



Kansas Trans Reporter

January 2007

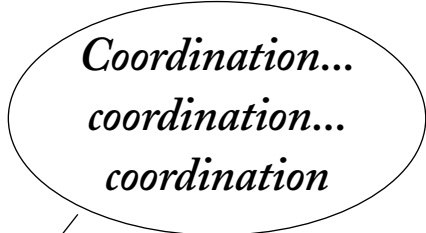
The Newsletter for Kansas Rural and Specialized Transportation Providers • The University of Kansas Transportation Center

Say it three times fast:

by Christy Lane and Pat Weaver

While it may seem that coordination has been on our agenda since the beginning of public transportation, there are some useful new approaches to coordination planning that may mean more rides for your community.

You know what happens when you repeat a word over and over; how the word seems to lose its relevance for a moment, becoming just a meaningless combination of letters? "Coordination... coordination..."



coordination..." How often have we heard that word associated with delivery of transportation services? Those of us who have been involved in Kansas transportation for a few years may occasionally lose the meaning of the word because we've heard it so many times and wonder if we'll ever "reach" coordination. We talked about how to coordinate better when

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Aging America needs more transportation options







by Kelly Heavey

2006 was a landmark year for the United States' population when it reached 300 million citizens. According to the U.S. Census, 35 million of those citizens are over 65. By the year 2050, the number of senior citizens is expected to jump 147 percent from the 2000 estimate, while the rest of the population will increase 49 percent.

A report by the National Cooperative Highway Research

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Coordination,

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the new rural public transportation program started in the early 1980s. We talked about how to coordinate better when the new coordinated transit districts were formed in the

the right services and are delivered as efficiently as possible by working with the other service agencies in our communities.

This year, with the passage and implementation of SAFETEA-LU, we face the challenge of planning coordinated services to go along with a significant increase in federal funds to support those services, recognizing the dire need in some of our rural communities. It

duplication and service gaps for each Coordinated Transit District (CTD) will be required as part of new contracts beginning July 1, 2007, according to John Rosacker, Assistant Bureau Chief of Transportation Planning for the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). The planning requirement applies to projects funded by the following programs: Section 5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities

What is coordination and why is it needed?

—The Transit Cooperative Research Program has defined coordination “as a technique for better resource management, in which improved organization strategies are applied to achieve greater cost-effectiveness in service delivery.”

—Coordinating transportation services reduces inefficiencies by eliminating unnecessary expenditures, while increasing service effectiveness to meet customers’ needs and attract others to the system.

—The Ohio Department of Transportation, at the forefront of the coordinated planning effort, claims coordinating transportation services has been “the best way to stretch scarce resources and improve mobility for everyone.”

mid 90’s; and now, here we are again, talking about it within the context of the United We Ride program and as a requirement of funding in 2007. Where does the time go?

Coordination is again a hot topic for a very good reason. Coordination truly is a job that is never completed. We have to work constantly to improve mobility in our communities, and even harder now in the face of a fast-growing population of older people and others who are dependent on our services. And, in an environment where there are never enough resources to provide all the service we’d like to, we must make sure that the resources we do have are targeted to

is hard work, but work that pays off in more rides for those in our communities who so desperately need our services for rides to the doctor, to the grocery store, to jobs and, yes, even to the beauty shop! We reported in a past issue of the *Kansas Trans Reporter* about new planning requirements that apply to human service and public transit agencies that came from the passage of SAFETEA-LU legislation passed last year (KTR, April 2006). This article provided an update on coordination planning requirements and information about the technical assistance available to Kansas agencies to help them comply with these requirements and take a significant step forward in improving services.

A primary goal of coordinated plans is to maximize the service coverage of transportation programs by reducing duplication of services and prioritizing service delivery. Coordination plans that address

A Web toolkit on coordination is located on the **Kansas United We Ride Web site:**
<http://www.ksunitedweride.org>

Program, Section 5316 Job-Access-Reverse Commute Program, and Section 5317 New Freedom. The Section 5311 Nonurbanized Area Formula Program is required to participate in the plan development.

Plans at the CTD level

On March 15, 2006, the FTA issued interim guidance in the *Federal Register* that contained the proposed requirements for creating coordinated plans. A copy of the interim guidance is available on the Kansas United We Ride Web page at <http://www.ksunitedweride.org>. KDOT is requesting one plan from each CTD, incorporating the needs and prioritized action for the counties in each CTD.

While creating coordinated plans may be seen as a daunting task to CTD members, they will have assistance from the KU Transportation Center (KUTC) and KDOT. As part of the United We Ride implementation grant, KUTC and KDOT will begin the process by assisting two pilot areas, CTD #3 and CTD #12,

A five-step plan for coordination

Five steps have been identified to assist with the creation of the coordinated plan. Steps 1 and 2 must be completed prior to holding a coordinated planning meeting; while Steps 3 and 4 are completed during the meeting. Step 5 is the plan-implementation phase.

1 Inventory. The first step is to conduct an inventory of the district's transportation resources and needs. The CTD must gather county data from transportation providers and human service organizations. The Toolkit contains inventory worksheets to assist with this task. After county data has been gathered, the CTD manager must contact the KUTC for assistance in calculating demand, based on the inventory data.

