

FEATURE

Building Livability through Mobility

By Nate Vander Broek

Many factors make a community livable. It's all about the needs of the people who live there. Transit service is key to livability in rural communities.



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Sustainability and livability. These two words have been used in the media a lot lately. You've probably read about these concepts in magazines and heard them debated on TV or in your own community. Your local government may have used these words in reference to making your city or county more "green." At the state and national level, sustainability and livability are being considered in environmental or housing projects. As a transit manager, what does livability and sustainability mean to you and how can they be applied in a rural setting? This article will show rural transit managers how to incorporate sustainability and livability in rural transit and how to gain funding to do so.

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MANAGEMENT

Improving Mobility for Hispanic Seniors

By Matt Baker and Pat Weaver

Central Plains Area Agency on Aging to investigate options

In March of this year, the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging (CPAAA) received a \$12,500 Hispanic Elder Transportation Access grant from the National Center on

Senior Transportation (NCST). According to Valerhy Powers of the CPAAA and Sedgwick County Department on Aging, this grant will allow the CPAAA to form a collaborative that will find ways to increase mobility for the elderly Hispanic population in Butler, Harvey, and Sedgwick counties. Transportation providers need to identify the demographic markets they

are or should be serving and tailor their services to these markets—the NCST grant will allow CPAAA to do just that.

In Kansas, both the Hispanic and elderly (65+) populations continue to grow. The health and economic conditions faced by many seniors as well as the cultural and economic conditions often facing

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Sustainability, livability, and transit *Continued from page 1*

What is sustainability and livability?

Let's start with sustainability. What does it actually mean? The Brundtland Commission defines sustainability as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The Commission goes on to say that it's not so much about specific environmental or other issues but about communities and how they will survive in the future. While sustainability advocates may have their own priorities, environmental issues are intertwined with social and economic issues, all affecting each other.

Next, livability. The National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination describes livability as "people-centered orientation in communities that ensures economic vitality, connectivity and mobility." The Center says that mobility has the greatest impact on the livability of a community because it connects people to social services, employment, health care, education and to others in the community. Transit services should be frequent, affordable and reliable and be equally available to all members of the community, regardless of age, income and education.

Clearly, livability and sustainability go hand in hand. The concepts are the foundation of a new partnership that seeks to maintain and grow a high quality of life in communities—described below.

Partnership for Sustainable Communities

In an effort to link sustainability with community needs, the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development joined together in 2009 to form an interagency *Partnership for Sustainable Communities*. The Partnership established the groundwork for creating sustainable communities based on six livability principles.

Sustainability means working within a community to meet environmental, social and economic development needs for us and future generations. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities encourages the use of six livability principles that aim to improve access to affordable housing, provide more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment.

Six Livability Principles Toward Sustainability:

- 1) Provide more transportation choices that decrease household costs, reduce dependency on foreign oil, and improve the environment.
- 2) Promote equitable affordable housing that expands housing location choices to increase mobility and lower housing and transportation costs.
- 3) Enhance economic competitiveness through reliable access to employment, education and services.
- 4) Support existing communities by targeting Federal funding to revitalization efforts in those communities.
- 5) Coordinate policies and investments to remove Federal barriers to effective programs at the local level.
- 6) Value the uniqueness of communities and neighborhoods by investing in safe, healthy, and walkable neighborhoods—urban and rural.

Let's see how sustainability and livability have been applied in a rural setting.

Rural livability through transit

While urban areas may be referenced most often with regard to livability and sustainability, who's to say they are not rural issues as well? No matter where you live, the same issues apply: Most people want to live in a safe and economically-competitive area, and they want to protect the quality and availability of their natural resources, health care and community events. Below are case studies from some forward-thinking communities that are attempting to do just that.

Mason Transit. A good example of a rural transit agency that has created a more livable environment through transportation is in Mason County, Washington. Serving a rural population of 50,000 people living near Olympic National Park, Mason Transit began with five wheelchair accessible vans on a dial-a-ride system and now has over 40 vehicles that provide fixed and deviated route bus, dial-a-ride, volunteer driver, and park and ride services linking riders to



Mason Transit purchased the Shelton Armory and developed plans for a significant expansion to create a combination community center / transit center.

work, medical care, and recreation.

One of the livability highlights of the agency has been achieved through the conversion of an old armory building into a multi-use community transit center. “Armory buildings are almost indestructible and are common among rural areas,” stated Dave O’Connell, general manager of Mason Transit.

Once the building was purchased in 2006, Mason Transit encouraged public participation and disclosure in the design process of the remodel. Public participation included a design fair, interviews, a website, radio spots, press releases, and community presentations. Participants in the design fair included state and local government officials, non-profits, private businesses, youth and the general public.

The design fair helped to identify goals for facility management and operations, such as:

- Self-generating income to cover long-term operations
- Intergovernmental and community support
- Consistent and transparent management
- Use of professional property management practices
- Hours of operation to maximize public use.

At least 42 potential tenants, neighboring businesses and other stakeholders were interviewed during the design process. A website and press releases kept the public informed about the process of the new facility as well as to notify the public about upcoming input opportunities. Local radio programs interviewed key players in the design process. And finally, presentations were made to civic groups to keep them informed of the project and to collect feedback on the design plans.

Along with providing basic transit facilities, the Community Transit Center provides locals with a much needed recreation center. The 65,000 square foot building has a gymnasium that is constantly used by a number of groups for a range of activities, such as soccer, hockey, basketball and even a roller derby team.

The Community Transit Center also has a technology lab, full kitchen, dining room and public restrooms, an amenity that O’Connell stated is fairly unique in a rural setting.

O’Connell said that approximately 52 groups share the available space. “There is even an outbuilding where [military] tanks were once held that is now used as a food bank,” he said.

Transit Promotes Liveability By...

