



# Kansas Trans Reporter

January 2003

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

## 511 and the Transit Connection

by Ira Allen

By now most people connected with transportation in Kansas know the State is expected to unveil its 511 program sometime in the coming several months. What may be less clear is what that means, exactly, and what role transit can play. Barbara Blue, ATIS (Advanced Traveler Information System) Coordinator for KDOT, has promised an interview with lots of details for our next issue, by

which time 511 will be up and running in Kansas. Before then, however, you might find it useful to know how a few other states are integrating transit information into their 511 services. Here's a little background.



### What is 511?

511 is the national traveler information telephone number designated by the FCC (Federal

Communications

Commission) in 2000. The idea is that each state will set up an ATIS to coordinate the efforts of various local transportation and communi-

*Go to next page*

## Putting Volunteers Behind the Wheel

by Erika Stanley

Volunteers can bring a breath of fresh air to your driving services. They can supplement your existing paid drivers, save costs, and add diversity to your agency. Despite these advantages, there are, as with most things, a few disadvantages to using volunteers. Below are some issues to consider before you put volunteers behind the wheel.

### Costs

The first word that comes to mind when one thinks of volunteers is

*Go to page 3*

## Inside:

511, continued, Page 2

Volunteer drivers, continued, Page 3

Tips for taking medications Page 4



What does it take to be a leader? Page 5

State your mission: A how-to article Page 8



Creating effective newspaper ads and posters Page 9



Dealing with tailgaters Page 11

Do you have a plan for computer tech support? Page 12



New KDOT Drug and Alcohol Testing Coordinator Page 14

Calendar Page 14

Resources Page 15



## 511 and transit,

*continued from page 1*

cations organizations (including transit agencies). Eventually you will be able to call 511 in any state in the country and find out about road conditions or check bus schedules. Some states are taking it a step further, looking to coordinate with the National Park Service and state or local councils on tourism. At the very least, however, each state will provide a core information set, potentially containing highway information and information on public transportation, including transit services. The FCC has left most implementation issues and schedules to state and local agencies, so the range of services available in each state is likely to vary.

### The Utah story

So what are other states doing? First we'll go to the shores of the Great Salt Lake to take a look at the relationship between 511 and the Utah Transit Authority (UTA). UTA is one of only three transit agencies in Utah, and the first to be integrated into 511 services. This integration stemmed in large part from the need to provide the public with transit information during the Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics. UTA transit schedules are available through 511. That effort was, and continues to be, resoundingly successful.

For callers who need some extra help using 511, the system rolls over to UTA's switchboard, allowing callers to speak with a UTA representative. This aspect of 511 services has the potential to become expensive for the Utah Department of Transportation, as UDOT pays the charges for every call that is rolled over to UTA (unlike states such as Arizona, where the costs for this service are passed along to the transit agency.

If you'd like to see how it works, either call 1-866-511-UTAH or hop in your car, drive to Utah, and dial 511. I tried it out myself, and was impressed by how easy it was to use. Utah's coordination with transit will not be limited to UTA.

About the other two transit districts in the state, Bryan Chamberlain, 511 Coordinator for UDOT, says, "We're very anxious to get them on there." He anticipates some challenges, but no major issues.

### Minnesota's experience

From Utah, we look to Minnesota, another forerunner in the 511 game. Minnesota is more like Kansas in that there are a fairly large number of transit providers in the state.

Ginny Crowson, Traveler Information Program Manager for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), says, "I've been talking to our Office of Transit at MnDOT about how we can incorporate our 67 transit providers across the state."

Crowson says her office is "debating" whether to add on-call transfer, which could be very expensive when applied to transit agencies across the state. One option is to pass that expense along to the transit agencies, if they are willing or able to shoulder it.

Once all Minnesota transit is included, Crowson says her office will probably ask the transit agencies if they'll help market 511, but "it won't be a prerequisite." Currently Metro Transit does not market 511, as they have a lot of equity invested in their own hotline. Crowson notes, however, that marketing 511 as a source for information on transit really could be "really useful" for some of the smaller agencies.

### 511's future in Kansas

As Kansas moves toward implementation of a 511 traveler information system, it will be important for transit agencies to provide input on what riders need to know and on how agencies can help provide informa-

**It will take a cooperative effort by all agencies if a usable 511 service is to be delivered to the traveling public in Kansas.**

Currently, the 511 transit menu is limited to information for Metro Transit, the provider for the Twin Cities area, offering general information as well as a phone relay to transfer callers directly to Metro Transit. However, Crowson is optimistic about the future. She envisions a transit menu that will ask the user which city or region they want information on, then provide a recorded message about what transit services operate in each area, along with a contact number.

tion for the system. Two potential mechanisms for providing that input are through the Kansas Coordinated Transit District Council or through the Kansas Public Transit Association. It will take a cooperative effort by all agencies if a usable 511 service is to be delivered to the traveling public in Kansas. ▲

## Volunteer drivers, continued from page 1

“free.” However, there are costs associated with implementing a volunteer driver program. Although a substantial amount of money will be saved in terms of salary and benefits

homemakers, or individuals whose employers allow them to volunteer in the community on company time. Before you create a volunteer program you should investigate whether or not your community has a strong volunteer base. This may entail contacting other non-profit agencies or community centers, such as the pub-

need time off for vacation or a doctor’s appointment. This kind of arrangement can be made in advance and will benefit your paid drivers as well as the volunteers.