2 Needs assessment. The second step is to assess the district's transportation needs. This step requires the CTD members to analyze the inventory data from Step 1 and determine where there are gaps or duplications in service. The Toolkit contains a map of each CTD that can be used by the members as a tool to illustrate where there are gaps and duplications, in addition to any narrative description.

Also, in preparation for the first coordinated planning meeting, the CTD members should determine who will be involved in the development of the coordinated plan. As mentioned in the April 2006 *Kansas Trans Reporter*, SAFETEA-LU requires that "the plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers and participation by the public." These stakeholders can act as catalysts by providing and assisting with the creation of coordinated systems, which improve access and mobility to the transportation-dependent. The Toolkit contains a "Stakeholders" section with many of the human service organizations that should be invited to participate in the coordinated planning meetings. Examples are the Area Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, community mental health centers, and community developmental disability organizations.

3 Stakeholders' meeting. During the first meeting, the CTD leadership will present the results of the transportation assessment. A map of the district identifying areas of duplication and gaps in service is the best method to explain the data to stakeholders. Sharing information about the current system and future transportation will give stakeholders the opportunity to brainstorm about strategies to meet gaps in service. To assist with this process, each stakeholder may complete the *Framework for Action: Self-Assessment Tool for Communities*, from the Toolkit. After completing the self-assessment, the group should identify areas where the district needs to improve its transportation services.

4 Develop coordination actions. The next step is to develop coordination actions. The Toolkit contains a template that the planning group can use to create its coordinated plan. This template contains the required elements included in the FTA interim guidance. The coordinated plan will also contain the following: all of the major strategies to be pursued; timelines; resources needed; persons and agencies responsible for carrying out the tasks; and a communication strategy.

5 Implementing the coordinated plan. The final step will be the implementation phase. To monitor progress, CTDs will be asked to report on progress toward meeting the strategies in their plans.

with the creation of their coordinated plans. The planning process will begin in early January 2007. After the pilot plans are created, the KDOT program consultants assigned to the remaining CTDs will assist

those CTDs with the planning process, including facilitating the planning meetings if requested. The KUTC will provide data collection and analysis.

Web-based toolkit for Kansas agencies

To assist CTD members with the coordinated planning process, the KUTC has created a toolkit available

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on the Kansas United We Ride Web site. The Web Toolkit contains advice and strategies from the United We Ride *Framework for Action* and other tools developed by other states—included in the resources section of the Toolkit.

KDOT and KUTC staff involved with United We Ride, and members of the Kansas Coordinated Transportation Council, are available to assist with the planning process. Contact Pat Weaver at the KUTC if you have any questions about the coordinated plan requirements or the Toolkit. Her phone number is (785) 864-2595, or you may email her at weaver@ku.edu. ▲

Transportation options,

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Program, *Guide for Reducing Collisions Involving Older Drivers*, found that elderly drivers use their own vehicle for 90 percent of their trips. Typical outings are along routes familiar to them—the most frequent trips are to the grocery store, the doctor, and the beauty parlor. Accident rates of elderly drivers, however, are second only to young, relatively new drivers, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

Why the higher accident rate? And what can transit agencies do in response? This article will answer these questions.

Visual acuity & older drivers

Aging causes a decline in senses essential to safe driving. The process of stopping at a stop sign hardly requires thinking for younger drivers, but older drivers' visual attention isn't as strong. According to the

NCHRP, vision is an area that the elderly tend to struggle with. It involves acuity, contrast sensitivity, and attention. Basically, it is the capability of seeing an object such as a stop sign, processing that information, then responding to it in a timely manner.

Another visual impairment that occurs as we age is slower pupil responsiveness, especially at night.

In its report, the NCHRP outlined both proven and experimental strategies to prepare communities for aging populations.

As a result, an older driver may recover more slowly than a younger driver from the glare of passing headlights.

In addition to vision decline, the NCHRP found that older drivers might experience hearing impairment and medicinal effects such as dizziness and drowsiness while at the wheel. Reaction time is usually slower and seniors generally can't multi-task easily. An elderly driver may also have difficulty turning his/her

head to check a blind spot or even performing basic driving functions such as braking and accelerating.

Community strategies

In its report, the NCHRP outlined both proven and experimental strategies to prepare for aging populations, such as improving the driving competency of older adults and reducing the risk of injury and death to older

drivers and passengers involved in crashes. Examples include providing advance warning signs and increasing word-size on roadway signs as strategies to help people drive safely longer, and establishing resource centers within the community to promote safe mobility choices other than the private automobile.

The *Guide* walks you through the feasible implementation of a program to reduce collisions involving older drivers, with 11 detailed steps.

