000 per person bodily injury, \$300,000 bodily injury per accident, \$50,000 property damage.

Note: In addition to the above, if you are a private not-for-profit provider but do not receive 5310 or 5311 funding, you must register with the KCC and file a tariff if you operate 25 miles outside of your domicile.

The driver qualification file includes a application for employment, a motor vehicle record check, a three-year work history from previous employers, a medical examiner's certificate (held by the driver) and a "long form" medical certificate report retained in the file; documentation of a driver's road test; an annual driver's certification of violations and an annual review of the driving record; a driver data sheet, and drug and alcohol testing reports.

A driver's log with hours of service is not necessary if the driver operates within a 100 air-mile radius of the normal work reporting location. However, the agency must maintain and retain accurate time records for six months that show the time the driver reports for duty each day, the total number of hours the driver is on duty each day, the time the driver is released from duty each day. There are different rules for new-hires and drivers who work for more than one employer.

Inspection, repair, and maintenance records must be maintained on each commercial motor vehicle. In

general, an inspection must be completed by a certified inspector annually, and daily post-trip inspections must be completed and maintained for 90 days. In addition, records of maintenance and inspection must be retained on each vehicle for one year plus six months after the vehicle leaves the agency's control.

The forms to meet these requirements and a helpful checklist for each requirement are included in the document *Procedures for Safety Compliance*. An electronic copy of this handbook is on the KCC Web site and may be downloaded at [http://www.kcc.state.ks.us/trans/safety\\_procedures.pdf](http://www.kcc.state.ks.us/trans/safety_procedures.pdf). You may also order a hard copy from KCC (see contact information below).

In addition, if you are a Section 5310 or 5311 agency and participate in the Federal Transit Administration drug and alcohol testing program through KDOT, the drug and alcohol testing regulations you currently follow meet the requirements of the intrastate safety regulations as long as the drivers are performing the majority of their safety-sensitive work

under the transit program. If you have any employees that perform some of their safety-sensitive job function under the FTA programs and some under the Commercial Drivers License provisions of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), you probably will need to seek clarification from Sandy Flickinger, KDOT,(785) 368-7091 or at [sandyf@ksdot.org](mailto:sandyf@ksdot.org).

**Who can you contact for assistance?**

While these requirements under the Kansas motor carrier safety regulations may be complicated, they provide a mechanism to help keep transit vehicles safer on the road. Staff at the Kansas Corporation Commission are available to answer your questions and assist you in compliance. You may visit their Web site at <http://www.kcc.state.ks.us/trans/index.htm> for regulatory descriptions, forms and schedules. In addition, you can contact Dale Moore at KCC by phone at (785) 271-3151 or email him at [d.moore@kcc.state.ks.us](mailto:d.moore@kcc.state.ks.us) for additional information or assistance. ▲



## What the FTA's Q & A drug and alcohol forum says about non-injury vehicle accidents, and more

by Laura Snyder

In our October 2004 issue, we published some questions and answers from the Federal Transit Administration's Drug and Alcohol Testing Web Site. We found a few more scenarios we hope you'll find helpful to your agency.

### **If there are no injuries in an accident, does the driver have to get tested?**

*Scenario:* A driver is involved in an accident. He [fender-bumped] a vehicle and received a citation. There was no apparent injury, and no one had to be transported to the hospital. Would the driver be taken for a Post Accident Drug and Alcohol Test?

*Response from FTA's Eve Rutyna:* According to §655.4, the definition of an accident is as follows: Accident means an occurrence associated with the operation of a vehicle, if as a result: 1) An individual dies; or 2) an individual suffers bodily injury and immediately receives medical treatment away from the scene of the accident; or 3) with respect to an occurrence in which the mass transit vehicle involved is a bus, electric bus, van, or automobile, one or more vehicles (including non-FTA funded vehicles) incurs disabling damage as the result of the occurrence and such vehicle or vehicles are transported away from the scene by a tow truck or other vehicle; or 4) with respect to an occurrence in which the mass transit vehicle involved is a rail car, trolley car, trolley bus, or vessel, the mass transit



vehicle is removed from operation.

In this case, a drug and alcohol test would depend on the factors mentioned above: whether either vehicle incurred disabling damage from the accident, or if the transit vehicle was required to be removed from the scene.

### **Rules about lift injuries**

*Scenario:* [First, remember that FTA considers the operation of a vehicle's lift to constitute operation of the

include operation of its lift. Thus fatalities associated with the operation of a lift require the conduct of FTA drug and alcohol post-accident tests for the driver and any other covered employee who could have contributed to the accident. Non-fatal accidents associated with the operation of the lift that result in bodily injury requiring immediate transportation to a medical facility will also require the conduct of FTA drug and alcohol post-accident tests unless the employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor consistent with §655.44.

