



Kansas Trans Reporter

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Transit agencies can prohibit concealed weapons

by Bret Rowe, Program Consultant,
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The Kansas legislature recently passed Senate Bill 418 to allow “concealed carry” of weapons. The Bill became law on July 1, 2006, however, according to amended bill and the Kansas Attorney General’s office, no concealed carry permits will be issued until January of 2007.

This new law would allow members of the general public over 21 who are legally entitled to do so,

to obtain a license to carry a concealed weapon for lawful self-defense. This process involves a thorough Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) and criminal records background check, satisfactory completion of a weapons safety training course, and a \$150 application fee. Licensees will not be allowed to carry concealed weapons into a police station, jail, courthouse, government meeting, government buildings, courtrooms, schools, bars, pro sporting events not involving firearms, the



Go to page 2

Has your transit agency’s level of preparedness changed?

by Pat Weaver

With the five-year anniversary of 9/11 and the one-year anniversary of Katrina, we’re reminded of disasters both natural and man-made. Is your transit agency more prepared than it was five years ago?

Five years have gone by since 9/11. It seems like yesterday, and it seems like an eternity ago. With that tragic occurrence, many of us wondered how we would react, and how (or if) we would

Go to page 2

Inside:

Concealed carry, continued
Page 2



Preparedness, continued
Page 2



More Q’s & A’s from FTA
Page 4

Suspending riding privileges
Page 6



Retaining & recruiting quality drivers
Page 7

Give ‘em options
Page 8

Attitude and awareness survey
Page 9



Migraines don’t have to be a headache
Page 11

Transit Web site features
Page 12



Calendar
Page 14

Resources
Page 15



Concealed carry,
continued from page 1

State Fair, public libraries, day care centers, churches, preschools, mental health centers, and state hospitals—doing so would be a Class A misdemeanor. By the way, active and retired police officers are entitled to concealed carry for their own protection; they are covered under other Federal laws and don't have to go through the

Transit agencies that choose to prohibit concealed weapons on their buses and in their facilities must:

- adopt a written rider policy
- post signs on the public entry of buildings and on the main passenger entry door of transit vehicles

does have a provision that would allow any public or private employer or business open to the public—if they chose to do so—to prohibit licensees from carrying concealed weapons while on the premises of the business. Any such businesses open to the public would have to post signs stating that carrying a concealed weapon on the premises is prohibited.

Transit agencies wanting to restrict or prohibit concealed weapons would have to post notices on the public entry door of their buildings, and on the main passenger entry door of each transit vehicle. The agency must also adopt a written rider policy statement that does not allow concealed carry on their premises¹ and in their transit vehicles.

Violation of carrying a concealed weapon on restricted or prohibited property would be a Class B misdemeanor.

The new Kansas law has a provision that would allow any public or private employer or business open to the public to prohibit licensees from carrying concealed weapons while on the premises of the business.

new application process meant for the general public.

The Federal government, including the FTA, does not prohibit concealed carry by the licensed general public on our Kansas transit vehicles. And the new Kansas law would not prohibit it, either, which has concerned some of our transit provider agencies.

However, the new Kansas law

For more information, contact Bret Rowe at KDOT Office's of Public Transportation, (785) 296-4907 or email bret@ksdot.org. ▲

Preparedness,
continued from page 1

recover. As a transit manager, that question not only is a personal one, but a professional one. Just how quickly could your agency get back to business after a terrorist attack or a natural disaster like a flood, fire or

tornado? A program of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has developed some resources to help you answer that question and procedures to help you to get back into operation should a disaster strike.

Ready Business, an extension of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Ready Campaign, helps owners and managers of small to medium-sized businesses prepare their employees, operations and assets in the event of an emergency. Launched September 2004, Ready Business is funded by

You are probably aware of some of the risks in your community, but there are some you may not think of.

Homeland Security's Office of Infrastructure Protection. A booklet entitled *Every Business Should Have a Plan* is one example of the resources available from Ready Business. This article will outline some of their key recommendations for protecting your transit agency and ensuring continuity of operations.

A plan to stay in business

Business continuity planning takes into account both man-made and natural disasters, and is a process that must occur in advance to help you to use your resources to take care of yourself, your co-workers and your agency's recovery.

Business continuity planning starts with a risk assessment—identifying which disasters are most common in the areas where you operate. You are probably aware of some of the risks in your community, but there are some you may not think of. Work with your local emergency planning committee in your county

¹Posting notice is required unless the agency is in a government building or mental health center where concealed carry is already prohibited.

or counties to help identify risks that you may not have considered.

Once you've identified the risks, assess how your agency functions, both internally and externally, to determine which staff, materials, procedures and equipment are absolutely necessary to keep the business operational. Identify operations critical to survival and recovery; e.g., emergency payroll, expedited financial decision-making, and accounting systems to track and document costs in the event of a disaster. Procedures for succession management should be in place; ideally including one person who is not based at the agency. In



smaller agencies, you may need to be creative to identify such a person.

The next step is putting together an emergency plan, including individuals with expertise vital to your daily business functions; in transit, this includes dispatchers and drivers with the "hands-on" knowledge of your operations.

Develop a comprehensive plan to serve your passengers and your community during and after a disaster. You will need to identify key suppliers, resources and other businesses you interact with on a daily basis and develop contingencies in case any of them are unable to operate. A disaster that shuts down a key supplier may mean that you shut down, too, if you

Source: Adapted from *Every Business Should Have a Plan*. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. http://www.ready.gov/business/_downloads/ReadyBusinessBrochure.pdf.