Transportation options sources:

Burkhardt, Jon E., Kerschner, Helen. *How to Establish and Maintain Door-Through-Door Services for Seniors*. Sept. 29, 2005. http://www.aoa.gov/prof/transportation/media/Door-Through-DoorGuide/HowToGuide_DoorThroughDoorTransportation.pdf

Innovations for Seniors: Public Community Transit Services Respond to Special Needs. The Beverly Foundation, The Community Transportation Association of America. http://www.beverlyfoundation.org/resourcestore/pdf/research_papers/innovations_for_seniors.pdf

Reducing Collisions Involving Older Drivers. Report 500, Vol. 3. National Cooperative Highway Research Program. 2003. (Visit www.national-academies.org/trb/bookstore to order)

Older Drivers. Insurance Information Institute. Nov. 2006. <http://www.iii.org/media/hottopics/insurance/olderdrivers/>

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p20-546.pdf> (United States Census information)

Here are the steps, which are further elaborated in the report:

- Identify/define the extent of the problem in your community.
- Recruit appropriate participants for the program.
- Establish crash reduction goals.
- Develop program policies, guidelines, and specifications.
- Develop alternative approaches to addressing the problem.
- Evaluate alternatives and select a plan.
- Submit recommendations for action by top management.
- Develop a plan of action.
- Establish foundations for implementing the program.
- Carry out the action plan.
- Assess/transition the program.

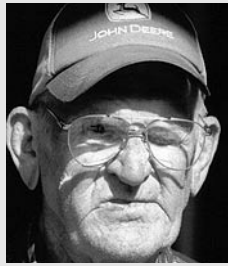
Transit service strategies

What can we do, as transit professionals and community members, to help those who are no longer able to drive safely? First, be aware of public perceptions of transit, both good and bad.

The Beverly Foundation, an organization devoted to increasing awareness of senior transportation and mobility, conducted a survey to develop a national strategy and plan for older drivers.

When seniors were asked what words they would use to describe their community's transportation system, the most common responses were "inaccessible," "inefficient," and

The Kansas Highway Patrol's recommendations for older drivers



Here's a list of safety tips written for the older driver.

Be prepared. Schedule periodic eye exams, update prescription glasses, increase the brightness on the vehicle's instrument panel, keep the windshield and headlights clean, and replace faulty windshield wipers.

Choose wisely. Use a car with automatic transmission, power steering, power brakes, and an easy-to-read instrument panel.

Reduce noise and distractions. Limit conversations and turn down the radio and air conditioner or heater vents.

Use extra caution. Avoid driving in inclement weather, check traffic when changing lanes, look before backing up, and use the horn when necessary. Always use signals and mirrors.

Plan ahead. Take easier routes, avoid rush hours, and avoid night driving.

Stay educated. Take a driving test to assess abilities, or take a course to sharpen skills and learn new strategies. Courses such as the AARP's Driver Safety Program might qualify the driver for an insurance premium discount.

"uncomfortable." The five major complaints of seniors about public transportation included, "advance schedule requirement," "hours of service," "limited service area," "being stranded/waiting," and "lack of help with transportation."

On the other hand, the words seniors used to describe what is most

important were "convenient," "accessible," and "safe." These are words to keep in mind when developing transportation strategies.

Local-level strategies

Below are some practical steps your transit agency can make to accommodate older riders:

Offer personal assistance with your demand-response service. This service offers extra help when requested by the rider. A report entitled *How to Establish and Maintain Door-Through-Door Services for Seniors*, by Westat, under contract with the Beverly Foundation, lists service characteristics that might help an older rider: *Gentle*—opening doors and providing guidance for the

The U.S. Access Board has issued a report that compares the new Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), the original ADA standards, and the International Building Code. This side-by-side comparison is arranged and ordered according to the format and sequence of the "new" ADAAG, published by the Board in July 2004. Provisions in the ADA standards maintained by the Department of Justice, which currently are based on the original ADAAG (1991), are provided alongside corresponding sections of the new ADAAG. Go to <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/comparison/index.htm>



Public participation in rural transit decision-making

Do you have to ask the public? If so, who do you ask? What do you ask them? And when?

.....
by Pat Weaver
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Do you think of public participation in service planning as something of a nuisance? As a waste of time since no one ever responds anyway? As a requirement of the law?

Well, that last statement is true; it is a requirement of the law if you receive federal funding to support your transit services. The earlier statements, though, are sometimes heard from very busy managers stretched thin to keep transit service on the road, or from those who have held public meetings only to find that very few people showed up to comment.

How do you make public participation meaningful, reasonable with the resources you have available, and still comply with the requirements of your federal funding? This article will provide some information about the minimum requirements in Kansas and make some suggestions for making that process useful to your program.

Is your process meaningful?

The transit service you provide is a public service to your community, funded by some or all of the community's members—and their tax dollars. Involving the public in decisions

about what kind of service is being provided is only fair, but also can lead to greater support or willingness to continue to support your service.

Think of it as good public relations and prudent management.

According to Bryson and Carroll in *The What, Why, Who, How, When, and Where of Public*

Participation, good public participation helps you to:

- quickly identify key difficulties, challenges, or opportunities;
- create better understanding of the situation, problems, issues, opportunities, and options for action;
- build better relationships by asking, considering, and involving people in work and decisions that affect them;
- manage conflict more effectively by involving people early on to foster better understanding, and build relationships; and build a coalition of support which involves people in solving problems, making decisions, or creating plans.

In short, good public participation allows you to get it right the first time. You're more likely to have developed a plan that better meets the needs of your community, and meets procedural needs so your community can be more supportive of the final decision. Participation in the beginning cuts down on the desire and capacity of someone to stop a decision either late in the decision-making process of your transit project or even during implementation.