Your program should include a volunteer recognition program to reward the volunteers for their time and energy. This is important



Volunteers must feel that they make a difference and are appreciated. Take time to give them special recognition.

for the volunteer, there will be overhead costs. These may include the cost of recruitment, training, volunteer liability insurance, and mileage reimbursement if the volunteer uses his/her own vehicle.

According to the Community Transportation Association of America, the cost for one paid driver and one purchased vehicle is over \$50,000 per year. Alternatively, they found the costs associated with ten volunteers using their own vehicles was approximately \$28,000 per year. The savings are substantial.

### Recruitment

The key to a successful volunteer program is the ability to recruit qualified and reliable people. Unfortunately, this is not easy. Due to the high turnover rate among volunteers, the recruitment process may be constant. However there are ways to make the most out of your recruitment efforts.

Several types of people typically volunteer their time to the community. They may be retirees, students,

public library, to see whether or not their efforts to recruit volunteers have been successful. If a college

is nearby, this may be a great resource, as some students volunteer to fulfill academic requirements or belong to clubs, fraternities, and sororities that do community service.

When you are ready to begin recruitment, get the word out by posting flyers, creating public service announcements, and placing ads in newspapers.

### Retention

Once you have recruited volunteers for your program, getting them to stay will be another challenge. One reason people volunteer is for a sense of personal satisfaction. If that satisfaction is lacking, they have no reason to stay. This could spell double-trouble because they may spread the word to potential volunteers if their experience is not a positive one.

Be careful not to take advantage of unpaid volunteers by overworking them. You may find that volunteers are best suited to supplementing the work of paid drivers. For example, volunteers can fill in for drivers who

because volunteers must feel that they are making a difference and are appreciated. Otherwise, their time and energy will seem wasted. Your agency may decide to host a lunch or dinner for the volunteers. This will allow the volunteers to socialize with other members of the agency while also receiving recognition. You can also reward volunteers by designating a Volunteer-of-the-Month award or handing out plaques of appreciation at a monthly meeting.

A volunteer program can offer many advantages to a transit agency. Volunteers can provide solutions to budget constraints and create interaction between diverse individuals in the community. For more information about volunteer driver programs contact the National Transit Resource Center at (800) 527-8279.

### Source

“Volunteers in Transportation—Some Issues to Consider,” *Community Transportation Association of America Technical Assistance Brief No. 1*, 2001. ▲

# Ten Tips for Safety-Sensitive Staff Who Must Take Medications



**1** *Be cautious.* All medications, whether prescription (Rx) or over-the-counter (OTC), have the potential to be dangerous. Use medications cautiously and always in accordance with your physician's directions. Do not perform any safety-sensitive function if you are impaired by any medication. This caution should not be construed, however, to require any FTA-covered employee to delay or deny any necessary medical treatment.

**2** *Inform your prescribing physician, dentist or other medical professional.* Before accepting a prescription, inform the prescriber of your safety-sensitive position (if applicable) and explain your job duties. Do not assume he/she will remember your explanation from one visit to the next. Remind him/her of any other medications you are taking, and make sure to include those medications prescribed by other physicians. Make sure the physician has your complete medical history. Ask if you will be able to perform your duties safely on these medications. If not, ask if there are alternatives. Follow

your employer's policy and procedures for documenting the physician's assessment and release-to-work statement, if applicable.

**3** *Solicit information from your pharmacist.* Anytime you need additional information about an Rx or OTC, ask your pharmacist. A pharmacist will be very knowledgeable about the medication ingredients, side-effects, precautions, and drug interactions. Even if you have already obtained information from your prescribing physician, your pharmacist may be more

**An individual's reaction to a medication may vary with each treatment, the nature of the illness and other medications taken.**

knowledgeable and able to provide additional information and insight. Read warning labels and side-effects delineated on information summaries provided with Rx and OTCs.

**4** *Do not over-medicate.* Always follow the prescription directly as written. Never increase the dosage or frequency of use without explicit directions from your doctor. Not only is this practice medically risky, but increased doses of a medication may cause impairment when the same medication used as recommended may not.

**5** *Check the strength of the prescription.* Sometimes medicines are prescribed in different strengths (i.e., 500 vs 250 mg). Do not take a pill without first checking the dosage and comparing it to the prescription,

even if you have taken this medication before or it's a refill.