- **Creating places for community life.** Transit can support places—public spaces, streets and buildings— helping to enliven their usage and making them centers for a range of community activities.
- **Serving as a catalyst for downtown and neighborhood renewal.** Transit can serve as a key force in the revitalization of neighborhoods and center cities.
- **Creating opportunity for entrepreneurship and economic development.** Transit can help create new businesses and improve access to job opportunities.
- **Improving safety and amenity.** Transit can help make communities safer, in part by making them more comfortable and attractive.
- **Making communities accessible and convenient.** Transit services and facilities can be tailored to meet community needs to provide a viable alternative to the automobile.
- **Shaping community growth.** Transit can be a key component of efforts aimed at reducing sprawl and encouraging development of mixed-use centers.

Source: Transit in Creating Livable Metropolitan Communities. TCRP Report 22
http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_22-a.pdf

Another goal of Mason Transit has been the promotion of improved downtown pedestrian accessibility. Mason Transit has been working to provide more transportation choices by improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure development and supporting multimodal connections. Mason Transit established a youth-staffed bike repair shop and equipped all buses with bike racks.

O’Connell admits that due to the current economic situation they haven’t been able to do as much as they’d like. In their effort to make the center more accessible for pedestrians, they’ve identified a lot of accessibility issues that need additional work. “Sidewalks are missing in some areas, but without adequate funding, we can’t work on that right now,” he said. The mayor is now onboard with maintenance needs, and O’Connell hopes that when the economy gets better, they will be able to make their much-needed improvements.

Partnerships have been a key component in allowing the service to expand. The transit system is working with two school districts by combining school buses with fixed route public transit to provide more service for the public and school children. Another

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partnership is with human service providers, where the transportation needs of low-income and homeless residents and veterans are met. Mason Transit also runs a volunteer driver program where volunteers are paid at a per-mile rate of use of their personal vehicles. The program provides transportation for patients who need urgent medical attention, such as for a kidney dialysis, in Olympia, Tacoma and local destinations.

Mason Transit does not charge a fee for any rider traveling within its county. Annual ridership has increased from 60,000 to over 500,000.

Mason Transit receives funding from FTA Rural Funds, Federal Highway Administration Flex Funds, Washington State DOT and Department of Ecology grants, and state and local tax revenue. To read more about Mason Transit, go to http://fta.dot.gov/documents/Rural_MasonCounty.pdf.

Pelivan Transit. Pelivan Transit in Northeastern Oklahoma is another example of a rural transit agency that has worked to create a more livable environment through transit. Pelivan Transit serves seven counties and 10 tribal communities with 25 routes connecting tribal administrations, medical, shopping, jobs and social destinations. All Native Americans in the Pelivan service area are eligible for free or reduced rides.

Livability has been enhanced by Pelivan by providing more transportation choices, including airport shuttles, curb-to-curb demand response, and variable fees for destinations up to 100 miles away. Equitable, affordable housing choices have been provided by partnering with other agencies to meet housing, road, transit and commuter needs and opportunities. Economic competitiveness has been enhanced by providing early and late shift transportation to jobs and inter-city connections. Pelivan supports the communities in its service area by providing many transportation options for residents, tourists, employees, the elderly and the disabled.

Pelivan is also stepping forward as a leader in sustainability. It has applied for funding to create four compressed natural gas (CNG) stations in northeast Oklahoma. CNG is a cleaner burning fuel than gasoline and has been shown to reduce ozone-forming emissions by 80 percent compared to gasoline. Pelivan is also testing intelligent transportation systems (ITS) software for statewide use, and integrating fare collection with neighboring operators to create more efficient service by allowing ticket purchases before transferring.

Owned and operated by Grand Gateway Economic Development Agency (EDA), Pelivan Transit receives funding from the FTA and the Oklahoma Public Transit Revolving Fund, and has received project funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). To read more about Pelivan Transit, go to http://fta.dot.gov/documents/Rural_Pelivan.pdf.

People's Transit. Huron, a town of about 12,000 residents in eastern South Dakota, has a large elderly population. With bitterly cold winter temperatures, residents were concerned about the town's elderly individuals walking to their destinations due to limited transportation options.

To help elderly residents without cars with their mobility needs, the Huron Area Senior Center created its own transit system, People's Transit. Nearly 30 years ago, it purchased a cargo van from a federal surplus warehouse and retrofitted it with passenger seats. This van, along with some other vehicles purchased at a later date, transported seniors to the senior center for meals and also to medical services.

When their funding switched from state to federal in 1981, funds increased and the service went public, adding school children and day care clients. However, because the buses were located at the senior center, People's Transit was still perceived by many as "the senior bus." People's Transit needed its own identity. In 1997, the city created a new transit center, known as Huron's Great Station, in a vacated fire truck bay at City Hall located on a main artery through town. This new location showed the city that People's Transit is not just for seniors.

When City Hall planned to move to a new building, People's Transit needed to find a new building to call its own. With a cold, northern climate, the building

had to be energy efficient as well as economical. The design for the new building would be twice as big as the fire truck bay with half the cost of utilities.

To access federal investment dollars to create the building, People's Transit needed local investment. This was accomplished through a community auction with the Modern Woodman of America and a grant from the Griffith Foundation. People's Transit also secured a loan from a local federal credit union and a lower-interest loan from the Community Transportation Development Fund. The City of Huron helped with the design of the building, cleared the chosen lot and provided the necessary city infrastructure.

The new facility has had a positive impact on the community in more ways than one. "We had a square block of land with three-foot high weeds and brush,"

Livability has been enhanced by Pelivan by providing more transportation options, by developing partnerships to provide affordable housing, and by providing viable commuting choices.



Part of creating livability in a rural area is considering popular origins and destinations and helping citizens move between them.

says Huron City Commissioner David McGirr, describing the project's palette. "With our work as a stimulus, surrounding property owners [also] cleaned up their act. The project has brought real improvement to the neighborhood."

In the last few years, People's Transit has been able to respond to increasing demands for work and medical transportation with new funding provided by Federal Jobs Access Commute (JARC) and the New Freedom program. To read more about People's Transit, go to <http://t4america.org/blog/2010/08/26/livability-in-small-towns-huron-south-dakota/>.

Meridian Multi-Modal Transportation Center.