What public participation is required?

If your agency is applying for federal or state public transportation funding from the Kansas Department of

Transportation, you are required to follow certain public notice requirements as part of your program—during the application process and during the planning process, and when you want to make significant changes to your services. The instructions in your application for funding spell out the requirements for public notices for the Section 5310 and 5311 programs, and the Section 5311 handbook provides additional details for offering charter service or other specialized services.

Outreach during planning activities. All recipients of Section 5311 (funding for nonurbanized areas), Section 5310 (capital assistance for transporting elderly and persons with disabilities), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute) and Section 5317 (New Freedom) must have a "locally-developed public transit-human service coordination plan" in place by July 1, 2007. These plans include a requirement for outreach to local public and private agencies (both non-profit and for-profit) and to the general public to solicit and consider on coordinating public transit and human services transportation in the community.

Adequate outreach in a coordinated plan includes an invitation to public and private agencies in the community, as well as an invitation to consumers or their representatives. As the transit agency manager, you are required to make a good faith effort to involve other agencies in your community to participate in the planning process, including those that are not FTA-funded, and to document that process.

Your approach to public involve-

ment might include a transportation “summit” with invitations issued to specific individuals to help you create a plan, and a public meeting held asking for comments on your draft plan. Changes that are more minor may be handled by a letter to those who might be affected or a notice in the newspaper to inform the community of a change.

Outreach during the application process. During application for a transit program, you must provide notice to all known private for-profit operators in the area regarding proposed service and opportunities, either through a public notice or a letter to each known service provider in the area, with at least 10 working days allowed for response. When private, for-profit service providers indicate an interest in providing service in the local area, you must consult and follow written procedures for establishing criteria for making public/private service decisions, including procedures for true cost comparisons among service providers when there are two or more operators interested in providing service.

Documents provide evidence of a good faith effort at early consultation with private-for-profit operators and others in developing a transportation service plan. Examples include letters sent to private operators and other stakeholders in your service area; minutes of meetings in which the transportation plan was discussed, a participant’s list, and letters of response.

Re: complaints, your responsibility is to meet with the party who filed the complaint to try to reach an agreement and to document your efforts to reach agreement. If no agreement is reached, provide documentation to KDOT explaining why not and inform the party who filed the complaint of the opportunity to respond to KDOT.

Public notice of approved changes

Once public comments have been addressed and KDOT has approved your program, you are ready to implement the program. For service changes, even minor ones, you should provide your customers with notice of the upcoming change. Post those changes on the bus and in other public areas where riders are likely to see them. You might also consider handing out “rider alerts” to customers as they board the vehicles.

Beyond the minimum: Involve the public in your planning

While we have summarized some of the minimum requirements for public involvement, engaging the community in planning any major service change—through public forums, surveys, focus groups, advisory committee meetings, and consultation with organizations that represent different groups who use public transportation—is likely to reap rewards in ongoing support for your program.

Sources:

Kansas Department of Transportation State Management Plan. 2005, Kansas DOT.

Kansas Transit Provider Handbook: Section 5311 and Section 5310 Program Guidance, 2005, Kansas DOT.

John M. Bryson and Anne R. Carroll (2002). *The What, Why, Who, How, When, and Where of Public Participation*, developed with the support of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/00006.pdf> ▲

Transportation options,

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rider. *Physical*—assisting with balance boarding the bus. Often includes a “hand-off” technique of assisting to the point of the rider being capable of managing him or herself. *Activity*—accompanying the rider to destinations like the grocery store or the doctor, and back home again. *Personal*—helping the rider get ready (i.e. putting on shoes and helping with his or her coat).

Enlist the help of volunteers.

According to the Beverly Foundation’s Web site, 46 U.S. cities provide a volunteer driver program. Added up, those programs have close to 4,000 volunteer drivers who worked an average of 4.4 hours per week. (That’s a weekly total average of 17,600 hours of assistance!) If your community is unable to offer cars to volunteers, consider reimbursing gas mileage as a solution, or launching an “Adopt a Volunteer” program with mileage funded by donations. These ideas are suggested in *Innovations for Seniors; Public and Community Transit Services Respond to Special Needs*, by the Beverly Foundation and the Community Transportation Association of America.

There are other opportunities to volunteer—through the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). They have created four types of volunteer positions (for which they provide training) to make sure older drivers are refreshed on driving skills: instructor, coordinator, trainer, and telephone coordinator. An online application can be found at http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/driver_volunteer/a2004-06-07-volunteer_with.html.

Market your services. Make your

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transit system known in your community. In the Beverly Foundation study, seniors were asked where they most frequently get their transit information. Transportation newsletters ranked second-to-last, while their top source was newspapers. If you want to increase your newsletter

The time to develop new transportation options for older drivers is now.

readership, think about targeting elderly drivers with special articles, sections, or advertisements. Press releases about new services or awards are another good way to get your agency's name out there.