**6** *Never take someone else's medication.* Even if you have taken this medication or one like it before. This is illegal, dangerous, and it may cause impairment.

**7** *Always monitor your reaction.* Anytime you take any medication (Rx or OTC) watch for any side-effects which could impact your ability to perform your job safely, including drowsiness, dizziness, confusion, etc. Try to get used to the medication first before reporting for work. The same applies even if you have taken this medication in the past with no previous side-effects. An individual's reaction to a medication may vary with each treatment,

the nature of the illness and other medications taken.

**8** *Avoid Rx/OTCs that have been problems in the past.* If you have taken medications in the past that have caused negative side-effects, make a note of the active ingredients and avoid these in the future. Inform your prescribing physician of your problem with the previous medication and ask for alternative medications that do not have this ingredient. For OTCs, read the ingredient portion of the label and ask the pharmacist for assistance.

**9** *Ask for alternative treatments or dosage schedule.* If you notice side-effects that could pose a safety risk, consult your prescribing physician (or pharmacist in the case of an

Go to page 14



## What Does it Take to Be a Leader?

.....  
by Ira Allen  
.....

**D**ilbert cartoons notwithstanding, managers are, on the whole, capable of providing leadership for their employees. Most managers and staff would agree, however, that nearly every manager has some areas he or she can improve.

We interviewed three transit agency managers about their leadership styles. Bob Bourne runs the Ames, Iowa-based CY-RIDE. Linda Yaeger manages the OATS transit service, covering most of Missouri. A third source, Peter Schauer, is a leadership and management consultant specializing in rural and small urban transit agency management for more than 20 years. His previous experience includes managing a transit agency in Missouri.

Each of the three people we interviewed brings excellent leadership skills to the table, and kindly agreed to give some of their valuable time to discuss leadership principles and how best to apply them in a transit setting.

### What is leadership?

Each person we spoke with focused on different aspects of leadership, but all three agreed on some basic principles.

Peter Schauer uses his hand to map out the principles he considers most important. The thumb stands for vision, because "it's the thumb that really makes the hand useful." Similarly, without vision, he

explained, "You're not able to function at a higher level."

After vision, said Schauer, comes imagination and curiosity, on the index finger. The middle finger represents honesty and fair play, "so you don't flip anyone off," he joked.

Courage, loyalty, stamina, and strength all center on the ring finger, and the pinkie symbolizes humor and

we'd really have to wonder about their relationship with themselves."

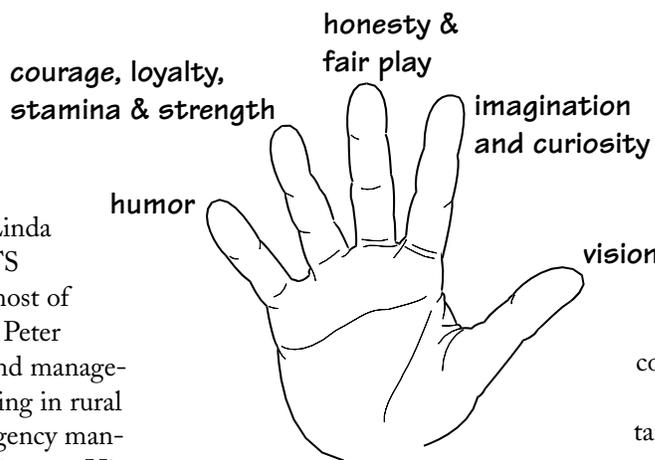
Although it sounds almost corny, it is a generally accepted truth that you must know and accept yourself in order to know and accept others. And you must know and accept others in order to lead them.

Linda Yaeger stressed the importance of honesty and integrity in all that you do. Straightforwardness, she said, is an essential part of her management style and her company's vision, along with a participatory style of management. OATS communicates their code of ethics, which is staff-developed and board-approved, to every new employee. Each employee also has the right to bring questions, concerns, and issues to management.

Yaeger emphasizes the importance of honesty in leadership. She said, "Always be honest. There's an honest answer to every question posed." That's true even if it's just, "I wish I could give you an answer to that right now, but I can't."

Yaeger also highlighted the importance of letting people know how much their efforts are appreciated, although she expressed regret that this is not yet her forte. Finally, she noted that it is important for a leader to empower their employees by "delegating jobs and letting your people do the jobs they're told to do."

CY-RIDE's Bob Bourne emphasized three leadership principles as being particularly vital: honesty, integrity, and empathy. He described empathy as anticipating the problems someone might encounter in their job. Empathic leaders "feel that when



*Peter Schauer uses a hand to map out the characteristics he considers the most important in leaders.*

humility. This last is particularly important, because "You're going to have losses and you're not going to be able to rationalize all your losses," he said. "You're going to have to laugh some of them off."