Given this scenario, where there was an accident when the driver tried

In this case, a drug and alcohol test would depend on ... whether either vehicle incurred disabling damage from the accident, or if the mass transit vehicle was required to be removed from the scene.

vehicle, and that any accidents that involve an injury while on the lift meet the post-accident testing criteria.] What happens if a rider falls off a stool she is sitting on while on a lift—a stool provided by the driver—and the passenger is taken to the hospital for medical treatment? Does the driver meet the FTA's criteria for [requiring] a post-accident test?

*Response from Rutyna:* According to the *FTA Drug and Alcohol Regulation Updates Newsletter* (Issue # 25, Summer 2003) in the Spring of 2003, FTA indeed clarified its position, expanding its interpretation of "operation of a vehicle" to

getting the individual on the lift, and if immediate medical treatment away from the scene was required, yes, you would conduct a post-accident test of the driver under FTA authority.

For questions specific to the Kansas Transit Drug and Alcohol Testing Program, contact Sandy Flickinger, KDOT Drug and Alcohol Testing Coordinator, at (785)368-7091 or e-mail [sandyf@ksdot.org](mailto:sandyf@ksdot.org).

Source: Federal Transit Administration Drug and Alcohol Testing Web site: <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Safety/DATesting.asp>. ▲

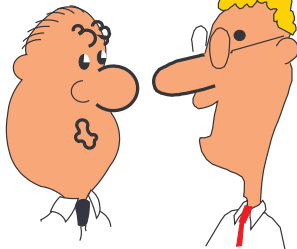
# “Why should I join the KPTA?”

... by Ronald D. Butts . . . . .

**A**s Executive Director of the Kansas Public Transit Association (KPTA), I am often asked, “Why should my small agency join KPTA? Isn’t it just for larger systems?” There are certainly many answers to this question, and many smaller agencies have found those answers. Let’s look at just a few.

## Advocating for increases in federal funding

KPTA, formed in 1983, provides a common voice for all transportation providers with our state and federal officials. We visit Washington, D.C., each spring to talk with our senators and congressmen and their staff about the needs of public transportation in Kansas. Our message has been well received; during the past six years, Kansas has received over \$17.4 million for new and replacement vehicles and rural bus facilities for Section 5310 and 5311 service providers through the Section 5309 discretionary capital program.



## A voice in state transportation funding

A KPTA member represents public transportation on the Kansas Transportation 2000 Task Force. We helped coordinate presentations for groups and individuals that appeared before this panel. We also made presentations on behalf of all public transportation in Kansas. We were directly involved in working with the Kansas Legislature during the enactment of the Comprehensive Trans-

portation Program for Kansas. This program increased funding to Section 5310 and 5311 service providers to over \$2.9 million each year.

Certainly, we are all proud of the improved quality of buses we have in service as a result of this increased funding from our state and federal partners in public transportation.

KPTA conducts an annual meeting for our membership. This is a great event that provides those in attendance the opportunity to

there is fun, fellowship and food, with discounted registration fees for members of KPTA.

## A chance to get involved

KPTA is an opportunity for you to have a broader impact on public transportation in Kansas by joining with others who share common interests in this vital service to our communities and to our customers. It provides you with the opportunity to become more involved by becom-

The KPTA annual meeting provides the opportunity to receive training and information that may otherwise not be easily accessible for your agency. Presentations often include current information on federal legislation affecting public transportation, updates by the Kansas Department of Transportation, and special programming directed to Section 5310 and 5311 agencies.

receive training and informational opportunities that may otherwise not be easily accessible for your agency. Presentations often include current information on federal legislation affecting public transportation, updates by the Kansas Department of Transportation and special programming that is directed to Section 5310 and 5311 agencies.

The KPTA conference is a great opportunity to meet and network with other public transportation providers like you, throughout the state. These new friends can be a very valuable source of information, and often a good sounding board when you need one. In addition,

ing a board member or an officer of KPTA. It gives you an opportunity for you to have a greater voice in public transportation in Kansas. We invite you to join with us in working to provide greater public transportation opportunities for all Kansas.

Joining KPTA is easy and the cost is very reasonable. Annual membership dues for Section 5310 or 5311 public transportation providers are only \$45.00 plus \$5.00 per public transportation vehicle.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at [kpta@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kpta@sbcglobal.net) or call (785) 273-2498. ▲

**Roll out the welcome mat,**

*continued from page 1*

seniors often keep driving even after their ability to manage and control vehicles diminishes due to age-related changes. Transit agencies can help encourage seniors to give up driving when they should, but it is necessary to understand the changing needs of the senior population and provide services accordingly.