Don't wait

The time to develop new transportation options for those in our community who struggle with safe driving is now. This population is growing quickly, and trying to meet new mobility needs should be on the top of every community's list. Take the initiative to work with others in your community to establish a progressive plan for addressing the challenges of increasing numbers of elderly drivers. At the transit agency level, adding just one more volunteer to assist passengers inside their homes as they leave for a trip might make a significant difference in transit use in your community.

The problems with transit have been voiced by senior drivers, and they have told us what they want, as well—convenience, accessibility and safety. Now it's time to do something about it. ▲

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

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Compiled by Jacob Bustad
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[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: Is there a list of acceptable prescription drugs, or more importantly, a list of non-acceptable drugs? If not, can we require a transit driver to provide a statement from their doctor stating that any medication that they are currently

FTA regulations as stated in 49 CFR Part 655.6(a): "Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, this part preempts any state or local law, rule, regulation, or order to the extent that: (1) Compliance with both the state or local requirement and any requirement in this part is not possible; or (2) Compliance with the state or local requirement is an obstacle to the accomplishment and execution of any requirement in this part."

In addition, should an employer implement additional elements, it must separate those elements and inform employees that those elements are not required by FTA/DOT, as stated in Section 655.15(j): "The



Is there a list of acceptable prescription drugs, or more importantly, a list of non-acceptable drugs?

taking will not affect their ability to perform their job? If so, can we just wholesale require it for any driver taking a prescription drug?

Answer: The drugs for which tests are required under FTA and DOT regulations are marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), and opiates. FTA/DOT provides no list of acceptable or unacceptable prescription or over-the-counter drugs. An employer may have elements within its drug and alcohol policy that go above and beyond what is required from FTA/DOT as long as those elements do not thwart the

employer shall inform each covered employee if it implements elements of an anti-drug use or alcohol misuse program that are not required by this part. An employer may not impose requirements that are inconsistent with, contrary to, or frustrate the provisions of this part."

FTA provides technical assistance in the area of which you questioned with its *Prescription and Over-the-Counter Toolkit* which is available through the FTA Office of Safety and Security web site (<http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov>) by clicking on the Publications tab.

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Agency marketing on a dime

by Kelly Heavey

How much money have you spent promoting your agency this year? If your budget is tight for marketing, Texas A&M Research Foundation's *TCRP Report 50: Low-Cost and Cost-Effective Marketing Techniques for Public Transit Agencies*, can help. It has dozens of real-life examples of low-cost advertising efforts, with topics including media relations, seasonal promotions, and marketing a new service. Here are a few examples suited for smaller transportation agencies. Hold onto your dollars; these suggestions will help you use every penny.

Incentive program: Smile on Mondays

Each year for four weeks at a time, a Florida bus agency holds a cooperative promotion with a local radio station. It calls this incentive program "Smile on Mondays."

Bus riders fill out a survey form about ridership and service of the agency. This form is included a monthly newsletter and riders turn it in to enter a drawing. The winner is announced on a local radio station Monday morning and wins prizes. This program could easily be an ongoing promotion.

The only cost to the agency was their monthly newsletter! The radio station promoted the drawing with 30-second spots and provided prizes.

Smile on Mondays has worked for the past eight years. It promotes the bus agency, the radio station, and

it acquires helpful customer feedback about riders' views on the agency.

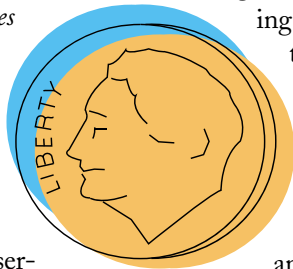
"I have connections" promotion

For a creative advertising campaign, an Indiana transit agency distributed a gift to every paying rider on its 30th anniversary: a button reading, "I Have Connections."

On a designated day the following month, any passenger wearing the button rode free for the day, and paying customers received a button for a free ride the following month.

The costs to the agency were buttons and printed advertisements (and some lost revenue).

The benefits were seen all over the transit service's area during the campaign by button-wearers. Transit vehicle operators eventually asked for their own buttons reading, "I'm Your Connection."



Transportation fair booth

People love getting things for free. Set up a booth giving away free magnets, key chains, route schedules, and anything else you think your riders would appreciate. If it's something they'll see every day, it will be hard for them to forget your agency.

Operating one of these booths in Auburn, California, cost the agency about \$600 for eight hours, including the giveaways.

Annual meeting

How do you honor and recognize your employees, share your annual accomplishments with stakeholders, and promote your company at the same time? You can accomplish all of these at your annual meeting. Invite

state legislators and officials from your state's department of transportation and government and social service agencies. Arrange a keynote speaker, and present an award to someone who has made a big impact in your agency.

This type of event attracts media buzz and publicly recognizes the achievements of your agency. It also provides stakeholders with the opportunity to address any concerns or comments about the operation of your agency.

The transportation agency of Rosiclare, Illinois, holds such a meeting each year that costs about \$2600. The agency says it is one of the best ways to promote awareness of rural transportation in the area.

In sum

Advertising for your transit agency doesn't have to be expensive. Work toward collaborating with a known figure like a local radio station personality or public official—and have fun with it! Always keep your current passengers in mind, but focus on the target audience you have yet to reach. What is it they need to know about your agency? What are they missing out on if they don't ride with you?