When asked to respond to the statement: "Effective leadership is all about effective personal relationships," Schauer said, "Yeah, I agree with that, but you can't overlook the relationship with yourself. I think if we looked at these Enron executives,

*Go to next page*

## Transit leadership, continued from page 5

the system fails it's not the fault of the driver; they just want to correct the problem," said Bourne.

To help build empathy and respect for employees, CY-RIDE managers must attain a reasonable proficiency at agency jobs, including

◆ *When you get feedback, you have to use it and you have to be honest... you have to address the issue.*

dispatching and driving buses. This allows managers to go in and help as second or third dispatchers when phones are ringing off the hook.

Another concept Bourne thinks is overlooked "in a lot of places" is keeping people busy without overwhelming them. Recognizing the potential for overload is a part of practicing empathy, and is vital to effective personal relations.

### Build trust

How do you create a climate where employees feel comfortable providing feedback? Bourne and Yaeger both agreed that it's "very difficult." However, they both went on to describe specific and effective methods for accomplishing that objective, as did Schauer.

Bourne said, "When you do get the feedback, you have to use it and you have to be honest...you have to address the issue." However, he noted, "That doesn't mean you have to do everything they want."

Bourne explained CY-RIDE's broad-ranging system of encouraging communication between managers and their staff. Periodic face-to-face discussions between managers and a half dozen or so long-term drivers (each with two or more years tenure at the company) are one component

of this system. Participants each bring forward two discussion topics within each of three categories (maintenance, operations, and policy).

In the course of conversation, these topics are further divided between will do, won't do, and can't do. Will-do topics are discussed later in a larger group, including both long-term and short-term employees.

If a topic is a won't-do, the manager explains why, because staff sometimes invest a lot of emotion in the ideas they put forward, and it is important to recognize that—even when their ideas won't get used. Can't-do topics are those that are illegal, like changing the drug testing process (it's federally mandated), or unreasonably expensive and impractical, like building a light rail line between Wichita and Des Moines.

In addition to participating in these discussion groups, drivers are asked for feedback after their initial training process, which "gets them

◆ *Leaders must know and accept others—and themselves.*

thinking, 'Yeah, we can make process improvements,'" said Bourne. Feedback is also gathered during exit reviews. These are just a few examples of steps CY-RIDE takes to encourage openness and communication.

At OATS, Yaeger has an open-door policy. "Anytime anybody wants to stop by, I try to make time for them." She said that the way to create a climate of openness is to allow people to have access to you. She

also noted that employee feedback from exit interviews is "sometimes the most honest information you get, and we do follow up on that."

Schauer also underscored the importance of open communication, plus "no sarcasm or smart-aleck remarks, being sincerely interested in what others have to say, and not being interested in showing others how smart you are."

Every manager can take steps to improve communications with his or her subordinates. According to Schauer, the best thing you can do is cross-train yourself and drive a bus. "Managers need to learn every job in the organization and go to the front line," he said. "It's like this: If your agency has a machine shop, and you want to build communications with the shop, you make a commitment to work there for an hour or three once a week for several weeks."

Learning to drive a bus is important, but there are other steps you can take, such as hanging out with your employees on the job and making site-visits with them to see other bus systems. Both these actions foster a sense of community and unity within an organization, and the latter can also help you find new ways for doing the same old things.

Yaeger agreed that spending time with your staff is important. "My managers are friends," she said. "We have a very cohesive and energetic management team." Providing your staff with necessary information, asserted Yaeger, is another key to building trust.

Bourne said that two of the most important actions a manager can take to build a rapport with his or her staff are to lead by example and to respect your drivers. He said, "One of the things that distresses me a lot is talking with transit managers who don't respect the job of bus drivers."

Bourne gave this scenario for leading by example at CYRIDE: "If a blizzard comes, we make decisions while out there driving around, rather than from the comfort of our couches. We don't make drivers do anything that we can't do, but we do expect them to do what we can do."

### **Train, train, train**

Yaeger said, "Everyone at all levels should have appropriate job training. She said drivers need defensive driving and customer service training, among other things. Training not only improves job performance, but

◆ *Effective leadership is all about effective personal relationships.*

also lets employees know they are important to you; that you genuinely want to help them do their job better. For example, she said she uses the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Expo as a training ground for her managers "because there's such a wide variety of stuff available." To motivate employees to seek training, she offers a \$100 per month pay bonus for certification as a Certified Community Transportation Manager (CCTM),

◆ *The best thing you can do to build trust with your staff is to cross-train yourself and drive a bus.*

which can be done at the Expo.

As a direct result of Yaeger's attitude toward training, 70 percent of the managers at OATS, including herself, are CTAA CCTMs. This is no small thing when talking about an agency that services 87 of Missouri's counties and employs a number of managers. Although most transit agencies in Kansas operate on a

smaller scale, the principle remains valid. Managers, drivers, and dispatchers all need training.