Cyber security: Protecting your agency from electronic threats

Here are some tips adapted from www.ready.gov to protect your agency's electronic data:

- Use anti-virus software and keep it and your operating system up-to-date.
- Don't open email from unknown sources.
- Use hard-to-guess passwords (and don't tape them to your computer to help you remember them!)
- Protect your computer from Internet intruders by using firewalls.
- Back up your data regularly and keep back-ups off-site.
- Make sure everyone in the agency knows these policies, follows them and knows what to do if the computer system becomes infected.

don't have a contingency plan in place.

Finally, plan what you will do if your building or vehicles are not accessible. Define crisis management procedures and individual responsibilities in advance. Talk with your

will want to see after an emergency and store them in a safe place.

• *Prepare for utility disruptions.* Your operations are dependent on electricity, gas, telecommunications, sewer and other utilities. Plan ahead for

Protect your computer from Internet intruders through the use of firewalls—and back up your data regularly and keep back-ups off-site.

staff and frequently review and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency.

Protecting your investment

In addition to emergency planning and communication, there are steps you can take to safeguard your agency and secure your physical assets:

- *Review insurance coverage.* Inadequate insurance coverage can lead to major financial loss if your agency is damaged, destroyed or interrupted for a period of time. Talk with your agent about physical losses, flood coverage and business interruption. Consider how you will pay creditors and employees. Find out what records your insurance provider

extended disruptions during and after a disaster. Examine which utilities are vital and talk with service providers about potential alternatives. Identify possible back-ups like portable generators to help in an emergency.

• *Secure facilities.* There's really no way to predict what will happen, but there are things to do to help you be prepared. Make sure fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and detectors are functioning. Think about how people and products go in and out of your building and secure the entries appropriately. Plan for mail safety by training staff to recognize a suspect package and to know how to handle it. Other mail safety strategies are available at <http://www.ready.gov/business/protect/facilities.html>. Finally, plan what you will do if your building or

Go to next page

Preparedness,

continued from page 3

your vehicles are not usable.

- *Secure your equipment.* Some disasters may damage or destroy some or all of your vehicles or other important equipment in your building. Conduct a walk-through to determine if there are ways to secure equipment. Consider attaching equipment and cabinets to walls.

Elevate equipment off the floor to avoid electrical hazards in the event of flooding. Identify computers, parts and other equipment that are needed to keep your service operating. Plan how to replace or repair equipment if it is damaged or destroyed.

- *Assess building air protection.* Some emergencies may release toxic particles into the air. Depending on the hazard, a building may provide a barrier between contaminated outside air and the people inside. Make sure that your facility's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system is working properly and is well-maintained. Develop and practice shut-down procedures.

Make sure outdoor air intakes are secure and away from ground level to avoid tampering. Evaluate whether you can feasibly upgrade the building's filtration system consistent with your HVAC system.

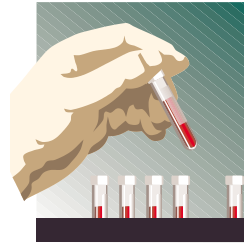
- *Improve cyber security.* Cyber security means protecting your data and information technology systems from outside and inside threats. Some of the recommended procedures may require specialized expertise. (See sidebar on page 3 for a partial list of recommended procedures.)

The *Ready Business Guide* was produced with support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). For more information on individual and business preparedness visit www.ready.gov. ▲

More Q's and A's from FTA's D&A Discussion Forum

[Here are a few more questions and answers from FTA's Drug and Alcohol Discussion Forum at <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Safety/BBS>. All answers are from Eve Rutyna, FTA.]

Question: I was just told in our audit findings that the transit supervisors and dispatchers do not necessarily have to be on the random drug-screening list. The reason I was given is that the supervisors and dispatchers would never be called upon to drive any of the transit vehicles in the provision of service. Is this true? I thought we had to be on the list because we are responsible for the dispatching movements of the vehicles.



Answer: The determination as to whether any employee is determined to be safety-sensitive and therefore subject to not only random testing but to the requirements of the DOT (49 CFR Part 40) and FTA (49 CFR Part 655) drug and alcohol regulations is dependent on the duties performed or potentially performed by that employee, it is not determined by job title. The duties that constitute safety-sensitive functions for FTA are defined in 49 CFR Part 655.4 *Definitions.*

"Controlling dispatch or movement of a revenue service vehicle" is one of the safety-sensitive functions.

FTA stated the following in 49 CFR Part 655 "Since each employer uses its own terminology to describe job categories that involve safety-sen-

sitive functions, each employer must continue to decide whether a particular employee performs any of the functions listed in the definition of "safety-sensitive function," including bus dispatchers. As noted in previous guidance, the key consideration remains the type of work performed rather than any particular job title.

Based on the comments received, FTA will not attempt a universal definition of "dispatchers" at this time. Instead, FTA will allow each employer to determine whether a particular dispatcher performs or may perform a safety-sensitive function."

FTA is aware that the job title "dispatcher" is very widespread, but that job duties can vary significantly between employers. (posted 6/14/06)

Question: How often does D&A training have to be done? I could not locate it in regulations. I have received conflicting info; one state agency suggest once a year and a D&A consultant says every 2 years.