**Changing needs**

Changes in demographic patterns are likely to significantly affect future transportation needs for seniors. Tomorrow’s elderly persons will represent diverse backgrounds, cultures, incomes, and travel-related requirements. There will be no “average

older traveler” in the future. The senior population is expected to live in far reaching suburbs and rural areas and will want to travel to a wide range of destinations. Nearly all seniors will have been automobile drivers from their teenage years and throughout their lives. They will be accustomed to the independence and flexibility that a personal automobile can provide. Transit agencies will have to adapt their services to higher expectations for independence to attract riders.

**A better today...**

The first step towards attracting senior riders to any transit service would be to provide information on a regular basis regarding schedules and stops. This can serve as an important

step towards making trip planning more convenient for riders. Providing more telephone lines for information and making the system more responsive to complaints and suggestions can also help attract seniors to public transit.

Transit agencies should focus on providing amenities that will make travel convenient for senior riders, such as, minimizing physical barriers and eliminating long waiting periods.

Some seniors may require help in navigating the public transit system. A travel training program, through which riders can travel with volunteers and learn about their local transit system, can serve as an effective tool for agencies in providing assistance to senior passengers. Such programs can also provide a way to wel-



**R**oll out the welcome mat—The Beverly Foundation, an organization focused on research and education efforts that contribute to the ability of older people to live in their community, lists some common challenges and solutions for transit providers.

*Challenges for riders*

- Difficulty scheduling rides
- Inability to get into vehicles
- Rides not available when needed
- Inconvenient fixed route locations
- Limited ability to pay for fares
- Uninformed about services
- Insufficient opportunities to communicate with drivers

*Solutions for agencies*

- Allow program vehicles to be used by designated trained volunteer drivers who could provide customized service.
- Install a portable step mounted on a chassis of a bus or a high van to make boarding and alighting from the vehicle easier.
- Recruit volunteer drivers to expand service options; create call-a-ride programs for weekends and nights; create rural circuit routes with one-day-per-week service per town.
- Expand the fixed route system to have multiple stops at locations seniors frequent, such as senior centers, community centers and public libraries.
- Provide no-cost transportation to health and enrichment activities.
- Initiate travel training programs to teach seniors about costs, routes and schedules.
- Use a mobile data computer for real-time exchange of information. For example, have a GPS system installed in the vehicle. For small systems, the driver should be accessible by a cell phone or another communication device, so that customers can call and ask questions regarding scheduled stop times and potential delays.

The Beverly Foundation encourages agencies to meet the needs of older residents in the future by adopting the **five A's** of senior-friendly transportation.

- **Availability:** Transportation exists and is available when needed, for example, during weekends and evening.
- **Accessibility:** Transportation can be reached and used when necessary, for example, bus stairs should be negotiable and bus stops should be reachable.
- **Acceptability:** Transportation should clean, safe and user-friendly.
- **Affordability:** Transportation should be affordable. The fees should be comparable to driving a car.
- **Adaptability:** Transportation should be modifiable to meet special needs, for example, by adding lifts to accommodate wheelchairs.

come people who are not habitual public transit users.

A polite, courteous driver can go a long way toward making passengers feel comfortable using the public transit system. Train your drivers to provide some customer service features, such as calling out stops.

Helen Kreschnar, CEO of the Beverly Foundation, says that in one-on-one van travel, drivers can help passengers who require assistance by escorting them from their doors to

Other steps agencies can take to make public transit convenient include providing special vehicles for specialized transit needs, and working with representatives of senior communities to build additional community support for more local transit funding—and therefore services.

#### **For a better tomorrow...**

In the long run, transit agencies can plan ahead to provide a more need-specific transportation system and

Age-related problems, such as changes in vision, physical fitness and reflexes, which make driving difficult, can also create barriers in using transit. Seniors are often unable to sit for long periods of time and need help getting to, boarding and alighting from vehicles.

the vehicle. Kreschnar recommends that, in small rural communities, drivers carry phones or other communication devices, enabling senior travelers to call and ask about potential delays and arrival times.

make fundamental improvements to public transportation.

For example, consider providing different types of services at varying prices. This will allow riders to choose the service that fits their specific

needs. Seniors desire a frequent, comfortable, and affordable transit service to a wide variety of destinations, over a wide range of hours. Providing such trips will increase patronage and customer satisfaction.

Transit agencies should focus on mobility management and coordination with other types of transportation providers, not just on operating public transit services. As older customers demand wider transit options, transit agencies will have to wear many hats, including that of travel facilitators. They can collaborate with other agencies in their area to achieve a more far-reaching service. A high level of responsiveness, speed, comfort, and flexibility will help transit agencies attract more riders, including seniors.

#### **Sources**

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# Listen to the voice(s) of wisdom

## Tips for surveying senior riders

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 by Nishtha Mehta  
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**K**nowing what seniors need is key for being able to make transit services more senior friendly and increasing senior ridership. Surveys are important tools for learning those needs. This article will discuss various surveying techniques transit agencies can use.