### **Who's in charge here?**

When asked if effective leadership was restricted to management, Bob Bourne responded, "That's a hot button topic right now...everyone is leading someone else if you really get down to it."

The Operations Department CY-RIDE has 100 drivers, and it is inevitable that within that group some individuals will lead others. Bourne said, "We have a wide range of people working here, and some will naturally become leaders...what management has to do is monitor their behavior so they don't become destructive." That's because not all natural leaders will feel compelled to

◆ *Not all "natural leaders" among your staff will feel compelled to lead in the same direction the agency is trying to go. This can become a real problem.*

lead in the same direction the agency is trying to go. This can become a real problem in agencies where all the staff are overworked, managers included, and haggard supervisors may not notice rebellious attitudes before they cause serious trouble.

The safest approach as a manager is to keep an eye on the natural leaders and encourage them to use their influence for the good of the agency. As Bourne said, "For people who want the job and want to do it the way we want to do it, it works well." The flip side of that, however, is that now and then you'll get a bad apple, and they "gots to go."

### **Lead by example**

"One of the most interesting things I've learned is the difference between dominance and leadership," said Schauer. Many people intimidate or dominate others by dint of a forceful personality or presence. It is far preferable and more effective to inspire others to follow your example. Schauer believes this the essence of true leadership.

As we were finishing our conversation, Schauer highlighted once again the importance of working on yourself, saying, "If you feel alienated from your fellow man, you can't be part of a group; you can't lead and you can't follow."

So the groundwork for leadership rests in self-examination. Of course, once you're in touch and in harmony with yourself, you still can't

lead anybody if you're a hermit. Schauer referred to the Tom Peters concept, "management by nosing around," and concluded, "The worst thing you can do as a leader is just to lock yourself in your office."

Both Bourne and Yaeger agreed, underscoring the importance of taking the time to communicate with staff on both a personal and professional level.

In closing, Bourne mentioned, "I think there are a lot of good managers out there who are doing a lot of clever things. Overall I think [transit] management is improving from what it was, but it still has a long way to go." ▲



# State Your Mission

*a how-to article*

.....  
by Ira Allen  
.....

**A**lmost every agency has a mission statement. Frequently they are wrangled out in committee meetings, brought laboriously to form, set in ink for posterity, and promptly forgotten. Sure, it might appear on your agency's web page, and it's certainly somewhere in your files, but can you recite it? More important, does it move you? Does it reflect your agency's actual day-to-day activities and inspire growth and confidence, or is it just one more piece of paper?

This article should help you decide (if you don't already know) whether your mission statement is all it's cracked up to be. We'll also give you some tips on what can be done to rewrite it. Because your mission statement should *matter*; it not only says who you are to the world, it says who you are to you.

## How to write a bad mission statement

First, look at what your organization does in the most technical terms possible. Next, throw in a bunch of adjectives and descriptive terms like "high quality" and "efficient," and work in some obvious generalizations. Make sure you add some filler words like "therefore" and "thereby," and give an ultra-specific geographic reference or two. Finally put the whole ugly mess into the passive voice. You might end up with something like the one in the box at the top of this page. If that statement

looks hauntingly familiar, it may be time to consider updating your own mission statement.

A certain humility is necessary for assessing a mission statement. Although you may have taken part in writing it, you should still question its relevance. Here are a few points to consider in evaluating your current mission statement.

- Is it accurate? Do you still serve the same population? In the same area?
- Has your agency's focus shifted? Does the statement reflect or allow for that shift?
- Is it inspiring? Does your mission statement reenergize you with belief in what you are doing, or do you have trouble staying awake long enough to wade through it?
- Is it memorable? Do the words fade from your mind as your eyes pass over them, or do phrases linger in your mind?
- Is it too technical? Can the general population understand and identify with it? Can employees of your agency? Can you?

Answering these questions should be helpful in determining whether and/or how much remodeling your mission statement needs.

While we are speaking here of "good" and "bad" mission statements, this is of course a value judgement. If your mission statement still works wonderfully, by all means keep using it. Each agency must determine for itself what it actually wants from this particular management tool. However, if you feel that your mission statement no longer fits your agency, you may want to consider the following general guidelines.

Is your mission statement a snoozer like this one?

"The mission of XYZ Transit Agency is to provide high quality, efficient service to the population of Heretown in Prairiegrass County, utilizing fixed-route service to meet the demands of riders. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to coordinate with other agencies, thereby improving the mobility of the residents of Boondockville and greater Prairiegrass County. This should be accomplished in the most economical manner possible."