Meridian, Mississippi, with a population of 40,000, provides another example of increased livability in a small town through transit. Meridian enhanced its city center, historic buildings and investment in downtown through the creation of the Meridian Multi-Modal Transportation Center (MMTC), known locally as Union Station. It is housed in a renovated Amtrak station. Multi-modal services include Amtrak, Greyhound, and the Meridian Transit system, as well as taxi service to the Meridian Regional Airport and trolley loops through downtown. The MMTC provides transportation services for 300,000 passengers annually.

The renovated Amtrak station not only serves as a transportation hub, but also a home for many businesses and events. The MMTC provides space for the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation, restaurants, and gift shops. The building hosts 250 events annually within its conference rooms and convention space.

The project has helped to revitalize Meridian's housing

stock in the area. Union Station brought \$17.3 million in HUD HOPE VI grants for development of attractive low to middle income duplex and single-family housing. Over \$8 million in private investment in the former blighted Depot District of downtown Meridian has been contributed to Union Station.

The MMTC was awarded \$5.1 million dollars in federal and state grants from the Mississippi DOT, including the first Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) grant for an historic reconstruction project. The MMTC received \$1.4 million in local funding and \$431,000 from Amtrak. Read more online about the MMTC by visiting <http://www.greatamericanstations.com/Stations/MEI>.

How to get started

There are a number of ways you can use transit to increase livability and sustainability in your community. The following list, found in the US DOT's *Livability in Transportation Guidebook: Planning Approaches that Promote Livability*, provides some helpful advice:

Engage community residents and stakeholders. Explain the ideas of livability and sustainability to your community and find out what they mean to them. Next, encourage public involvement and outreach in transportation planning. If issues involve other agencies, such as land use or housing, develop an efficient, engaging interagency process for the new partners.

Start with something that matters. Look for recognized issues and needs that will spark a big idea or compelling vision that can continue to inspire

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and engage partners and the public. In some instances, there may already be ongoing community efforts, such as affordable housing or downtown revitalization. Seek ways to use stronger transportation participation to help with their efforts.

Welcome partners. Depending on your specific project, you may want to enlist housing agencies and private developers, resource agencies and utilities, city and county planning and zoning staff, business leaders and landowners, and a broad range of other community groups. You may find it easier to strengthen existing partnerships and working groups, such as an MPO or regional planning agency, than to start from scratch.

Pool and leverage funding. When a regional or corridor plan includes non-transportation partners and effectively addresses their issues and program requirements, it is reasonable to expect some cost-sharing. A carefully developed scope, work plan, and public involvement process can usually address individual agency needs and funding program restrictions at the same time.

Select a place. Because applying livability principles requires transportation agencies to work with localities (who typically have land use authority), public- and private-sector developers (who build the housing), and a range of other partners interested in specific places, it can be helpful to use a “place-based” approach even when working on broad policy and program development. This could mean focusing on a few demonstration

sites along a multimodal corridor, such as potential transit development opportunities, selecting a few key communities or neighborhoods when working on a regional plan, or partnering with a few representative regions or MPOs when working at a statewide scale.

Funding

On June 28, FTA announced availability of Section 5309 Discretionary Bus Livability funding (\$150 million nationally), with applications due on July 29, 2011. These funds are available to finance capital projects to purchase buses and construct bus-related facilities. Funds will be awarded in accordance with U.S. DOT's Livability Initiative and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. A copy of the Federal Register Notice is located at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-06-27/>.

Conclusion

Urban areas are not the only places that can experience improved livability through transit. There are many opportunities to create a more livable and sustainable environment through transit in your rural area or small town. Creating a livable environment through transit not only improves the lives of those who need the additional transportation options, but opens up new economic opportunities for everyone in the community.

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Transit needs of Hispanic seniors *Continued from page 1*

Hispanics make Hispanic seniors a key transit-riding constituency. According to the 2010 Census, the Hispanic population in Kansas grew 59.4 percent from just over 188,000 to 300,000 over the last 10 years. Over one in 10 Kansans is now of Hispanic heritage.

In addition, as Baby Boomers grow older, the elderly population will rise significantly. Currently, approximately 13 percent of Kansans are above the age of 65. The U.S. Administration on Aging predicts that the elderly population in Kansas will rise 58 percent by 2030 making up over 20 percent of the state's population. The 2010 Census reports that over 10,000 Kansans are elderly Hispanics (over the age of 65), becoming a larger and more important constituency for transportation providers.

In the last ten years, the combined Hispanic population in the CPAAA's service area in Butler, Harvey, and Sedgwick counties is reported at nearly 71,000 individuals; and the Hispanic elderly population for these three counties has risen from approximately 1,500 in 2000 to nearly 2,500 in 2010. By 2020, it is estimated to be approximately 3,500; a target constituency to be addressed in the grant awarded to CPAAA. This article outlines a process that transportation providers can use to determine ways to reach and serve the elderly Hispanic transit market.

Seek stakeholder input

We say this a lot, but it bears repeating: the first thing transportation providers need to do in any planning effort is to get stakeholders involved. Obviously, the key group in this case is Hispanic seniors. However, there are many more stakeholders who ought to be involved as well. Think about the places that Hispanic seniors go either by transit or by other means. Remember, Hispanic seniors are not all that dissimilar from other American seniors; they require most of the same goods and services and are often on similar budgets. Of course, once you get local Hispanic seniors involved in the planning process, they will be able to help identify who these other stakeholders are.

In the meantime, however, you can make some reasonable assumptions.



Hispanic seniors are not all that dissimilar from other American seniors; they require most of the same goods and services and are often on similar budgets.

Specific to the Hispanic community may be social service agencies that provide service in Hispanic neighborhoods. These may be affiliated with a local Catholic parish or diocese. Perhaps the local parish priest could be a stakeholder or, at least, he could point you in the right direction to identify leaders in the Hispanic community.

More generally, think about the common needs of seniors. Seniors tend to visit doctors and hospitals more often than other age groups. Get hospital staff on board. Senior centers run by cities or private organizations are frequented by seniors looking to socialize over a meal or a game of cards. Do seniors get there on their own or does the center provide them transportation? Get the applicable staff on board.