For more information on Transit Cooperative Research Program's *Low-Cost and Cost-Effective Marketing Techniques for Public Transit Agencies*, visit <http://www.trb.org/trbnet/projectdisplay.asp?projectid=1035>.

Source:

Weatherby, Cynthia. *Low-Cost and Cost-Effective Marketing Techniques for Public Transit Agencies*. Texas A&M Research Foundation. Transportation Research Board, 1998. ▲



Back injuries on the road: How to prevent them, how to heal them

by Kelly Heavey

Back injuries on the job account for one-fourth of workman's comp claims, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, and four out of five people will experience sharp or aching back pain at some point in their lives whether it's work-related or not. The pain can build up from day-to-day lifting, continuous improper posture, or it can be the result of one sudden incident. Regardless of how or when it happens, daily driving can take its toll on your spine without proper precautions. Here's a look at typical causes of back pain and what you can do about it on the road and at home.

What causes back pain?

Many factors increase the chances for back injury. Some examples are: age, fitness level, diet, heredity, race, cigarette smoking, and occupational risks. As a transit driver, occupational risks include assisting passengers in wheelchairs into tight spaces on a van or a bus and driving for long periods of time without breaks.

How can I prevent it?

Lifting improperly while assisting any passenger can be extremely harmful to your back, so you may want to consider taking these precautions: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and squat down to lift with your knees, keep your neck aligned with your back when you look down, don't bend at your waist when lifting, and keep the weight as close to your body as possible. Your

Back Stretches

General advice: Hold stretches for about six seconds, release for six. Repeat five times, two or three times a day.

Stretch #1. Lie on your back. Press knees into chest, holding your shinbones (or the back of your thighs) with your hands. Release and repeat.



Stretch #2. Lie on your back with arms stretched out, perpendicular to your body. While turning your head to look at your right hand, pull your right knee close to your chest and then try to touch it to the ground on the left side of your body. Repeat on left side.



Stretch #3. Rest on hands and knees. Slowly dip your back, keeping head up and chin out. Then slowly arch your back, pulling chin to chest. Repeat.



Photos by Kelly Heavey

sturdy support will help a passenger transition smoothly on and off the bus and it will keep your own back protected at the same time.

For those long stretches of driving, relieve tense muscles and refresh yourself by taking a 15 minute break every two hours. Make sure to stretch and change positions in these breaks. This is recommended by the Department for Transport and the Driving Standards Agency of the United

Kingdom in their report, *The Highway Code*.

A recent study from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy called *Take the Pain out of Driving* reports that more than half of the business drivers surveyed have suffered from back pain in the past 12 months. The study lists back-saving strategies specifically for drivers compiled in an *Initial Driving Position and Posture Guide*. It lists eight pre-

ventative steps for adjusting the driver's seat, beginning from when you initially sit down to drive. The information is detailed and specific.

Protect your back and prevent slouching with an adjustable lumbar roll (or you can use a rolled up towel) placed in the small of your back. Also, if you move the driver's seat as close as you can comfortably get to the steering wheel—while still maintaining a safe 10 inches between your breastbone and the steering wheel as recommended for air bag safety by the Insurance Information Institute—the hollow of your back will be better supported.

When you assist passengers to their seats, face your entire body towards them. This will help you to avoid twisting your back in an awkward position.

Recovering from back pain

If you experience back pain, an easy at-home remedy is to apply cold and heat to the area. For the first few days, gently press an ice pack or a frozen bag of vegetables wrapped in a towel against the area for 20-minute periods several times a day. A few days later, begin applying heat to the area to stimulate blood flow.

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) recommends resting for no more than two days when recovering from back pain, because physical

activity is a good way to help your muscles recover. If the pain does not subside after 72 hours, NINDS recommends seeking medical attention.

Besides taking on-the-job precautions to prevent back pain, consider making positive lifestyle choices. Exercise regularly with three 30-minute cardio sections every week. Walking is a good option. Don't pile all of your workouts into a few days,

Take the pain out of driving by taking care of yourself and your back.

however, because over-exercising in spurts can harm you in the end when your muscles aren't used to all the work. Stretch throughout the day whenever your muscles feel tense (see recommended back stretches on the previous page.) Make sure your diet includes enough calcium and vitamin D to build stronger bones (think leafy vegetables, dairy products, and fish.)

A transit driver is always on the move! Take good care of your back while you care for your riders. There isn't one surefire strategy for that, except to be healthy in as many areas of your life as you can. Besides being mindful of proper lifting techniques, remember to take a few minutes to stretch throughout the day, and eat healthily to maintain your strength. ▲

Sources on back pain:

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke *Lower Back Pain Fact Sheet*, www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/backpain/detail_backpain.htm

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy's article, *Take the Pain out of Driving*, www.csp.org.uk

Insurance Information Institute: *Air Bag Safety*, <http://www.iii.org/individuals/auto/lifesaving/airbags/>

U.S. Department of Labor report found at: <http://www.pp.okstate.edu/ehs/training/oshaback.htm>

U.K. Department for Transport, Driving Standards Agency. *The Highway Code*. Stationary Office, May 2004. <http://www.highwaycode.gov.uk/>

Stretches found at <http://tms.ecol.net/fitness/backstr.htm>

FTA Q&As,

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Question: The following scenario has occurred several times: An employee claims injury but completes his shift without medical attention or visible disability. The next day the employee doesn't report for work as a result of said injury. Must drug testing proceed? Is there a specific rule regarding this situation?