## A "good" mission statement puts first things first

Of course, no one sits down and tries to write something as awkward and heavy-handed as the above. Mission statements are frequently the result of committee action, which can be the least efficient way to accomplish anything. So if your agency is working with an awkward mission statement, don't feel ashamed. Unfortunately, groups of intelligent people working together seldom produce stirring and meaningful phrases.

The first thing to consider when revamping your mission statement is who should write it. Your best writer is usually a good candidate, but someone who feels deeply and strongly about the agency's mission also may do a good job. Have that person design a mission statement within some general guidelines, and then go over it together as a group.

Once discussion begins, keep it focused on the substance of the statement, rather than the structure and form. The group can often better determine what is important for the agency, but, once again, a single indi-

Go to page 10



## Getting the Word Out

by Erika Stanley



### Tips for effective newspaper ads:

- Never run an ad without a headline.
- Headlines containing news are very effective. The news can be the announcement of a new service or program.
- Short headlines with fewer than 10 words get the best readership.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs in the body copy. Avoid difficult words, jargon, and acronyms. The best advertisements are written in everyday language.
- Readers look first at the dominant visual image (illustration or photo) then the headline, then the copy. Make sure the illustrations and headline designs are easy to understand and tell as much of the story as possible.
- You will be competing with a lot of other information for a reader's attention, so be sure to keep your ads fresh and up to date.
- Be careful when using photographs for ads because they may not reproduce well in newsprint. Black and white glossy photos are the best.
- If using an electronic file, be sure any photograph has the minimum required dpi and the ad itself is in a file format the newspaper can use.

**A**re you looking for quick and inexpensive way to let the public know about your transit services? Consider print advertisements. Newspaper ads and posters can be very effective in spreading the word without draining your budget. Below are some guidelines to follow.

### Newspaper ads

Most cities and towns have a daily newspaper plus a weekly neighborhood, college, or shopper's newspaper. The costs for placing ads in the various newspapers vary significantly because they serve different markets. Daily newspapers are effective for conveying a single message to the entire area. Neighborhood newspapers will likely be more effective in advertising a specific service.

Text and graphics for the ad can be created using word-processing or

desktop publishing software. These types of software can also provide quality graphics and visual aesthetics for your ad. Contact the newspaper to see if the ad needs to be created using a specific software or format.

The advantages of daily newspaper ads include timeliness, good readership, and wide reach. Smaller and more localized newspapers provide advertising for targeted areas.

Newspaper advertising departments usually allow flexibility; sizes and formats of ads can be changed to accommodate various budgets. Each newspaper has different requirements for ad sizes, costs, and contracts.

### Posters

Posters and flyers are another good way to develop community relations, support, and awareness. A poster should not contain too much detail because the information will be lost

on the reader. A simplified schedule of arrivals and departures from popular routes (or a popular gathering place such as a local shopping mall or community center) is acceptable information to include.

Be careful not to make the poster too large, as some places may not allow it to be posted. Also, do not make the poster too small or else it may be overlooked. The finished poster size should be about 8-1/2 by 11 inches.

Consider the segment of the population you are trying to attract before designing your poster. A poster might target a specific group or be more general. In any case, the poster should include your agency's local phone number and logo. The style of the poster should also be consistent with other printed materials distributed by your agency. Keep

*Go to page 11*

## State your mission,

continued from page 8

vidual is more likely to come up with a strong and inspiring statement incorporating those values.

### The writing process

*For starters.* Now that you've been chosen to write the mission statement, what now? First, look at the mission statement you already have. What is wrong with it? What is right with it? How much of it can be recycled? Now look at the input you received from your Board and staff about what they feel the agency's mission is or should be. How do the two mesh? Do they mesh at all? If not, or if in doubt, don't feel compelled to cling to the old version. Transit is a continuously growing industry, and if your agency has moved on, your mission statement should reflect that.

Keep in mind that a mission statement is not the same as a vision statement. "A vision tends to be an intensely personal thing, often held by the founder or a small, tightly-knit group," while "Mission statements are formal tools of control... they can be used in place of the more personality-oriented vision," writes Thomas A. McLaughlin in *The NonProfit Times*.

*The Deli Principle.* As you are writing, remember the Deli Principle. Go to any deli and order a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on white bread. Chances are good that you'll get precisely what you want. Now go to the same deli and order pastrami and roast beef with swiss and provolone on a toasted sourdough roll, with lettuce, tomato, olives, cucumbers, mayo and a touch of German mustard. The person behind the counter is likely to ask you to repeat some part of your order, and even then there is no guarantee you will

get quite what you ordered or envisioned. This is because the more we human beings try to do at once, the lower our chances of achieving all these goals become.

Does this mean you should settle for less on your mission statement? Absolutely not! But you might do well to pattern your efforts on the simplicity of Pepsi's famous mission statement: "Beat Coke."

Although a transit agency is not a deli, you should still look for some unifying principles behind the various services and goals of your agency, and pare those down until you get to the the essence of why your agency exists. Now you have the basis for a mission statement.