If you can figure out where seniors are spending their time, you can figure out who to get involved. These persons know

the Hispanic senior community as well as anyone; after all, it's their job.

And, since your purpose is increasing mobility, get all the players in your local transit market involved. Powers, of the CPAAA, who is in charge of the Hispanic Elder Transportation Access grant there, has gotten local paratransit providers, Wichita Transit, and Derby Dash all on board.

Abel Perez, Executive Director of the Wichita Hispanic Chamber of Commerce representing 275 minority business owners in the Wichita area, echoes this advice. He recommends that you go out to the communities to find out what the needs are. In Wichita, the mayor held open forums with several of the minority communities in the city: Hispanic, Vietnamese, and African-American, held in the "barrio" (Hispanic neighborhood). More than 250 people attended, according to Perez. The forum included representation from most of the city departments, and included translators. He believes the open forum made a big difference in relationships with the City, opening the door to make calls when questions or other needs arise. He also recommended meeting with staffs of senior centers located in predominantly Hispanic communities such as LaFamilia Senior Center in Wichita as the community works to identify needed transportation services for Hispanic Elders (one of the key partners in this project). Perez also plans to reach out to CPAAA staff to serve on one of the Hispanic Chamber's panels to increase the dialogue between transportation service providers and the Hispanic community.

Mobility Manager Mary Handley of Delmarva Community Transit, serving four counties in rural Maryland, said her agency's breakthrough in meeting the needs of their Hispanic constituents came when they received funding to develop a Hispanic Outreach Program and hire a Hispanic Services Outreach Coordinator/Travel Trainer. The Coordinator is Spanish-speaking and has worked to build trust in the services offered by their agency. The role of their Outreach Coordinator is to meet with people where they are in the community—on job sites, in the community

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centers, or other locations, to find out about their mobility needs, inform them of services and, when needed, actually provide travel training to individuals to learn how to use transit services.

Health services are a frequent service destination for Delmarva's service, and some of the larger clinics may have someone on staff who is the case manager, or at least "point person," for Spanish-speaking riders and potential riders. These individuals have been great partners in ensuring that the mobility services are meeting the needs of the community. In addition, a priest at one of the Catholic churches in the Delmarva service area has been an important link to the community to promote dialogue about needed services, according to Handley.

In Wichita, Powers already has sought out a variety of organizations that play a significant role for Hispanics, the elderly, or both, as well as local planning organizations. In addition to the Wichita Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and LaFamilia Senior Center, she has worked with the American Red Cross, the Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Medical Service Bureau, Medical Transportation Management, the National Organization for Mexican American Rights, and local radio and television outlets.

Identify and prioritize barriers

Once you have found your stakeholders, you can begin to determine the barriers to the use of transit for Hispanic seniors in your community. While the Delmarva program was designed to specifically address mobility needs of migrant workers who are in the community and, in some cases, settling in the Delmarva service area, Handley believes that many of the same principles apply in developing services that address barriers associated with providing transit serving the Hispanic community. While this article cannot speak to the exact conditions in your specific location, there are certainly some common barriers that Hispanic seniors encounter in attempting to use transit services.

Language may be a barrier. Culturally, one obvious barrier to Hispanic seniors using transit is that they are more likely

Delmarva Community Transit Develops Hispanic Community Outreach Program

Delmarva Community Transit (DCT), a division of Delmarva Community Services, is the public transportation provider for Dorchester, Talbot, Kent, and Caroline counties in the state of Maryland. DCT has grown to provide bus service to the general public with over 60 vehicles in their fleet. Regular fixed routes circulate throughout the towns of Cambridge and Easton as well as to and through many municipalities in all four counties.

DCT works in conjunction with Queen Anne County Ride and Shore Transit. Their buses transport people to work, to shopping and to medical appointments, and in doing so helps keep the local economy strong. Public transportation allows individuals who might otherwise be isolated find independence. DCT provides many specialized transportation services for people who are elderly or disabled and others who meet criteria including door to door service, medical assistance transportation, and kidney dialysis transportation.

In two of the counties, many migrant workers are Hispanic. DCT now provides service to the Hispanic permanent and migrant populations and is developing new services, as well. Bus schedules for Maryland Shore Transit are already printed in Spanish, and the growing Hispanic population is part of the target population of DCT's One-Stop Call Center. The center was funded in part by a JARC/New Freedom grant from the Federal Transit Administration. The aim of the one-stop center is to provide better services for low-income persons, especially those with disabilities, older persons, and Hispanic residents. One of its prime program activities is ongoing outreach and marketing to people who have not known how to access transportation services. The staff includes a mobility manager, a travel trainer, a coordinator of volunteers, and an information and assistance worker who specifically works with older persons. All staff members focus on helping each person find transportation that best meets his or her preferences and needs.

Source: Adapted from *The Spirit of Rural Transit: Alive in Delmarva*. Profiles in Innovative Rural Transportation, CTAA.

to not understand English. Transportation providers serving significant Hispanic communities should consider translating signage and literature to reflect this need. Yet, according to the NCST, "limited literacy in both their native Spanish as well as English" necessitates solutions such as "the use of plain language and mostly oral presentations."

Perez believes that language is a major barrier; "It's common and a pretty big barrier in Wichita," he said. Currently, none of the public transit providers in the three-county area have information available in Spanish or provide targeted outreach to the Hispanic population, a barrier that this project plans to address.

Delmarva Community Services has

a two-pronged approach to help break down the language and cultural barriers. Drivers traditionally have participated in a fairly extensive sensitivity training program related to ethnicity, aging and disability. Some of the lessons learned in developing the Hispanic Outreach program are now being incorporated into the driver training program, according to Handley. To overcome some of the language barriers, both drivers and passengers are provided with "flip cards" with English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English transit survival phrases to help improve communication on the bus.