### Ask the right questions of the right people

Ridership surveys gather information from current riders. After senior riders board vehicles, they can be asked to fill out a set of questions. A staff member from the transit agency conducting the survey can be on board the vehicle to explain the importance of the process and provide help as the participants fill out the questionnaire.

This survey type can include questions regarding what extra features should be included to make the transit services more comfortable for seniors. It should also aim at inquiring about the immediate concerns of the people using the service. These survey types are also called “surveys of convenience.” However, this does not allow gathering information from people who could potentially be transit-users but currently avoid public transportation.

General population surveys, on the other hand, gather information from both current and potential riders to help transit agencies increase their client base and create awareness within the community about the var-

ious transit services available. These aim at a wider base of respondents. Survey questions attempt to find what services would attract seniors to public transit and what changes they would like to see. These surveys can be conducted through mail-in or telephone interviews.

### Getting to know you...

Surveys can be used to develop services that meet the need for gaining access to goods and services, and improving quality of life. Broad categories of questions in transit surveys for seniors include demographics, accessibility issues, travel behavior, and health and disability issues.

According to Anita Stowell-Ritter of AARP Knowledge Management, questions regarding demographics can help divide the senior respondents into narrower age groups and groups on the basis of other socio-economic features such as income, number of vehicles owned, etc. This can help in developing accurate models to predict future transit need and demand for a community.

Examples of demographic questions include inquiries about age, gender, marital status, education level, ethnicity and income. These can be both open-ended, for example: What is your age as of your last birthday? or close ended, for example: What is your age group? (35-55, 55-75, above 75 years old).

Questions about accessibility are aimed at gathering information on how satisfied the riders are with the existing transit services and what new

features would make transit usage more comfortable for existing or potential riders. These include questions where respondents can rate their satisfaction with various features of the service on a scale of 1 through 5, where 1 is completely dissatisfied and 5 is completely satisfied.

Accessibility questions can also examine senior awareness about the existing transit system, for example: Rate your agreement with the statement: If I were no longer able to drive, it would be difficult for me to continue to live in my current neighborhood (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree).

Questions on travel behavior target the issue of social isolation—an important consideration for seniors. Travel behavior questions can examine the mobility of seniors within their community, for example: How often would you leave your home and go somewhere (shopping, visiting) in a typical week? (not at all, 1-2 times, 3-5 times, more than 5 times, don't know). Another example of a travel behavior question would be: Do you ever ride-share with someone (other than your spouse) when you need or want to get to a location? (yes, no).

Another important category of questions that senior transit surveys should include related to health and disability. According to Stowell-Ritter, these questions help analyze if the existing services meet senior-needs based on the health and well-being of the rider-base. These questions are also important in case the survey results will be used to produce computer models looking at transit demand. Examples of these questions include: How would you describe



your current health? (excellent, very good, good, fair, poor); and, Does any disability, handicap or chronic disease keep you from participating fully in work, housework or other activities? (yes, no). These questions can be followed up with more specific inquiries on the severity of the health difficul-



ties and if they impair the use of the existing transit services, for example: Do you use any of the following aids to get around? (cane, crutches or walker, electric scooter, wheelchair, none of these).

The results from these surveys can be used to create policies and services making transit senior-friendly.

### Some examples

Information gathered through transit surveys has led to the development of policies and initiatives that improve transit options for seniors. A survey by the Beverly Foundation of 263 community-based organizations in America that provide transportation to older adults, found that seniors can often face problems of isolation, access to only a narrow range of health and other necessary services, and few transportation options, especially in rural areas. The results from this survey have indicated that there is a need to provide broader access to health services for seniors. The survey also found that there is a greater need for trans-

portation assistance and support in rural regions.

These findings have led to the proposal of innovative solutions by the Beverly Foundation, such as shared vehicle use among community organizations, use of volunteer drivers from within the community and vehicle-renting by transit agencies. These solutions respond to specific problems faced by transit agencies, such as financial issues, as well as to the need of providing more options for seniors.

More information on this survey and its findings can be found at the Beverly Foundation's Web site, [www.beverlyfoundation.org](http://www.beverlyfoundation.org), clicking on the link "Resource STORE" and then selecting "Research on STPs."

Locally, Douglas County Senior Services (DCSS) conducts an annual survey to check the performance of their transportation service. According to Jessie Ann Lusher, executive director of DCSS, the results of one of the surveys indicated that seniors were not satisfied with the cleanliness of the vehicles. In response to this, DCSS provided maintenance schedules and cleaning kits to all its drivers.