*Style.* Avoid using lots of adjectives and adverbs. They are often unnecessary, and sometimes even a little ridiculous. After all, who is going to provide inefficient, poor-quality service to worsen the lives of transit riders in their community? So writing the opposite—that you will provide efficient, high-quality service to better the lives of transit riders in your community—is unnecessary. It's a given. The nature of what you wish to do, rather than how you wish to do it, should be the focus of your mission statement. If your focus shifts to describing how you will do things, and you start seeing a lot of words like 'enthusiastically' and 'high quality' in your writing, you are muddying the waters. Stop. Are all these words really needed?

Use the active voice in your writing. According to McLaughlin, the passive voice, in addition to being wishy-washy and boring to read, "subtly suggests passivity and reactive thinking. The cooling effect of the passive voice dilutes a mission statement's power."

A mission statement is a motivational tool. It should help you, your employees, your customers and the

general public remain aware of what your agency is really trying to do, of the larger purpose behind it all. So technical jargon is out, as are clichés.

Finally, be careful about geographic references. Your geographic boundaries could change, and you might want your mission statement to allow for that. Generally speaking, your mission statement should allow room for growth.

*The Business Card Test.* If you can't capture the thrust of your mission statement, from memory, on the back of a business card, it's probably time to go back and pare down some more. Better yet, if someone else can read your mission and then fit the gist of it on the back of a business card, you're probably ready to take it to the Board.

### An example from Kansas

The mission statement for the Paratransit Council at the Sedgwick County Department on Aging/Central Plains Area Agency on Aging is:

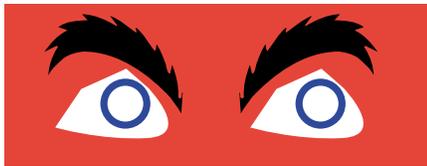
To facilitate the coordination of existing transportation services and explore potential resources to promote continued growth and leadership of transportation opportunities in Sedgwick, Harvey and Butler counties.

Valerhy Harmon, Director of Transportation and Physical Disabilities, wrote it with input from her staff.

"The transportation program's mission statement had to reflect the department's, in which the main issue is helping older adults maintain their independence and remain in the community. Add to that what is important in a transportation system—it's safe, accessible and affordable.

Go to page 13

## Watch Your Back! (and your Front)



By James C. Holland

The driver behind you is riding your bus's license plate a bit too close. What's a driver to do? You may think that the only way to teach this tailgater a lesson is to abruptly apply your brakes. Wrong answer. The point is not to teach anybody a lesson. The point is to drive as safely and courteously as possible. Remember, you are in an agency vehicle and responsible for the safety of your passengers. There are several driving techniques you can use to deal with tailgaters.

### Stay alert

Tailgating is one of the most common causes of traffic crashes. To keep tabs on these bumper-riders—and to maintain your response flexibility—pay very close attention to your traffic environment. You can do this by checking the road ahead and by checking your rearview and side mirrors every three to five seconds. Awareness of other drivers is the first key to driving safety.

### Do what you can

There are three main reasons why people tailgate buses.

First, some tailgaters are simply in too much of a hurry. Second, some drivers feel uncomfortable not being able to see ahead because a bus is in front of them. They tailgate in

preparation for passing.

While you can't dissuade these first two kinds of tailgaters, you can reduce your risk somewhat by protecting the front of your vehicle. Maintain a safe "space cushion" between you and vehicles traveling or moving in front of you. Allow no less than 4 seconds between your vehicle and others during the day, 5 seconds at night, and 6 seconds during bad weather. You'll be better able to maneuver quickly and safely out of troublesome situations or if you have a sudden flat tire or an accident occurs ahead. Such sudden emergencies may cause a tailgater to rear-end you, but if you maintain space in front of your vehicle you can help prevent a chain-reaction pile-up and additional damage to your vehicle.

The third reason some drivers tailgate is they have trouble anticipating your intentions. They may be unaware of the number of stops and pick-ups your bus needs to make or the traffic regulations you must follow.

You can do something to reduce this kind of tailgating. Make sure that your bus is equipped with devices to communicate with drivers behind you. For example, each transit bus should have a "makes frequent stops" sign on the rear window and have working brake and tail lights. Reflective tape on rear surfaces helps other drivers see your bus from a distance.

If you have to double park, turn on your hazard flashers. If you must stop in an unusual location or if your vehicle breaks down, use emergency reflective equipment and get as far off the road as possible. Always make sure you use the proper signals

well in advance to let those behind you know what you are doing.

It is very difficult and can be dangerous to ignore tailgaters, and you should take the necessary measures to keep yourself and your passengers safe. As a last resort, you may be able to change lanes or pull over to the side and let the tailgater pass you, but be sure you can do so safely. Be careful out there!