Answer: The FTA requires one-time training for covered employees and supervisor. Please see 49 Part 655.14 below for details as to type of training for each:

§655.14 *Education and training programs.* Each employer shall establish an employee education and training program for all covered employees, including:

(a) *Education.* The education component shall include display and distribution to every covered employee of: informational material and a community service hot-line telephone number

for employee assistance, if available.

(b) *Training.*

(1) *Covered employees.* Covered employees must receive at least 60 minutes of training on the effects and consequences of prohibited drug use on personal health, safety, and the work environment, and on the

should be considered a minimum and may be exceeded if necessary.

Part 655.14(b) states, “*Covered employees.* Covered employees must receive at least 60 minutes of training on the effects and consequences of prohibited drug use on personal health, safety, and the work environ-

tation Guidelines (Chapter 5.

Training) and their *Best Practices Manual* (Chapter 3. Education and Training). [Note: Both publications may be found at <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Safety/BBS>.]

Hope this helps to clarify the issue! (posted 11/17/03)

FTA also believes that it would be an undue burden to mandate an industry-wide training schedule. The final rule recognizes the diversity of employee-management relationships within the transit industry and also strikes a reasonable balance with the requirement for employee and supervisor training.

signs and symptoms that may indicate prohibited drug use.

(2) *Supervisors.* Supervisors and/or other company officers authorized by the employer to make reasonable suspicion determinations shall receive at least 60 minutes of training on the physical, behavioral, and performance indicators of probable drug use and at least 60 minutes of training on the physical, behavioral, speech, and performance indicators of probable alcohol misuse. (posted 9/10/03)

Question: In your reply above, I could see no specifics in sources used stating “one-time-training.” While I don’t think our “once-a year” recurrent training on D&A is wasted, perhaps it is not necessary. Comments?

Answer: The 60 minutes of awareness training is required only once in the employee’s tenure with the company. A total of 120 minutes (60 minutes of training on drug use and 60 on alcohol misuse) is required for supervisors making reasonable suspicion determinations. This also is required only once in the supervisor’s tenure with the company. There is no regulatory requirement for refresher training. The time-frames

ment, and on the signs and symptoms that may indicate prohibited drug use.

(2) *Supervisors.* Supervisors and/or other company officers authorized by the employer to make reasonable suspicion determinations shall receive at least 60 minutes of training on the physical, behavioral, and performance indicators of probable drug use and at least 60 minutes of training on the physical, behavioral, speech, and performance indicators of probable alcohol misuse.” FTA responded as follows to a comment during the 655-rulemaking period:

“FTA also believes that it would be an undue burden to mandate an industry-wide training schedule. The final rule recognizes the diversity of employee-management relationships within the transit industry and also strikes a reasonable balance with the requirement for employee and supervisor training. However, a grantee may choose to include additional requirements not mandated by FTA, i.e., recurring training and employee rights. If a grantee does so, the grantee’s policy shall indicate that those additional requirements are the employer’s, and not FTA’s.”

Further information on training requirements may be found in two FTA publications: their *Implemen-*

Question: I am looking for recommendations for inexpensive training tapes, Web sites or DVDs to satisfy the D&A employee training. The local D&A companies will do it at a premium. Any suggestions or resources are appreciated.

Answer: There are a number of resources that will provide films, pamphlets, brochures, audiotapes, and various literature at little or no cost. Here are some for you to try:

1. National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), PO Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852. (800) 729-6686 or (301) 468-2600.
2. State substance abuse clearinghouse (each state has at least one federally funded clearinghouse which can provide you with nationally and locally produced information materials).
3. Drug-free Workplace Help Line, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. (800) 843-4971.
4. Partnership for a Drug Free America, 405 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10174-0002; (212) 922-1560. (posted 8-2-06) ▲



The last resort: Suspending riding privileges

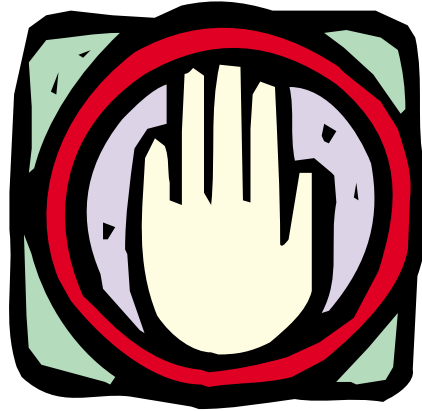
by Justin Dorsey

On most days transit passengers board your vehicle, sit down, look out the window, and disembark without incident. However, in rare circumstances, a passenger will do something so unacceptable that it warrants suspension of riding privileges. This article will discuss general considerations related to suspending riding privileges along with policies on the topic from three transit agencies.

Things to consider

When writing and/or enforcing your refusal of service policy, consider the following issues: ADA requirements, protecting passenger safety, and due process claims. ADA requirements state that it is not discrimination for a public or private agency to refuse service to an individual with a disability if that individual engages in violent, seriously disruptive, or illegal conduct. However, service cannot be refused because the disability results in appearance or involuntary behavior that may offend, annoy, or inconvenience others. For example, someone with Tourette's syndrome may make involuntary profane statements, but service cannot be refused because of that behavior. However, if it is reasonable to believe that any passenger endangers the safety of other passengers and/or employees, service may be refused.