The Department on Aging (DOA) at Sedgwick County also conducted a similar survey for senior riders recently. This survey asked respondents to evaluate the transportation service with special emphasis on timeliness, politeness of drivers and dispatchers and connectivity. According to Valerhy Harmon, director of Transportation and Physical Disabilities of Sedgwick County DOA, the results overwhelmingly found that seniors were happy and comfortable with the transportation service. Seniors also commented that they felt secure using the transportation facilities, which was an important concern for both the agency and the clients. According to Harmon, if

the survey had suggested the need for improvement in any aspect of the transportation service, the concerns would have been addressed.

Transportation for seniors, more than an issue of convenience, is a necessity of life. Surveying the current senior population can be a tool in understanding and responding to senior needs. Changes put in place due to the findings from these surveys can help transit agencies provide better services to seniors riders. Such surveys also instill a sense of ownership among seniors for the service. This is essential not only in terms of providing a better quality of life for seniors, but also for increasing rider base for agencies.

### Sources

Interviews with *Anita Stowell-Ritter*, AARP, Washington DC; *Helen Kerschner*, Beverly Foundation; *Jessie Ann Lusher*, Executive Director, Douglas County Senior Services; *Valerhy Harmon*, Director of Transportation and Physical Disabilities, Department on Aging, Sedgwick County, KS; *Wendy Koerner*, Lawrence Transportation Service. *AARP Texas Transportation Survey*, 2002.

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## Perils of 15-passenger vans

by Nishtha Mehta

Many transit agencies use 15-passenger vans to transport their riders. However, because of the high incidence of accidents involving these vans, it is important for agencies to be aware of the unique safety problems of these vehicles. This article

turned, killing three students. —In the summer of 2000, one student and teacher driver were killed in Arizona as a passenger van carrying 10 students veered off the highway and overturned.

Research conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicates that 15-passenger vans are involved in more single-vehicle accidents involving rollovers than any other

The rear-ward shift (along with the placement of rear tires) increases the propensity of the van to fishtail. The lack of structural integrity, non-laminated side windows, and inadequate crash-padding add to the hazards associated with these vehicles.

### By the law...

The Motor Vehicle Safety Amendments Act of 1974 is a federal law that prohibits the sale of new vehicles with a capacity of more than 10 passengers to schools unless the vehicle meets federal school bus safety standards; 15-passenger vans



More information about the **Moving Kids Safely in Child Care** program conducted by Kansas Safe Kids can be found by calling their office and talking with Cherie Sage, the regional coordinator, at (785) 296-0351. More information about the **Defensive Driving for Van-Drivers** course conducted by National Safety Council, Kansas can be found by calling their office and talking with Kathie Holman at (816) 842-5223, extension 222.

will describe these problems and discuss steps transit agencies can take to reduce risks.

### Danger on wheels

Between 1990 and 2001, 1,576 15-passenger vans were involved in fatal crashes that resulted in 1,111

passenger vehicle. The risk of rollover in such vans also increases with an increase in the number of passengers. When carrying less than five passengers, the risk of overturning is 12.3 percent. This risk increases to 70 percent when the van is filled to capacity.

In 2002, Ben Hogan, of Hogan Law Office P.C. Alabama, conducted a study to test the safety of 15-passen-

ger vans. Hogan found that several factors contribute to making these vans highly unsafe. 15-passenger vans have a high center of gravity even when empty, and this center shifts higher and rear-ward as more occupants board the vehicle. The upward shift of the center of gravity increases the overturning tendency of the van.

do not meet these standards, unless modified.

A few states have banned the use of 15-passenger vans for all school-related transportation. Kansas has enacted a similar law that goes into effect on July 1, 2005. Larry Bluthardt, of the Kansas Department of Education's School Bus Safety Unit, says that Kansas Department of Transportation requires vehicle guidelines to be followed by school districts and non-public schools. These guidelines include that no vehicle, other than a school bus, shall be used to transport more than 10 individuals, including the driver, at a given time. If a certain school district or non-public school already purchased a vehicle, such as a 15-passenger van, before July 1, 2001, they can operate the vehicle until July 1, 2005 after which

### Most van-related accidents are caused by inexperienced drivers.

fatalities among occupants of the vans. Some examples:

—On July 20, 2002, a Ford 15-passenger van transporting college cheerleaders overturned after the rear tire lost its tread.

—On September 24, 2001, a 1990 Dodge van transporting college students in Marianna, Florida over-

## Lower your risk when using a 15-passenger van

- Conduct maintenance checks and procedures. All essential systems, including brakes, exhaust, fuel, steering, tires and suspension, should be in good working condition.
- Hire qualified drivers. Create a list of the qualifications necessary for a 15-passenger van driver and use it as a checklist before employing drivers. The checklist can contain questions regarding load distribution in such vehicles, familiarity with all road rules, and previous experience driving these vans.
- Do not transport more than 10 passengers at a given time. 15-passenger vans are more prone to accidents when filled to capacity.
- Remove the rear seats to reduce loading behind the vehicle's rear axle.
- Strictly enforce the wearing of safety belts for both drivers and riders.
- Educate drivers about what causes rollovers and the importance of driving at lower speeds.
- Include safety items on board, including fire extinguishers, first-aid kits and communication devices.