Cultural barriers. Hispanic populations tend to be isolated within their own communities or neighborhoods. This is not to say they are isolated in the sense

they live miles from anyone else but rather to say that they often live in a very contained and close-knit neighborhood which they do not frequently leave. This also means that there is often a stigma about accepting help from outside of one's family. Especially in Hispanic communities, the family is an even stronger nucleus than it is in some other ethnic groups. Meeting with individuals in their communities or at common destinations where groups come together is a good way to develop trust and learn more about mobility needs.

Economic barriers. Hispanic seniors also may be disproportionately economically disadvantaged. Combined with the stigma of accepting help from outside the family, this further isolates seniors in Hispanic communities. Being impoverished can be seen as shameful, especially by seniors who have worked hard to create a living for their families.

Physical barriers. Seniors who do not drive, choose not to drive, or who do not have access to a car may be more isolated with less access to critical services. This is especially true for Hispanic seniors. According to the NCST, nearly 40 percent of Hispanic seniors do not drive (only 16 percent of white seniors do not drive). Without access to transportation, Hispanic seniors may find it more difficult to keep medical appointments, to shop for groceries, and to remain socially active.

Once you have determined which of these barriers most limit mobility of Hispanic seniors in your community, you can begin a plan of attack. Decide how you want to prioritize your efforts. You might place a high priority on addressing

barriers you can most easily tear down. Or, you may decide to address those barriers which help you realize the largest increase in ridership or the best impact on the community. Seek input from your stakeholders to decide these next steps.

Handley believes that barriers were significantly addressed when the transit program became part of the agency's "one-stop center." At Delmarva, three programs are housed under one roof and function as an interdisciplinary team: senior services, community action providing services associated with low income such as housing and utility assistance, and transit services (See sidebar for more information about the one-stop center).

Strategies to increase mobility

In general, there are a few strategies that may help support transit use by seniors, in this case, Hispanic seniors:

- **Collect data and research the mobility needs of the population you wish to serve.** Use your stakeholders; they're fonts of first-hand information.
- **Coordinate local transportation.** Again, using your stakeholders, create lasting networks and collaboration between social service agencies, churches, senior centers, local area agencies on aging, etc.
- **Just like the CPAAA, work to identify additional resources for support services** such as an outreach coordinator, mobility manager, travel trainer, or others based on your community's particular needs to support mobility.

• **Get information to those who need it most.** All the planning in the world is moot unless you reach the people you are trying to serve. This is not only important with respect to actual services but also crucial in the planning process itself. Your planning efforts should always seek to reach as many affected persons as possible. You can do this only by actively seeking out those persons. They're not likely to come to you on their own.

Following these steps benefits Hispanic seniors in your community, it benefits your community as a whole, and it benefits your transportation service.

With the NCST grant, the CPAAA is only creating a plan. As Powers explains, it will be "up to the community to implement these solutions." Perez expressed concern that as resources in the City become more constrained—and meetings are being held right now to discuss potential cuts in service—many Hispanics, particularly Hispanic seniors, may be hurt. Lack of Saturday service, or longer distances to bus stops are expected to negatively impact older individuals who may never have driven or who do not have access to a car, according to Perez.

Even when resources are short, if Hispanic seniors are a key constituency in your community, as they are in much of Kansas, you should incorporate more targeted outreach into your planning efforts. Take steps to reduce barriers to improve your information gathering and create service plans that are inclusive of the needs in your community.

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Passenger-Van Safety Strategies You Should Know

By Anne Lowder

NHTSA re-issues consumer warning on rollover dangers.

Frequently 10, 12 and 15 passenger vans are used to transport passengers. What may not be known about these vans is their propensity to roll over. In 2007 there were 45 fatalities in 15-passenger vans that rolled over, 73 percent more than in 2006. Therefore, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has reissued a consumer advisory warning, (see our article in the *Kansas Trans Reporter* January 2004) first announced by NHTSA in 2002 and again in 2004, 2005 and late 2010. The advisory warning comes after the studies (completed and still ongoing) of crash data compiled from the NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

Crashes involving 10, 12 and 15 passenger vans sparked public concern that prompted these safety studies and in some cases legislation or policies that prohibit or limit the use of these vehicles. [For example, the Kansas Department of Transportation no longer provides specifications for straight van body types to Section 5311 agencies.] The safety studies for vans looked at gross vehicle rate, road conditions, to what extent operators were aware of the recommended tire pressures for their vehicles, the frequency and the means they used to measure tire pressure and how much the tire pressure differed from the manufacturer's recommendations. The results from the studies prompted three primary recommendations: 1) proper tire maintenance, 2) drivers training and 3) passenger and driver seat-belt use.

Check those tires—and often

Proper maintenance of 10, 12 and 15 passenger vans tires (including the spare tire) is necessary to reduce rollover probability. Results from studies showed that:

- Tire pressure and wear are critical factors in the cause of rollovers of 10, 12 and 15 passenger vans.
- Seventy-four percent of 15 passenger vans studied in the Tire Pressure Special Study (2001 and 2003) had a least one tire inflated incorrectly (either over or under inflated) by 25 percent or more than normal standards for these vehicles.

- Study participants were not aware of where to find the recommended tire pressure for their vehicles.

Good tire care improves vehicle handling as well as fuel efficiency and tire life. Proper tire inflation can prevent such events as tread separations and tire blowouts which may cause loss of control of a vehicle and result in a rollover.

Proper tire inflation guidelines

Generally, tires should *not* be inflated to the pressure recommendation located on the sidewall of the tire (this is the maximum pressure). Rather, use the vehicle manufacturers' recommended tire pressure for the *vehicle*. A vehicle's tire pressure recommendation is located on a

Because tire materials degrade over time, NHTSA cautions against using a spare tire as a permanent replacement.

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decal just inside the driver's door or in the vehicle owners' handbook.

Dangers of low tire inflation. A low tire increases the tire wall pliability and thus it will "roll" under the wheel, resulting in only half of the tire being in contact with the road. This increases the probability of loss of control of a vehicle in an emergency maneuver such as stopping (it increases stopping distances) and also increases the chance of hydroplaning on wet surfaces.