If you are a state or local government agency, before suspending a passenger's service, ensure that you will not violate that passengers' due process



rights. Basically, this means that your agency must have policies that clearly identify unacceptable behavior and procedures all parties will follow if unacceptable behavior occurs. For example, the City of Lawrence, Kansas suspension of paratransit riding privilege policy identifies abusive, offensive, or threatening behavior and acts that invade privacy as unacceptable. If a first offense occurs, service may be suspended up to thirty days. If a second offense occurs within a one-year period, service is suspended up to sixty days. If a third offense occurs within a one-year period, service is suspended up to one year.

Before a suspension goes into effect, the rider will be notified in writing and he/she has the right to request a hearing through an appeals process. This policy can be found at: <http://www.lawrencetransit.org/access/howtoride.shtml>.

If you are a private non-profit agency receiving public money, the

law is somewhat vague on whether or not a passengers' due process rights are applicable when using your service. Nevertheless, it is good policy to have written policies and procedures for suspension of riding privileges.

Having policies that identify unacceptable behavior and procedures that will be followed if this behavior occurs accomplishes two things. First, it decreases the chance your agency will violate a passenger's due process rights. Second, it protects passengers from having service arbitrarily suspended.

According to the Transit Cooperative Research Program, when it comes to suspending transit service, "Normally, when an...administrative agency is about to take action adverse to a citizen, on the basis of 'adjudicative facts,' due process entitles the citizen at some stage to have notice, to be informed of the facts on which the agency relies, and to have an opportunity to rebut them."

KDOT regulations

If you are an agency funded by Section 5311 and/or 5310, you must have a written transportation service policy on file and a copy of your ridership policy available to riders. Among other things, the transportation service policy should include your policy on passenger incidents (rider behavior that interrupts the normal transportation process), while

Sources:

- Transit Cooperative Research Program, *Legal Research Digest 20*, June 2005.
- City of Lawrence suspension of riding privilege policy— <http://www.lawrencetransit.org/access/howtoride.shtml>
- Federal Transit Administration information on nondiscrimination under the ADA, Section 37.5h—http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/ada/civil_rights_3906.html

Suspension of riding privilege policy components

- description of unacceptable behavior
- consequence of each instance of unacceptable behavior
- how the transit agency and rider will communicate during the suspension of service proceedings (by phone, in person, or in writing)
- appeals process
- reinstatement of service process

the ridership policy should include your policy on:

- cancellations
- disruptive passengers
- no shows and
- registering a complaint.

Although KDOT requires that an agency's transportation service and ridership policy contain certain policies, KDOT leaves considerable leeway to write policy specifics.

Nonetheless, when it comes to disruptive passengers, according to Bret Rowe of KDOT, "Many agencies have a three strike and you're out policy." Agencies not funded by Sections 5310 and 5311 are not regulated by KDOT and may or may not have a transportation service or ridership policy.

Agency policies

Ron Straight, transportation manager of Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas, Inc., has never suspended someone's riding privileges. That does not mean he hasn't come close. He considers suspension of service for one of two reasons. The first is verbal abuse aimed toward a vehicle operator and the second is scheduling a ride but not showing up. In either case if the action is deemed unacceptable or too frequent, the rider is verbally warned that if the action continues, suspension of service may occur.

If necessary, Straight sends a suspension-of-service letter as a formal warning. Straight believes that is part

of the reason he has never had to suspend service. "If someone is threatened with removal of service, it will get their attention, especially if it is their only transportation," he said.

Ken Barrows, manager of Lyon County Area Transit, posts their suspension-

of-service policy inside each transit vehicle. It is a three-strike policy that identifies fighting and cussing as unacceptable behavior. Once a third offense occurs, service is suspended for 30 days. The rider whose service is suspended can appeal the decision to the Lyon County Area Transit main office. After 30 days, riding privileges

are reevaluated. For riders with cognitive impairments, extra steps are taken to ensure they understand and follow the policy. For instance, if a problem occurs, Lyon County Area Transit will contact a social worker to help explain the policy to the rider.

A circumstance may arise when a transit passenger's actions are so unacceptable that suspending riding privileges is necessary. However, the situation is unlikely black and white. Therefore, it is helpful to have written procedures and regulations to guide decision-making. For a copy of the policies that must be included in your Transportation Service and/or Ridership Policy contact Stacey Dove of KDOT at (785) 296-5284 or StaceyD@ksdot.org. ▲

Retaining and recruiting quality bus drivers

by Brandon Garrison

It can be challenging to find and retain quality drivers in an industry that typically doesn't pay high wages. But by providing a quality working environment, recruiting effectively, and asking the right questions in interviews, you can hire drivers who will join your organization to stay.

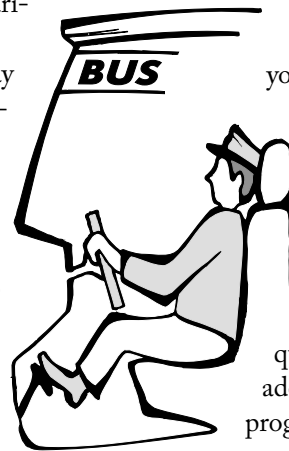
Recruiting

Before you can hire anyone you need to attract quality applicants. One way to find new employees is to increase

the amount of applicants to your hiring pool. A larger hiring pool increases your chances of having high quality applicants, but you may have to work

harder to find them. Advertising in local newspapers is a typical way to seek applicants; you can increase the number of applicants by posting job opportunities on local career Web sites or your own transit Web site.