Source: "Public Citizen's Advice to Owners of 15-Passenger Vans," *Public Citizen* Web site: [www.citizen.org/autosafety/passengervan/articles.cfm?ID=8917](http://www.citizen.org/autosafety/passengervan/articles.cfm?ID=8917).

operation will be prohibited by law. So in short, by the time you read this, the use of 15-passenger vans by schools to transport children will be prohibited in Kansas.

This law, while not directly applicable to transit agencies, sheds

operated by experienced drivers holding a commercial drivers license. The advisory also included information regarding risk of rollovers and safety measures.

In November 2002, NHTSA, in partnership with the Health

## The use of 15-passenger vans by schools to transport children is now prohibited in Kansas.

light on the problems associated with transporting riders in these vehicles. This brings us the question of what transit agencies can do and what resources are available to them to promote safe use of these vans.

### Take action!

NHTSA has been involved with several actions and steps associated with the safe use of 15-passenger vans. In April 2001, an advisory issued by NHTSA informed the public that these vans should only be

Resources and Services Administration and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), announced a training program for child care providers called Moving Kids Safely in Child Care. This two-day program trains child care providers on how to safely transport children using age-appropriate restraints, and on the benefits of using buses rather than 15-passenger vans. The program can be adapted to the specific needs of a transit agency. It is available through the state high-

way safety offices, including the Kansas SAFE KIDS Program, which is a nonprofit coalition of over 60 statewide and regional organizations and businesses, including the Kansas Department of Transportation (see sidebar at left for some safety tips from NHTSA, published at the *Public Citizen's* Web site).

According to John Drees, program coordinator for Safe Kids Douglas County, most van-related accidents are caused by inexperienced drivers. Kansas is addressing this problem through a training program aptly named Defensive Driving for Van Drivers. This course, conducted by the National Safety Council's (NSC) Kansas Chapter, prepares drivers to operate all vans, including 15-passenger vans. Kathie Holman, the program coordinator for this course, says courses can be conducted on-site for companies and are also taught as open classes, depending on the number of students. There is also an added financial incentive for participating in this program as all the students can obtain a discount on their personal auto insurance, per Kansas law.

Kansas Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) also provides training using the NSC's "Coaching the Van Driver" program. For more information on this program, call the Kansas RTAP office and talk with Pat Weaver at (785) 864-2595.

### In sum...

According to Drees, many of the accidents involving these vans can be prevented if certain precautions are taken. It's important to: 1) understand that these vans are larger, heavier vehicles and 2) employ all available safety measures to reduce the risks associated with them. Transit agencies should attempt to hire well-trained, experienced drivers, and use the resources available

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## Build your own home...virtually!

Tips for creating a Web site from scratch

by Nishtha Mehta

As internet use grows in America, many transit agencies are creating their own Web sites. These sites offer information about schedules, fares, routes, and special events. They become a one-stop "information kiosk" for all persons who wish to gain information about the services offered by the agency. The transit agency, in turn, receives a marketing tool that provides them with flexibility, a wider audience, improved customer service, a professional image and low cost maintenance.

Transit agency staff members can construct their virtual homes themselves. This article will tell you what to do.

### Your inner Web-designer

Because finances are often tight for transit agencies, and professional Web site designers are expensive to hire, agency staff may choose to build a Web site themselves, using a Web site builder. Operating a builder requires no prior knowledge of programming and designing. There are two types of builders; online and offline.

Online builders provide off-site

space on the internet for your Web site. A popular example is iPage. This builder can help you create a simple and professional Web site, easily and inexpensively. It provides a customizable Web site with 50 megabytes (MG) of disk space on their Web server. It also provides 10

email accounts from the Web site that can be used by transit agency employees. The cost for this service is approximately \$6 per month with a 30-day money back guarantee. If all the text and graphics that need to be displayed are already saved on your computer, you can create a Web site within five minutes.

Builders like iPage have simple user-friendly interfaces (elements of the program that the user interacts with), and provide an owner's manual that can take you through a step-by-step process on how to create a Web site. Extra pages can be included at the price of approximately \$2.00 per month more.

Another popular online Web site builder is 1&1 Instant Web. This Web site builder can help you create a simple site without any HTML programming skills. It is suitable for small businesses. 1&1 Instant Web site requires no registration to get started. Unlike iPage, Instant Web allows you to view how the Web

pages would look before making any payment. It allows you to create a Web site in five simple steps; choosing the layout, refining the design, editing the content, adding extra features and publishing the site on the Web. Its cost is comparable to iPage.