Further, with low tire pressure (due to the side wall being more pliable) the tire will absorb more of the road conditions from normal driving (such as potholes or a hard elevation in the road). Under-inflation can lead to tire overheating, side wall blow-outs, premature tread wear, and tread separation all of which increase the propensity of a roll over in a 10, 12, and 15 passenger vans.

Dangers of high tire inflation. High tire pressures have two downsides: The sacrifice in comfort; and the increased chance of a puncture when driving over sharp objects, such as on a newly maintained gravel road. High tire pressures are more inclined to keep its shape during any encounter, and will thus transmit the forces of the road to the suspension, rather than being damaged itself.

Experienced drivers wanted

Drivers should be trained to be aware of the special handling characteristics in 10, 12 and 15 passenger vans.

Don't carry to capacity. Research (Garrott and Subramanian) has shown that when there are ten or more people in a 15 passenger van, there is a greater risk for a rollover. According to their research, from 1997 to 2006 about 50 percent of the fatalities in these vans occurred in heavily loaded (10+ occupants) vans that rolled over. Each person added to the van shifts the van's center of gravity. This is because as the van reaches maximum gross vehicle weight (GVW), the center of gravity moves rearward and upward. The result of the extra weight created by passengers decreases the van's stability and increases the potential for a rollover and the possibility that a driver will lose control of the vehicle.

Handle with care. Garrott and Subramanian's study also showed that higher speeds and curved road geometry were associated with rollovers.

All combined, these vans are harder to control. Driver experience helps in the prevention of rollovers or crashes in 10, 12 and 15 passenger vans. More experienced drivers recognize the load capacity and the need to compensate with slower speeds and adjusted steering techniques as well as a performing pre-trip vehicle and tire inspections.

Mandatory seat belt use

Sadly, seat-belt use among passengers in these vans is significantly lower as compared to other types of passenger vehicles. The FARS data showed that 80 percent of the 1,699 persons killed in crashes of 15 passenger vans between 1990 and 2009 were due to unbelted occupants and ¼ of those were the drivers! One answer to lowering the fatality rate is

Helpful Tips for Driving a 15 Passenger Van:

- The driver should be licensed, fully trained and experienced in operating a 15-passenger van.
- Rest. Fatigue affects driving and response time.
- Inspect the vehicle before every trip. Especially make sure that tires are the proper size for the vehicle, are inflated to the manufacturer's recommendation and check for signs of wear. Correct tire size and inflation pressure information can be found in the owner's manual.
- The vehicle should never be overloaded (exceed the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating). Research shows overloading not only increases rollover risk but makes the vehicle more unstable in any handling maneuvers.
- Ensure passengers are buckled up for every trip.
- Many pressure gauges available at fuel stations have been de-calibrated by manhandling and the effect of time, and it is for this reason that vehicle owners should keep a personal pressure gauge with them to validate the correct tire pressure.



Source: Consumer Advisory: NHTSA Reissues 15-Passenger Van Safety Caution, NHTSA, October 2010.

an agency mandatory seat-belt use policy for all occupants, including the driver, and strict enforcement of that policy.

Conclusion

Prevention is the answer for lowering the rate of crashes and fatalities involving 10, 12 and 15 passenger vehicles. The National Highway Transportation Safety administration recommends injury prevention countermeasures to improve van safety including improved driver training, increased awareness about the need for van tire maintenance and proper inflation during pre-trip inspections, and required seat-belt usage for all occupants—including the driver.

Healthy Habits Reduce Stress and Fatigue

By Matthew Barnett

Stress happens. It happens to office staff and to those who work in the shop or who drive transit vehicles. Stressful situations can initiate our “fight or flight” instinct. This reaction, also known as the “stress response,” occurs when we sense danger. This heightened state is our body’s way of protecting us.

But stress isn’t all bad. It can help you stay focused, energetic, and alert.

In extenuating circumstances, stress can help save your or another’s life. It can give you that extra energy to finish a job that needs done. When it builds up, though, stress goes from helpful to problematic. Stress can materialize, especially if job requirements surpass the capabilities or resources of a worker.

Fatigue is one of the negative consequences of stress. Fatigue on the job is never helpful. This article will provide some tips to handle stress and fatigue and ways to avoid having them in the first place.

Stress and fatigue symptoms

Common symptoms of stress include headache, sleep disturbance, upset stomach, difficulty concentrating, low morale, and poor personal interactions. These symptoms can affect health, moods, productivity, and overall quality of life.

When stress takes over, or you don’t get enough sleep, you can fall victim to fatigue. Symptoms can include loss of

motivation, weakness, dizziness, and exhaustion. Fatigue could indicate more serious physical or psychological health issues. Severe fatigue can even cause you to pass out.

Fatigue can happen to any one of us. Here are some helpful tips to use at the workplace to help keep you on your toes and your head off your desk.

Ways to reduce stress and fatigue

It’s true that we all handle stress differently, but learning how to manage

stress is key to job performance, staying safe, and keeping mentally and physically fit. Because there is no one way to best reduce stress for everyone, here are some helpful tips to consider.

The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) recommends thinking over the four *A*s: *avoid*, *alter*, *accept*, or *adapt*. One of the four *A*s might work better than another in a given situation, or a combination might work best.

For example, if religion and politics are hot buttons for you, *avoid* talking with co-workers about them. If you tend to argue the same subject with the same people, *avoid* bringing it up, or excuse yourself when it does come up.

Some situations require you to *alter* or adjust your attitude and *adapt* to a new routine. An example would be learning a new (and initially daunting) computer program adopted by your agency.

Some situations are unavoidable, such as serious illness or death of a loved one. It’s best to cope with this

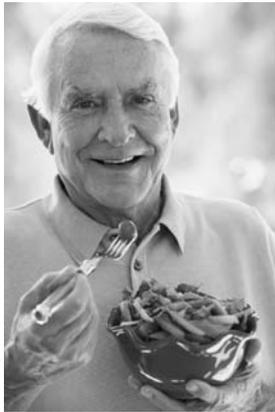
stress by *accepting* the way things are, and adapting. A simple change in attitude can work wonders. It’s better to adapt to a situation you can’t change than to try to fight a losing battle. In these situations you may feel you’ve lost control; changing your expectations may help you to feel more calm and in control of the aspects you can control.