Some transit employers have made the move towards attracting quality and not quantity by adopting an employee referral program. Your field-tested employees know the demands of the job and know what it takes to last as a driver—this gives them the



Go to next page

Good bus drivers,
continued from page 7

ability to judge whether anyone they know would fit your organization. You can help make sure your employees recommend good workers by giving your employees a referral bonus after the new-hires prove themselves. The Emerald Center Multi-County Board for Disabilities and Special Needs in South Carolina, for example, offers a bonus to full-time employees after the person they refer has worked full time for six months.

The interview process

Another method of attracting quality employees is to conduct background checks and screen applicants through temp agencies and career centers. You can get an idea of whether employees will be good workers by asking temp agencies about their work ethic, attendance and abilities. When you conduct a background check, always check a potential employee's driving and criminal records, and don't forget about work history. Employees that have worked in positions for extended periods of time will probably do the same if they work for you. However, it is a mistake to automatically pass over an applicant that has worked a series of jobs for short periods of time. Look at the reasons why he or she left; if the split was on good terms, there is no reason not to consider him or her for a position.

After you have narrowed down the number of applicants, you can you begin to schedule interviews. Interviews can be misleading because sometimes the applicants who "perform" best in interviews don't make good employees. If you want to prevent this from happening, take control and conduct a structured interview. Develop a list of questions to ask in all of the interviews. This

makes it easier to compare the different candidates. Ask questions about hypothetical on-the-job scenarios and judge each applicant's response. Focus your questions on assessing personal character more the job skills because you can always train someone how to drive a bus, but you can't train them to have the right attitude for the job. Never form an opinion about someone until you finish interviewing him or her. A snap judgment normally is based on characteristics that have nothing to do with someone's quality of work.

Retaining good drivers

Now that you have finished the hiring process, you must do your part to make sure new drivers enjoy the job enough to stick around. You probably won't be able to negotiate a whole lot on wages and benefits, but try to make wages and benefits competitive. Instead of focusing on money, you can retain your drivers by providing training and an enjoyable, fulfilling work environment.

One of the best ways to retain drivers is to eliminate unnecessary

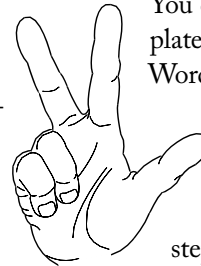
Go to page 10

Give 'em options

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by Laura Snyder
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If you're looking for a way to better identify the gaps in your community's transportation plan, why not create a Community Transit Options Directory? The directory can also promote transit by doubling as a resource for current and potential transit riders, who will be able to find the answers to most of their transit-related questions in one place. A third benefit: community leaders can use the directory to help with transportation planning.

A Community Transit Options Directory lists basic information about all transit options in a community, from specialized transit for older drivers or people with disabilities to taxis and chauffeur services to community volunteers. Web sites and phone numbers are listed for each organization, along with a short profile. The directory can also ask a series of questions to help a reader decide which type of transit is right for him or her.



United We Ride offers templates for such a directory on their Web site shown at the end of this article.

You can download the templates, which are in Microsoft Word, and customize them so they contain information about transit in your community. The Web site walks you through the step-by-step process of customizing and printing the templates. Also included is a downloadable Program Profile Survey to be distributed to transit providers in your community. The providers can fill out information such as contact numbers, hours of operation and service fees to be included in the directory. United We Ride suggests recruiting community volunteers to assist with compiling the information for the directory.

Once the directory is compiled, transit managers and community leaders should be able to see which kinds of transit services are lacking in their community.

Source:
http://www.unitedweride.gov/1_934_ENG_HTML.htm ▲



An attitude and awareness survey can reveal ways to increase effectiveness

by Brandon Garrison



Transit agencies must understand their customers' needs and concerns if they are to spend money effectively and increase ridership. One way to assess an agency's effectiveness and customer satisfaction is through an attitude and awareness study conducted by an objective third party.

An attitude and awareness study is made up of two parts. The first determines a community's attitude towards the quality of service public transportation provides, as well as what they expect from a transportation service. The second researches the public's awareness of particular advertising campaigns and brand identity. This research, if carried out correctly, can yield information that will help improve service quality and increase ridership and advertising effectiveness. Here is an overview of how to conduct an attitude and awareness study.

An objective third party is important

If you are thinking about conducting an attitude and awareness study, hiring a third party may be more productive than doing the research yourself. "When you use your own people,

Use focus groups to gather information

Small communities might not have the resources or the need to conduct the large-scale market research involved in an attitude and awareness study. A focus group is a way to gauge public opinion at a lower cost. Here are some guidelines suggested by Nancy Pearl.

- Focus groups should be made up of a variety of people, such as riders, non-riders, community leaders, workers, and the elderly, for example.
- Focus groups should be made up of no more than 10 people. This helps keep the proceedings orderly and assures that group members get a chance to voice their opinions.
- Avoid "groupthink," the tendency for group members to agree with the most outspoken person, by hiring a trained facilitator to lead the session. The cost of hiring a facilitator is around \$500.
- Ask local colleges or marketing firms to suggest good facilitators.
- Ask the focus group questions about the timeliness, reliability, cleanliness, and safety of the services; the attitude of call-center employees and drivers; and their feelings toward your advertisements and logo.
- If your main goal is to build ridership, make sure the group you're sampling reflects the people you want as riders in five years.

who aren't necessarily trained to conduct market research, it takes them away from their regular jobs and creates the potential for an unintentional skewing of the results," says Nancy Pearl, President of Nancy Pearl Marketing/ Communications Consulting in Reno, Nevada. If you are trying to increase transportation funding or simply improve your service, accurate research makes your organization more credible.