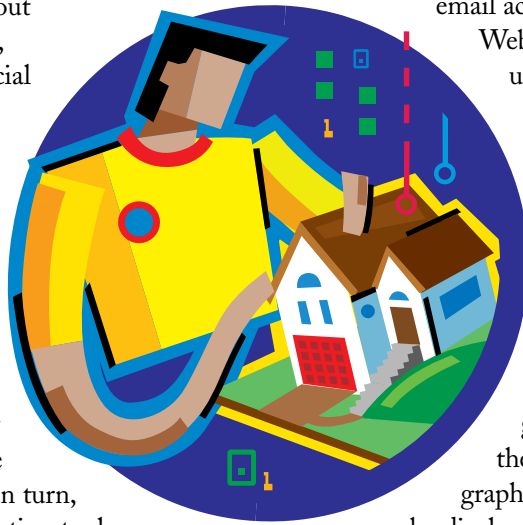
There are many other online Web site builders available. More information about iPage, 1&1 Interface Web and other builders can be found by going to the Web site <http://www.buildwebsite4u.com/building/Web-site-builders.shtml>.

Another way of constructing Web sites is by using an offline Web site builder. Similar to an online builder, these require no HTML or programming knowledge. You load a program into your personal computer and do not have to be online for operation. Unlike online builders,

### Web site builders are available online or offline.

these packages do not require a monthly payment but have a higher one-time cost.

One such popular package is the Cool Web site Builder. This program approximately costs \$150 and can be used to create, maintain and publish a professional Web site, with no extra payments. Offline builders can take you through various templates, colors, fonts and styles for creating a Web site to suits your purpose and audience. They also give you options to include photos and graphics. More information on offline Web site



builders can be found at <http://www.build-a-web-site.co.uk/offlineweb-sitebuilder.html>.

### What to include

The most important part of any Web page is its content. Transit Web sites appeal to a wide audience. Internet savvy individuals use these sites to plan their trips. Customers want information about schedules, maps and fares as fast and as easily as possible. Current and potential riders can be provided with this information in an easy-to-use and accessible format through your Web site. Any new program or service of your agency can also be publicized on your Web page. Your Web site can serve as an advertisement and sales pitch for you.

A transit Web site can be used to recognize and respond to the needs of frequent and infrequent riders, residents and tourists. Choose graphics and photographs that enforce and communicate your message and include links to relevant Web pages. These features can make your site more useful and easier to navigate.

According to Ajay Ramamurthy, database programmer at the University of Kansas Transportation Center, GIF format files are best for logos and JPEG format files are best for any photographs you want to include on your site. Ramamurthy also suggests providing relevant documents in portable file format (PDF), as these are easy to view and can be stored separately on the Web server with a link to them provided on the main Web page. Adobe Acrobat Reader for viewing PDF documents is available for free at the <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>. This information and link can be included on your Web site.

Consistency within the site and with external Web conventions can

also promote ease of use. As Web-visitors become accustomed to using your Web site, they will know how and where to search for relevant information. Other features that add to the usability of the site are reduced download time for schedules, maps and any other documents available on the site and up-to-date information. According to Ramamurthy, the best way to reduce download times is to decrease the picture size, keep documents small and include only relevant information.

Public transit can be promoted through these Web sites by providing up-to-date information that gives the potential rider a viable alternative to using their own vehicles for travel. Information about bus interchanges and real time travel information can increase the efficiency of trip planning.

The golden rules on how to build and what to include on Web sites are that the sites should be simple, understandable and clear, and they should have a logical, well planned structure. More information and samples of rural and specialized transit sites can be found on the Web site [www.transitweb.its.dot.gov](http://www.transitweb.its.dot.gov) by clicking on "Usability Guidelines for Transit Web sites" and then "Designing."

### Do's

- Select a Web site name that accurately represents your agency and is easy to remember.
- Keep your audience in mind as you design.
- Create a clear sales message.
- Update your site content frequently to keep it current.
- Anticipate and answer your visitor's questions.
- Check site once a week to ensure that all features are working.
- Include contact information.
- Title each page to be search-engine friendly.

### Don'ts

- Don't have too much information on one page.
- Don't let the site become outdated.
- Don't use complicated designs, colors and fonts.
- Don't "yell" at visitors by using all capital letters.
- Don't include meaningless graphics and clip art features.
- Don't include documents or features that take very long to load with a modem.
- Don't ignore any requests for information and complaint that you receive. Web sites should be used as an interactive tool not a way to distance the agency staff from clients.

Source: "10 Reasons Why Your Business Needs a Web site," *Webeze*, 2005.

### Conclusion

The internet has changed the way people look for information and services. With the number of people using the internet doubling in the past two years, creating a space for your agency on the Web has become important. Using this resource, ample information can be provided to customers in a highly flexible and yet focused way.