To relieve stress at work, listen to your doctor and try exercising. Exercise can reduce susceptibility to illnesses, speed up your metabolism, increase blood flow, and increase oxygen to your brain. Do a mix of aerobic exercise and stretching. Stretching will help keep you from feeling stiff after sitting for long stretches of time.

The website <http://www.fitness.gov> explains that individuals who engage in near-daily physical activity of 30 minutes or greater will experience fewer days of sickness with the common cold. The Web site also argues that exercise and a well balanced diet can help your body avoid chronic fatigue. Moderate physical activity will improve physical and mental health.

Benefits to you and your agency

We all fall victim to stress at one time or another. Maintaining healthy habits will not only help keep stress more manageable and increase morale at the workplace, but it may also increase productivity. Getting enough sleep, eating healthy, and exercising and stretching are all positive ways to keep you going at work. These changes are not always easy to make, but committing to a plan of action will help you. For more information on healthy habits, check out the links in the sources below.



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Free Tool Displays Transit-Oriented Census Data

By Erik Berg and Nate Vander Broek

Transit managers have a free and powerful tool for planning new service in their areas. OnTheMap is a newly-updated, free Web-based tool by the US Census bringing together the vast data resources of the US Census Bureau with the spatial capabilities of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Released as an economic data tool, OnTheMap creates maps and reports for geographic areas, from national data to congressional districts to individual cities and towns. These maps and data can be used by Kansas transit managers and planners to analyze commuting patterns

and economic factors that would require transit services.

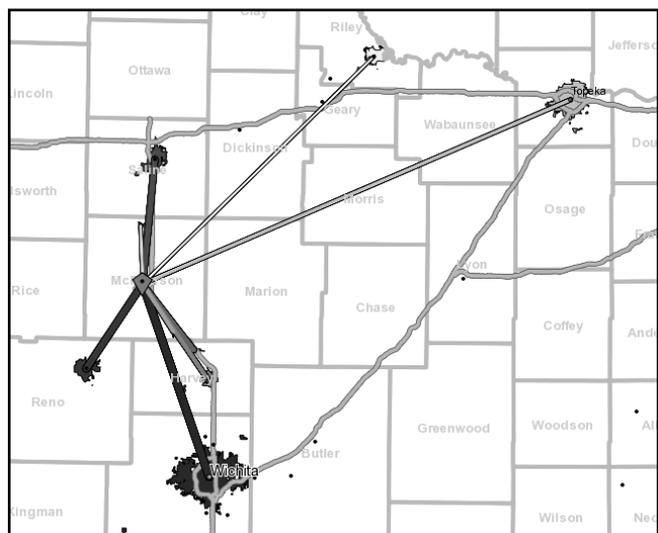
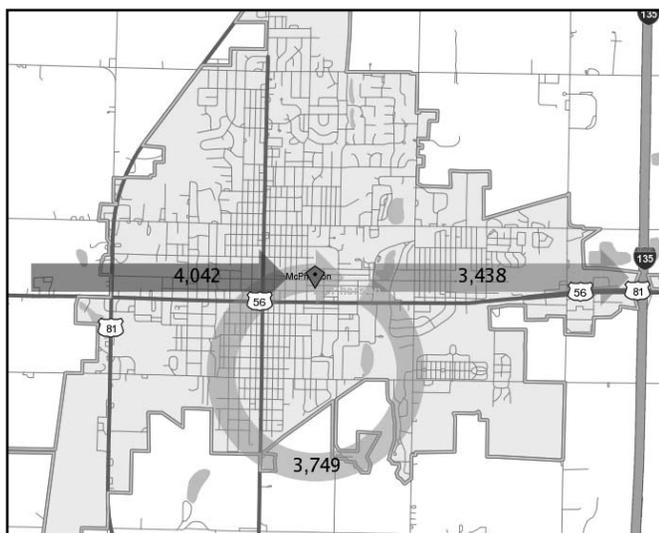
Bringing statistics and geography together

OnTheMap is a product of the US Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) section. Offered as a subscription-free data tool and accessible to any transit manager or planner with Internet service, it can display economic and transportation data as reports complete with graphic maps.

As with all GIS, data is displayed spatially in layers that can be switched

on or off over a base map. Regional layers include states, congressional districts, and metropolitan/micropolitan/Combined Statistical Areas. Local layers feature counties, county subdivisions, census tracts and block groups, and postal codes. Transportation layers available include road classes from interstate to local, railroads and stations, airports, and Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs). Other layers relating to educational institutions, military installations, and recreational destinations are also available.

continued on next page



Above left, OnTheMap provides data for the number of commuters coming into and out of a designated location. In this example for McPherson, KS using data from 2009, the maps shows that 4,042 people commute to McPherson for employment, 3,749 people live and work in McPherson, and 3,438 people live in McPherson but work elsewhere. **Above right,** OnTheMap provides data for the top commuter destinations from a designated area. In this 2009 example of residents of McPherson, KS, 6.1 percent commute to Wichita, 4.6 percent commute to Hutchinson and 3 percent commute to Salina.

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- Kansas Department of Labor, <http://www.dol.ks.gov>.

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Send e-mail messages to Pat Weaver at weaver@ku.edu or Lisa Harris at LHarris@ku.edu. Visit our website at <http://www.ksrtap.org>

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Other Services

In addition to publishing the *Kansas TransReporter*, Kansas RTAP 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
- Website
- E-mail discussion group

OnTheMap *Continued from page 13*

A simple process for analyzing commuting patterns

OnTheMap is designed for ease of use, and can perform several types of analysis for transit planners. It may help answer some scenario questions, such as:

- Where do young workers live who are employed in a specific geographic area?
- Where are the workplace destinations for workers living in a particular community or neighborhood?
- How do specific employment areas compare in terms of worker origin patterns, worker ages, monthly earnings, and industry-sector employment? How are these areas changing over time and among different demographics?
- What percentage of low-wage workers live and work within a city, versus those who commute to a nearby city?
- How many potential customers/employees live or work near a particular work site?