How to find a third party

One way to obtain an objective party is to hire a professional marketing group to conduct the study. These groups can be found by running ads in transit publications asking for proposals. Give preference to applicants familiar with the transit industry.

According to Nancy Pearl, "Some firms specialize in transit-oriented research. These firms might cost more, but you won't waste your money on information that isn't helpful." Professional research ensures credibility and quality but comes with a price tag. Expect to pay around \$15,000 to \$20,000 for this research.

Another possible third-party source is to ask a local university or college if students would be willing to conduct the research as a project. This could cost much less than hiring a marketing firm. "I would certainly suggest contacting a local college that has a marketing department and see if they would take on an attitude and awareness study as a class project," says Nancy Pearl.

Go to next page

Attitude and awareness,

continued from page 9

One benefit of having a local university conduct the study is that they might not charge for student labor. However, getting help from a university probably won't be free; costs might include the price of materials and hourly wages for call-center operators. The project's quality should be high if qualified professors lead the project. "Professors are experts in research; maybe not specifically transit, but they can still help ensure objectivity in the compilation and results of the study," says Pearl.

How to maximize the research

Just because a third party is conducting the research does not mean that you shouldn't have a role in the process. To make the most of the study, make it clear to the researchers the information you want. If you want increased ridership, have researchers talk to non-riders about why they don't ride. Interviewing riders can provide insight into improvements that will make current riders happier and potential riders more interested in using public transportation. It is important to survey a large, diverse number of people to accurately judge the level of awareness of advertising campaigns.

Analysis of the research data is a task that falls into a different area of expertise. "You need someone trained to look at statistical data and tell you what you need to know," advises Nancy Pearl. Once researchers complete the study, have a qualified individual interpret the statistics. This is an important step in using the information to actually implement change. It is also important to consider that follow-up research can determine whether the original study was productive. "Conduct a baseline study, and then repeat every three to five

years to see if you've met your goals and improved," suggests Nancy Pearl.

Bottom Line

An attitude and awareness study can generate ideas on how to draw in new riders and improve services for transit dependent individuals such as the elderly or disabled. Market research can greatly benefit your transit agency—and by being creative it doesn't have to cost a lot of money to conduct.

Source:

"Image is More than a Logo," by Nancy Pearl, *Maryland RTAP Update*, 2005. Reprinted from *Metro Magazine*.

Good bus drivers,

continued from page 8

job stress. Bus-driving, by nature, can be stressful, but there are some small changes you can make to help retain employees. Bus drivers normally work long shifts so anything you can do to make them more comfortable will make them happier. Don't make schedules so tight that drivers are unable to properly assist customers with special needs and stay on schedule. You can make drivers more comfortable by installing more comfortable seats or making sure the air-conditioning works.

Sources:

TCRP Synthesis 40: *A Challenged Employment System: Hiring, Training, Performance Evaluation, and Retention of Bus Operators*, available at the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies Web site http://trb.org/news/blurp_detail.asp?id=561

The Emerald Center Multi-County Board for Disabilities and Special Needs in South Carolina <http://www.schsp.org/emeraldcenter/sm01news.htm>

"Tools for Hiring, Training, and Retaining," available at the Metro South Chamber of Commerce Web site <http://www.metroouthchamber.com/htr.html#Hiring>

Also, you could give drivers a little more time between routes to grab a snack or use the restroom.

While climate control and comfortable seats can make your employees content, there is much more

Simply being respectful and fair to your employees can help make sure they work with you for a long time.

involved in creating a low-stress work environment. There are many steps you can take to improve working conditions that cost little or nothing. By simply being respectful and fair to your employees you can help make sure they work with you for a long time. Continuous training rather than short-term, intensive training when an employee is first hired is another way to retain workers. If you give your employees the opportunity to be creative and learn new skills, they will think of their jobs as an opportunity for advancement instead of stagnation.

You can use this advice as a starting point to improve your transit agency and increase the quality of your employees. Your best bet is to be creative and open minded—just like the employees you want to work in your organization. ▲



Migraines don't have to be a headache for employers

by Laura Snyder

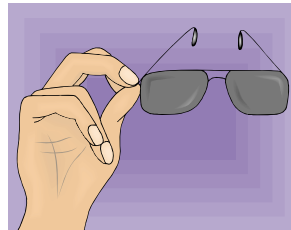
It's a late fall afternoon and the sun is setting. A transit driver headed for her last stop for the day turns west down a tree-lined street. As the sun filters through tree branches, the driver is hit by a strobe-light effect. A wave of nausea warns her that a migraine is on the way.

Migraines affect about six percent of men and 18 percent of women, adding up to about 36 million people in the United States, according to MAGNUM, a national migraine awareness group. Migraines are also in the top 20 most debilitating diseases in the world. Driving with a migraine is dangerous for both the driver and the passengers, but missed work due to migraines can really add up. How can an agency work with an employee suffering from migraines to minimize the occurrences and maximize productivity?