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"How to Make a Web site of

*Go to next page*

## Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

### 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](mailto:weaver@ku.edu)

July 7, 2005

Section 5310/5311 Transit Management 101 for New Managers

Topeka, Kansas.

Contact: Kansas RTAP, Rose, 785-864-2594 or email [rosemary@ku.edu](mailto:rosemary@ku.edu). <http://www.kertap.kutc.ku.edu>.

### Intrastate regulations training sessions

Topeka—July 5, August 1 or September 6  
KCC 1st Floor Hearing Room, 1500 S.W. Arrowhead Road

Hutchinson—July 11, August 8 or September 12  
KDOT District 5 Conference Room, 1220 W. Fourth Street

Hays—July 18, August 15 or September 19  
KHP Office, 1821 Frontier Road, Bldg. with Blue Roof

Garden City—July 25, August 29 or September 26  
KHP Office, 2222 E. Highway 50

More sessions are scheduled for later this year. See dates at [www.kcc.state.ks.us/trans/safety\\_meetings.htm](http://www.kcc.state.ks.us/trans/safety_meetings.htm).

July 8, 2005

Section 5310/5311 Transit Management 101 for New Managers

Wichita, Kansas.

Contact: Kansas RTAP. Rose, 785-864-2594 or email [rosemary@ku.edu](mailto:rosemary@ku.edu). <http://www.kstap.kutc.ku.edu>.

September 12-14, 2005

Annual Meeting of Kansas Public Transit Association

Topeka, Kansas.

FMI: Ron Butts, KPTA, 785-273-2498. Email: [kpta@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kpta@sbcglobal.net). <http://kstransit.com>.

October, 2005

Transporting Special Needs Passengers

Contact: Kansas RTAP, Rose, 785-864-2594 or email [rosemary@ku.edu](mailto:rosemary@ku.edu).

<http://www.kertap.kutc.ku.edu>.

October 4 - Garden City

October 5 - Wichita

October 6 - Emporia

October 11 - Manhattan

October 12 - Pittsburg

October 14 - Olathe

October 19 - Topeka

### 15-passenger vans,

continued from page 11

to them through the various programs offered in the state to lower risks for all road users.

### Sources

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### Web site from scratch,

continued from page 13

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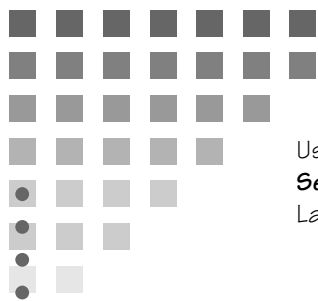
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*Effective Use of Transit Web Sites: A Synthesis of Transit Practice*, Transportation Research Board. Synthesis 43, 2002. [www.transitweb.its.dot.gov](http://www.transitweb.its.dot.gov). ▲

## Resources Order Form



Use this order form to order the resources listed here.

**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 and videotapes

**The ADA and Aging Transit Services.**

Provides an overview of the legislation that has a profound impact for the elderly of this country. National Eldercare Institute, 1992.

**A Guide for Seniors: Finding the Right Transportation Option for You.**

A template in Word format that can be modified to fit your service and your community to find the right transportation option for seniors.

**Report: Understanding Senior Transportation: Report and Analysis of a Survey of Consumers 50+.**

"Understanding Senior Transportation" continues the AARP's efforts to expand knowledge about older persons and transportation. The report presents the results of a telephone survey of approximately 2,400 adults age 50+. Because we know that mobility (as measured by trips made and miles traveled) shrinks as individuals age, the survey focuses on adults age 75+. Special efforts were made to reach adults 85+. Anita Stowell Ritter, Audrey Straight, Ed Evans. AARP, 2002.

**Commercial Drivers License in Kansas: Questions and Answers.**

A fact sheet that provides useful information on Commercial Driver Licenses (CDL). It is not intended to supply all pertinent information relating to the CDL regulations in Kansas. KUTC, RTAP Fact Sheet, 1990.

**FHWA Useful Safety Web Sites.**

A handy list of 35 Web sites on safety-related topics, including retroreflectivity, rumble strips, pedestrian and bicycle safety, speed management, work zone safety, highway-rail grade crossings, and much more.

**Drug and Alcohol Testing for Human Services Transportation Providers**

This CTAP Technical Assistance Brief (#2) gives information about drug and alcohol testing regulation seminars, requesting test results, gives a substance abuse policy checklist and discusses the dangers of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. CTAP, 2000.

**Commercial Drivers License Videotape Series.**

Amalgamated Transit Union. A package of study materials to help prepare for the CDL exam.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Street address</b>	<b>Email address</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>Zip + 4</b>	<b>Date materials needed</b>

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# 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.

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

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## 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

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## 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 ..... Laura Snyder, Nishtha Mehta

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