Example of using OnTheMap

To demonstrate, let's research the commuting pattern for McPherson, KS, with a population of 13,232. Follow along with these simple steps:

- Open a Web browser and navigate to <http://lehdmap.did.census.gov/>.
- Once the OnTheMap application has loaded, type "McPherson, KS" in the search text box on the left side of the screen and click the "Search" button.
- On the results page, click on McPherson, KS under the Places category. After you click on McPherson, KS, the application will load a base map of this location. On top of the base map is a box with information about McPherson, KS, such as the selection area and census blocks.
- Click on the "Perform Analysis on Selection Area" link found on that box. On the new Analysis Settings box, select the "Inflow/Outflow" radio button from the Analysis section. Check "2009" from the Year section. And finally, select the "All Jobs" radio button under the Job Type section. Click the "Go!" button.

The application will bring you back to your base map with the results displayed. The tool tells us that 3,749 people are employed and live in McPherson, 4,042

people are employed in McPherson but live elsewhere, and 3,438 people live in McPherson but work elsewhere.

If we want to know where the residents of McPherson are commuting for their employment, we can do that as well. Simply click on the "Change Settings" link on the Results tab, select "Home" from the Home/Work Area tab, select "Destination" from the Analysis Tab, keep the year as 2009, and keep job type as "All Jobs." Click the "Go!" button.

The results show that 6.1 percent of McPherson's residents commute to Wichita, 4.6 percent commute to Hutchinson and 3 percent commute to Salina. From here, you can export a detailed report to PDF or Excel.

If you want to change the settings of this search again, simply click on the "Change Settings" link at the bottom of the Results tab.

To see an animated view of how this data has changed over time, select the "Change Settings" link, select multiple years from the Analysis Settings box and then hit the "Go!" button. When you're back on the base map page, click the "Animate Overlays" link in the Results Tab. This will loop through the data for all the years you selected, making it easy to see trends or changes throughout the years.

For the complete list of tutorials, instructions and general information about OnTheMap, go to <http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/datatools/onthemap.html>.

Transit planning with OnTheMap

As you can see, OnTheMap is a new and exciting tool available to transit managers and planners. With the data resources of the US Census, in partnership with state data providers, OnTheMap offers managers and planners the chance to view new data spatially as well as statistically, and to download it in formats that will be most useful to them. With its simple, easy-to-use format and Web-based availability, OnTheMap also offers rural transit managers the chance to use GIS for transit planning without having to purchase expensive software packages. ●

Transit Resources

Crossing Great Divides: A Guide to Elder Mobility Resources and Solutions in Indian Country

This document highlights the importance of transportation for American Indian elders and identifies innovative approaches and resources to improve transportation services for elders living on reservations or other Indian lands throughout the United States. 44 pages. 2011. http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/Crossing_Great_Divides.pdf?docID=144635

National RTAP's Newly Revised Emergency Procedures for Rural Transit Drivers Training Module

The Emergency Procedures module offers the most current training on preparedness for hazards and threats that transit operators may encounter. The free module contains a Learner's Guide, a Self-paced eLearning Course Disc, an Instructor's Guide, a disc with videos and a trainer's PowerPoint presentation. Email info@nationalrtap.org or call 888-589-6821 to order.

Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide. 2005. AARP Public Policy Institute. A guide to help communities identify areas where they can direct their energies toward making their community more livable for themselves and others. 162 pages. http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311_communities.pdf

Fact Sheet: How the Travel Patterns of Older Adults Are Changing: Highlights from the 2009 National Household Travel Survey. 2011. This fact sheet provides information about how older adults are choosing public transportation for a greater share of their trips, reversing a trend seen in previous decades. AARP Public Policy Institute. 7 pages. <http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/fs218-transportation.pdf>

One Call-One Click Toolkit. This toolkit provides information for communities interested in working together—whether locally, regionally or statewide—to develop a one-call or one-click service for transportation. Communities can choose to start small, follow one of a number of different models, and develop technologically and functionally from information and referral to reservations, dispatching, and more. Community Transportation Association of America. <http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=2428&z=101>

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The purposes of the RTAP 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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Calendar

Rural Transit Training and Conferences

Defensive Driving and Emergency Response**

July 21 in Salina
Aug 9 in Emporia
September 21 in Chanute
September 27 in Pratt
October 4 in Garden City
October 5 in Great Bend
October 12 in Atchison
October 13 in Manhattan
October 20 in Olathe
November 16 in McPherson

Advanced Mobility Securement**

July 19 in Norton
September 20 in Independence
September 28 in Newton
November 15 in Oakley

Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance Skills**

July 20 in Hays
October 26 in Ottawa

Transit Management in a Diverse Working Environment: "Bridging Generational Differences in Kansas Transit Agencies"

August 22 in Manhattan, KS.
Register at <http://www.kstransit.org> or call 785-235-8825. More information from Pat Weaver at weaver@ku.edu.

Kansas Public Transit Association Annual Meeting

August 22-24 in Manhattan, KS.
Register at <http://www.kstransit.org> or call Tuck Duncan at 785-235-8825 for a printed registration form or more information.

ADA, Paratransit and Community Mobility Workshop

August 8-10, 2011 in Tulsa, OK.
Sponsored by South West Transit Association (SWTA). To register visit <http://www.swta.org/blog/?p=1060>. For more information contact Kristen Joyner at kjoyner@swta.org.

2011 Transit Marketing Workshop and Spotlight Awards

September 11-13, 2011 in Albuquerque, NM.
To register visit <http://www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=974106>. For more information contact Kristen Joyner at kjoyner@swta.org.

American Public Transportation Association Annual Meeting & EXPO.

October 2-5, 2011 in New Orleans, LA.
To register, visit <http://www.apta.com/mc/annual/Pages/default.aspx>.

**To register for a Kansas RTAP workshop, go to <http://www.kstrap.org>. Click on "Register to attend." Questions? Contact Kristin Kelly at (785) 864-2594 or kbkelly@ku.edu.