Migraine myths & facts

Migraine sufferers might not bring their condition to the attention of supervisors for fear of discrimination based on myths, says Michael John Coleman, director of MAGNUM. For instance, the myth that migraines

are caused by stress lays blame on the sufferer for lack of control in his or her life. In fact, during a migraine, the blood vessels in the brain dilate, says Coleman, but when a person is under stress, the body's blood vessels constrict. Drugs that stop migraines actually bring on the physiology of a



Many people who suffer from migraines wear sunglasses, even indoors.

stress attack by constricting the blood vessels in the brain.

Because bright lights tend to aggravate migraines, many "migraineurs" as MAGNUM calls them, will wear dark glasses, even indoors. They may also walk with a slight stagger, which Coleman says has no effect on a person's ability to operate gas and brake pedals in a vehicle. This kind of behavior sometimes leads employers to suspect employees of being drug addicts or alcoholics instead of migraineurs.

Migraines do not affect everyone equally. Migraines are caused by a poly-genetic disease that can originate from one, two, or three genes in

a migraineur. A person who rarely suffers from migraines or has mild symptoms may only have one gene involved, while another person who frequently shows intense symptoms may have all three genes involved.

Not all migraine sufferers have headaches, either. Headaches are a

symptom, says Coleman, but they do not necessarily always accompany migraines. Some people will never have headaches but suffer from nausea instead.

ADA protection?

Coleman says migraines, like epilepsy, are an episodic disability protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) depending on the severity and frequency of the condition. Tommy Thompson, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, classified migraines as a disability in a letter to the International Headache Congress in 2003.

Transit employers or human resources staff can help migraine sufferers by taking a proactive approach. Employers should talk with employees and make them feel comfortable discussing medical issues that might affect their jobs. Employers should also learn to recognize some common migraine symptoms, which will help prevent

Go to page 14

Sources:

"Migraine Headaches Cause Pain for Employers," by Iris Arnold, *ADA Compliance Guide*, November 2005.

Migraine Awareness Group: a National Understanding for Migraineurs. 2006. MAGNUM Homepage— <http://www.migraines.org/disability/>

Medical Examination Report for Commercial Driver Fitness Determination, retrieved March 20, 2006. FMCSA Homepage— <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/documents/safetyprograms/Medical-Report.pdf>



Extra features build a high-service Web site

by Brandon Garrison

In this day and age your transit agency needs a Web site to adequately serve the community. Web sites are effective at providing up-to-date information and are relatively inexpensive to maintain. The public has come to see Web sites as a sign of an organization's professionalism. It might seem like a big step to implement a Web site at your transit agency, but there are many software programs available that help you build Web sites and many professionals and hobbyists that are willing to create Web sites for you.

There are a few basic points that all transit Web sites need to cover. If you are thinking about creating a Web site, or just want to improve the one you already have, it is important to include sections about routes, fares, services, customer outreach, contact information, and current news. This edition of the *Kansas Trans Reporter* will focus on services, fares, and routes. In the next issue you can look forward to customer outreach, contact information, and current news.

Services

Whether you are a large agency that offers a variety of services or a small agency that works with other groups in town, it is important to provide information to the community about the services available to them. You should designate a section of your Web site to provide brief descriptions of each service available. List information about the fare rates of each service, and how customers can

schedule rides. The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority's Web site has a good example of a services section. They list all of the different services that their agency offers along with a descriptions and costs (see above, top).

The purpose of a Web site is to make information easily available, so don't make your clients navigate to different sites for services that you don't provide. If you are creating a Web site for a rural transportation agency that shares riders with nurs-

At left, and below: Many transit Web sites have features that make it easier for riders to plan routes, purchase tickets, and learn about special services. Here are three examples of Web sites with user-friendly features from transportation authorities in Kansas City, the Massachusetts Bay area, and San Francisco.

ing homes, hospitals, or other transportation providers in your community, you should list the other transportation providers' Web sites and phone numbers. You can go a step further by describing the services they offer and the associated costs.

Fares

While you should list ride costs with the descriptions of each service, it is helpful to assign a portion of your Web site specifically for fare information. In this section you can list the costs of single fares and any fare

packages that riders can purchase. Also, it is important that you list the locations around town where people can purchase fare cards, if they are available. If there is enough demand, you could set up a system that allows customers to pay for fares online. The bottom line is that you want to design your Web site with the goal of making your transportation system easy for the community to use. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority lets registered users buy fare packages online (see page 12). Registered users provide shipping

and billing information and receive a password and username. The MBTA describes each package and provides a "Buy Now" link that lets registered users buy tickets and have them sent to a specified address.

Routes

Many riders visit transit Web sites in search of route maps. Simply making route information available is helpful, but providing different methods of presentation can make this information easier to understand. One way to improve route maps is to make them scalable. Customers can see the entire system or they can zoom in on specific routes to view the different stops. You could make maps interactive by making each route a link so that customers can click on a route for information about its stops and connections. While this level of interaction can only improve customer service, it is important to include a written schedule along with your route map because users may not always be able to see an image if they don't have the necessary software or are using an incompatible Internet browser.

King County Metro, the transportation authority for the Seattle area, has an innovative map feature. They have tracking devices in their buses that allows Web site visitors to see where a bus is along its route. Check it out at <http://transit.metrokc.gov/oltools/tracker.html>.