Answer: I'm assuming you are having a trained supervisor make a determination that these accidents did not meet FTA's threshold for post-accident testing, hence the employees were allowed to go home without being tested in each case. In such a "scenario," there would be no provision for testing them for a post-accident test. It may be helpful to review the regulations regarding post-accident testing. See below.

655.44 *Post-accident testing.*

(a) Accidents. (1) Fatal accidents. (i) As soon as practicable following an accident involving the loss of human life, an employer shall conduct drug and alcohol tests on each surviving covered employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident. Post-accident drug and alcohol testing of the operator is not required under this section if the covered employee is tested under the fatal accident testing requirements of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration rule 49 CFR 389.303(a)(1) or (b)(1). (ii) The employer shall also drug and alcohol test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

(2) Nonfatal accidents. (i) As soon as practicable following an accident not

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New program for child transportation

by Kelly Heavey

What do you remember about the school bus rides as a child? Perhaps the memory that sticks out is a bully terrorizing other children with spit wads, or the time you forgot your favorite book on the back seat. Most of the problems are typical “kids stuff,” but sometimes more serious problems do occur, and early childhood transportation services must be prepared to deal with all of them. If your agency transports children,

Head Start recently launched a new Web site just for you: **Transportation PathFinder**. The site provides state legislation and policies of transportation for Head Start, which primarily deals with children from infancy to five-years-old, but the information can be applied to older age groups and transportation departments unaffiliated with the organization. It’s an innovative resource that answers many questions about transporting youngsters.

The Web site is neatly split up into six modules: State Information, Library, Guidance, Scenarios, Questions and Answers, and Search.

State Information includes contact information for the State Director of Pupil Transportation. (Kansas’ is Larry Bluthardt.) You’ll find links for planning school transportation meetings and ordering safety videos—a free service provided by the School Bus Safety Education Unit of the Kansas State Department of Education. You will also find links to Kansas State Regulations and childcare laws.

The Scenarios section lists hypothetical situations a child transportation agency might face on a bus and what to do in those situations. Examples of what you will find are

listed in the box to the right. The section encourages a problem-solving approach for the bus operator. It could serve to develop your agency's policies on troublesome matters, or even problems it hasn't faced yet but might in the future.

If you have any questions about the topics on Pathfinder, you can submit them online; the Web site developers are currently developing a Q&A page. Nearly 20 topic categories are being compiled and they will range from transporting children with disabilities to field trips.

Transportation PathFinder is a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Web site. It is currently under active development. ▲

Scenarios on the Transportation PathFinder Web site

A child's first day: Larry is a bit nervous about his first day on the head start bus.

Left behind: Olga is accidentally left on a bus after a trip to the center one morning.

Scratches and bruises: Alice looks as if she may have been physically abused recently.

A need arises: There are no buses equipped to handle Stacy's wheelchair.

Unwelcome passenger: An aggressive man attempts to board a bus filled with children.

administered within eight hours following the accident, the employer shall cease attempts to administer an alcohol test and maintain the record. Records shall be submitted to FTA upon request of the Administrator.

(b) An employer shall ensure that a covered employee required to be drug tested under this section is tested as soon as practicable but within 32 hours of the accident.

(c) A covered employee who is subject to post-accident testing who fails to remain readily available for such testing, including notifying the employer or the employer representative of his or her location if he or she leaves the scene of the accident prior to submission to such test, may be deemed by the employer to have refused to submit to testing.

(d) The decision not to administer a drug and/or alcohol test under this section shall be based on the employer's determination, using the best available information at the time of the determination that the employee's performance could not have contributed to the accident. Such a decision must be documented in detail, including the decision-making process used to reach the decision not to test.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention for the injured following an accident or to

To access the PathFinder Web site, go to: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/>, use the Search feature to search for "Transportation Pathfinder," click on the selection called "Transportation," and follow the highlighted links entitled "Transportation PathFinder."

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involving the loss of human life in which a mass transit vehicle is involved, the employer shall drug and alcohol test each covered employee operating the mass transit vehicle at the time of the accident unless the employer determines, using the best information available at the time of the decision, that the covered employee's performance can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident. The employer shall also drug and alcohol test any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as deter-

mined by the employer using the best information available at the time of the decision.