An online trip planner is a new

Go to next page

Sources:

"Transitweb: A Website Design and Traveler Information Resource for Transit Agencies," http://www.its.dot.gov/transit_dev/introduction.asp

TCRP Report 84: *e-Transit: Electronic Business Strategies for Public Transportation, Vol. 6—Strategies to Expand and Improve Deployment of ITS in Rural Transit Systems*, available at http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_84v6.pdf

San Francisco Bay Area Transportation Authority, <http://transit.511.org/triplanner/index.asp>

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, <http://commerce.mbta.com/program/?prog=monthly>

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, http://www.kcata.org/transit_programs.html

Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

Fall 2006 Kansas RTAP Driver Training Workshops: Skills for the Experienced Driver
 October 9—Topeka
 October 10—Emporia
 October 11—Chanute
 October 18—Wichita
 November 1—Hays
 November 2—Garden City
 November 3—Salina

For more information, call or email Rose at 785-864-2594, rosemary@ku.edu; or visit our Web site at <http://www.ksrtap.kutc.ku.edu>.

Oct. 22-25, 2006
 17th National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation
 Stevenson, Washington
 Contact: Robin Phillips, Transportation Research Board
 Phone: (360) 705-7929
 Web site: <http://www.trbruralconference.org>

November 5-7, 2006
 2006 Transit Marketing Seminar & Spotlight Awards
 Corpus Christi, Texas
 Contact SWTA at <http://www.swta.org> or call 210-366-1436

January 21-25, 2007
 TRB 86th Annual Meeting
 Washington, DC.
<http://www.trb.org> or email TRBMeetings@NAS.edu.

February 8-9, 2007
 National Conference on Disaster Planning for the Carless Society
 New Orleans, Louisiana
 For more information, call (504) 280-6680 or (800) 258-8830; email mhnoveva@uno.edu; Web site: <http://www.carlessevaccuation.org>.

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

February 11-13, 2007
 SW Transit Association 27th Annual Conference and EXPO
 Austin, Texas
 For more information: <http://www.swta.org> or call 210-366-1436

Migraines, continued from page 11

employers from making mistaken assumptions that an employee is using drugs or alcohol.

Reasonable accommodations for employees should be made, but if an employee is frequently missing work due to migraines, Coleman advises that a human resources person suggest the employee visit a neurologist for treatment. Preventative drugs such as Topamax or Depakote ER, along with learning to avoid migraine triggers such as Aspartame or MSG in foods, may reduce occurrences of migraines.

If your employee is using prescribed medicine for migraines it is important for him or her to check with a doctor to see if the medication will interfere with driving. Your employee should also report the prescription drugs to his or her supervisor or designated human resource person. For more information about migraines and the ADA, visit www.migraines.org. ▲

Web site features, continued from page 13

technology that can be easier to use than an interactive route map. You could include this feature in the same section of your Web site as the map. A trip planner works much like an online mapping service where you

A trip planner goes a step further than an online map by suggesting which routes to take and where to make connections.

enter your location and destination and it tells you the fastest route. A trip planner goes a step further by suggesting which routes to take and where to make connections.

Travel 511, a travel guide for the San Francisco Bay Area, has a good example of an online trip planner on their Web site. You simply fill out an online form that asks you where you are, where you want to go, and what time you are leaving. The planner then shows which routes to take and which connections to make, based on the information you provided (see

page 13). While many large agencies have their own trip planners, other smaller agencies have cooperated with each other to develop trip planners that cover entire regions and multiple agencies.

All of these features will improve your transit Web site. Some of them are easy to implement and practical

for smaller agencies while others might not be necessary, but provide a glimpse at the future. It is up to you to determine which ones will benefit your community.

In our next issue we will discuss how to incorporate customer outreach, contact information, and agency news into your Web site. We will also look closer at how your agency can go about implementing Web site features. ▲

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

- Every Business Should Have a Plan.** U.S. Department of Homeland Security. http://www.ready.gov/business/_downloads/ReadyBusinessBrochure.pdf

- Hazard and Security Plan Workshop: Instructor Guide.** Contains a hazard and security planning template that reflects the operating environment and the realities of rural, small urban, and community-based passenger transportation systems. The training course in this report is supplemented online with a downloadable template for a completed hazard and security plan. Download at http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_86v10.pdf.

- Threat and Vulnerability Toolbox.** National RTAP, 2006. In the wake of last year's tragic hurricane season, the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP) has released a new interactive DVD helping transit managers of any size agency more effectively assess hazards and threats and develop emergency response plans. Transit managers learn to 1) identify essential assets, 2) identify safety hazards and security threats, 3) develop plans to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of those risks, and 4) establish protocols for managing critical incidents.

Online resources

- "Protect Your Workplace" Campaign Posters and Brochure,** http://www.us-cert.gov/reading_room/distributable.html#work

- American Red Cross: Business and Industry Guide,** http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_606_00.html

- FEMA: Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry,** <http://www.fema.gov/business/guide/index.shtm>

- FEMA: State Offices and Agencies of Emergency Management,** <http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/statedr.shtm>

- Institute for Business and Home Safety: Open for Business,** http://www.ibhs.org/business_protection/

- OSHA: How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations,** <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3088.pdf> and **Small Business Emergency Response and Planning,** <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/smallbusiness/sec10.html>

- Small Business Administration: Get Ready, Be Prepared,** <http://www.sba.gov/disaster/getready.html>

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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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Address incorrect? 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
- Program planning assistance
- Technical assistance
- Video lending library
- Telephone consultation
- Computer database searches
- Training development
- Referral services
- Web site
- 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.

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