(ii) If an alcohol test required by this section is not administered within

[A decision to not test an employee involved in an accident] must be documented in detail, including the decision-making process used to reach the decision not to test.

two hours following the accident, the employer shall prepare and maintain on file a record stating the reasons the alcohol test was not promptly administered. If an alcohol test required by this section is not

prohibit a covered employee from leaving the scene of an accident for the period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident or to obtain necessary emergency

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Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

February 11-13, 2007
 SWTA 27th Annual Conference
 and EXPO
 South West Transit
 Association
 Austin, TX
 (210) 366-1436
 conference@swta.org

February 24-27, 2007
 National Association of
 Workforce Boards Forum
 National Association of
 Workforce Boards
 Washington, DC
 (703) 778-7900
 sewells@nawb.org

February 25-28, 2007
 Marketing and Communications
 Workshop
 American Public Transportation
 Association
 Las Vegas, NV
 (202) 496-4845
 amartin@apta.com

March 7-10, 2007
 2007 Joint Conference of the
 American Society on Aging and
 the National Council on Aging
 Chicago, IL
 (415) 974-9675
 registrar@asaging.org

March 7-8, 2007
 Coordinated Mobility: A Unified
 Transportation Management
 Solution
 National Transit Institute
 Atlanta, GA
 (732) 932-1700
 msirleaf@nti.rutgers.edu

March 19-20, 2007
 People on the Move: Using All
 Transportation Options (ADA
 and Beyond...)
 Easter Seals Project ACTION
 Austin, TX
 (800) 659-6428
 stibbs@easterseals.com

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

**2007 Spring Driver Training
 Workshops: Defensive
 Driving Refresher and
 Transporting Passengers
 with Special Needs**

March 20 - Dodge City
 March 21 - Wichita
 March 22 - Emporia
 March 27 - Colby
 March 28 - Great Bend
 March 29 - Salina
 April 10 - Manhattan
 April 11 - Topeka
 April 12 - Pittsburg
 April 19 - Olathe

For more information, go to
<http://www.kortap.kutc.ku.edu>
 and view "Training Calendar"
 or call Rose Lichtenberg at
 (785) 864-2594 for more
 information.

May 1-2, 2007
 18th Annual Transportation
 Research Conference
 University of Minnesota Center
 for Transportation Studies
 St. Paul, MN
 (612) 624-3708
 conferences5@cce.umn.edu

May 6-10, 2007
 11th National Transportation
 Planning Applications
 Conference
 Transportation Research Board
 & Florida DOT
 Daytona Beach, FL
 (313) 963-4651
 arens@pbworld.com

May 6-9, 2007
 Bus and Paratransit Conference
 American Public Transportation
 Association
 Nashville, TN
 (202) 496-4845
 amartin@apta.com

May 19-25, 2007
 CTAA EXPO
 Community Transportation
 Association of America
 Reno, Nevada
 (202) 247-8356
 expo@ctaa.org

FTA Q&As,

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medical care.

(f) The results of a blood, urine, or breath test for the use of prohibited drugs or alcohol misuse, conducted by Federal, State, or local officials having independent authority for the test, shall be considered to meet the requirements of this section provided such test conforms to the applicable Federal, State, or local testing requirements, and that the test results are obtained by the employer. Such test results may be used only when the employer is unable to per-

form a post-accident test within the required period noted in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

For clarification, since you were asking about injuries this definition of accident might be helpful. Please note that an individual must IMMEDIATELY receive medical treatment away from the scene. This did not occur in your scenario.

§655.4 *Definitions.* 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 acci-

dent; 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. ▲

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.

Online resources

U.S. Florida's Volunteers: The Driving Force for Senior Mobility—Identifying Barriers and Enabling Change. Winter Park Health Foundation, December 2006. 7 pages (available from KUTC on at http://www.unitedweride.gov/Volunteer_Drivers_for_Senior_Transportation_12-2006.pdf).

Low-Cost and Cost-Effective Marketing Techniques for Public Transit Agencies. Transportation Research Board, Transit Cooperative Research Program Project B-13. (Available at <http://www.trb.org/trbnet/projectdisplay.asp?projectId=1035>). This report includes a description of low-cost and cost-effective marketing techniques currently used at large, medium, and small urban and rural transit agencies for use throughout the transit industry.

How to Establish and Maintain Door-Through-Door Services for Seniors. The Beverly Foundation, 2005. (Available from KUTC or from <http://www.beverlyfoundation.org>). "Door-through-door" transportation offers a very high level of service for seniors who have significant mobility limitations. This how-to guide describes how to make such services work in your community using information from case studies.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Rules' Affect on Rural Transit Agencies.

<http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/rtap/pubs/ta/hipaabrief.pdf> of available from KUTC Library. New National RTAP InfoBrief Number 29. Fall 2006, 2 pages. Many rural transit providers struggle to understand their role within the HIPAA regulations, especially providers of non-emergency medical transportation. This Infobrief provides some guidance on compliance with the Act.

Kansas United We Ride Coordination Toolkit.

<http://www.ksunitedweride.org>. The new community coordination toolkit is up on the Kansas United We Ride Web site. See link at the top of the page.

RuralTransportation.org. <http://www.ruraltransportation.org/index.shtml>. Rural Transportation.org, originally developed by the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), serves as an information clearinghouse for regional development professionals, local government officials and others interested in rural transportation planning and development issues.

Volunteer Driver Turnkey Kit. <http://www.beverlyfoundation.org/turnkeykit/index.html>. This kit is an online resource for organizations interested in starting volunteer driver programs. It also includes resources on the Volunteer Friends model—a specialized pilot program for providing volunteer rides for seniors.

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Agency		Phone	
Street address		Email address	
City	State	Zip + 4	Date materials needed

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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
- 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.

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