### Sources

*Coaching the Van Driver, Instructors Guide*, FLI Learning Systems, Inc.

"Can Drivers Avoid Being Rear-Ended?" *CalAction*, Autumn 2001.

[www.farmers.com](http://www.farmers.com)

[www.reportroadrage.co.uk](http://www.reportroadrage.co.uk)

[www.seniordrivers.org](http://www.seniordrivers.org) ▲

### Print advertising,

*continued from page 9*

the text concise and direct. As with newspaper ads, word-processing or desktop publishing software can be used to create the text and graphics.

Posters should be placed where they will be seen, such as the entrances to public facilities or in the waiting rooms at doctors' offices.

Print advertisement does not have to be expensive or time-consuming. These two forms of advertising may be just what your agency needs to achieve community awareness and increased participation.

Adapted from *A Handbook for Effective Advertisements & Marketing of Community Transit*, Ilium Associates, Inc., 1989. ▲



## Do You Have a Plan for Tech Support?

.....  
by Matthew Kaufman  
.....

Small transit agencies frequently place computer maintenance on the back burner. Failing to stay on top of maintenance and new developments can result in the loss of files and information, difficulty in adapting to new technology, and extreme stress for you and your employees. So if you haven't done so already, it is time to develop a plan for tech support.

The Internet and computer networks have complicated the task of caring for computers. You now have to worry not just about how you and your staff communicate with computers but how your computers communicate with one another. While expanded features can save money and time, their existence can make assessing and meeting your technical support needs more difficult.

### Determine your needs

Start assessing your technology needs by creating a statement about how you use computers. This statement should be basic—something like:

“We are an agency that provides transit for low-income and special-needs individuals. We use computers to maintain files on our riders, for route scheduling, bill tracking, and communicating both within and outside our agency.”

Such a statement indicates that you probably need more than one computer and access to the same

stored information for multiple users. It also indicates that you need the ability to backup files, print documents, and use e-mail.

While your own statement will help you identify many of your needs, you should delve deeper. Think about your needs in terms of program, hardware, and network support. Program support relates to

*If your unofficial “tech guy” is troubleshooting computers in addition to his regular agency job, create some guidelines so you don’t overwhelm him with requests.*



using the software on your computers. Hardware and network support can be much more difficult. It entails items like creating and maintaining a network, deciding when a computer should be upgraded, and whether you should backup onto zip discs, CDs, or a hard drive.

Your next step is to take an inventory of your resources. Look at each need you described and determine how you are meeting it. If you

are failing to meet or barely meeting some of your needs, don't worry. Lots of tech resources are available.

### Visit the Internet

If you have Internet access, and you or someone on your staff has basic computer skills and an understanding of your operating system, check out the Internet for a great resource for nonprofits: [www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org). All the information on this site is custom-tailored to nonprofits. You can post questions, research, buy equipment, and read reviews regarding software and hardware. The site also has a large section covering resources for nonprofits, from sources of discounted and donated software to a list of technical assistance providers.

Books can provide information in a format that is easier to use and more complete than the Internet.

If you have a specific area of concern, like word processing or MS Windows, you might consider purchasing a book.

Your local bookstore or an online retailer should have large selection.

### Take a computer course

If you need assistance using a specific program or dealing with a computer network, consider taking a computer course. A book or the Internet may provide you with little assistance if you do not already know the basics. Taking a course can provide you with the basics. Once you know more, you can use books and the Internet to expand your knowledge.

Local community colleges and universities typically offer computer

classes to the public at reasonable rates. For example, the University of Kansas offers courses on subjects from using Excel to digital audio editing. Because you are a public entity you may be eligible for a discount.

### Buy a service agreement

For hardware support consider purchasing an extended-service agreement when you buy a new computer. These agreements allow you to contact the manufacturer when you experience problems with your computer. Usually you contact the company by phone and a technician accesses your computer via the Internet and attempts to diagnose and correct any problems. If a replacement part is needed it can be sent to you, and the manufacturer can arrange for a third party to install it.

A little caution should be used when purchasing an extended service agreement. It's not uncommon for technical support to keep you on the phone, on hold, 30 minutes or more. If the problem you are calling about affects your Internet connection, the technical support representative will have difficulty diagnosing the problem. The knowledge level of support personnel can also vary significantly. If you get a relatively green representative, you might have to call again to find someone better able to diagnose the problem. Keep in mind that you will likely be waiting on hold every time you call.

The final option is to take your computer to a local service center or have a technician come to your office whenever problems occur. With a limited budget this option should be reserved for only the most difficult problems.

### Combine your resources

Ultimately good technical support will entail most or all of the options

listed above. Make sure that members of your staff are trained to handle the everyday software questions and occasional hardware issues that may come up. You can purchase service agreements or use outside vendors for the big problems.

If you decide to try to tackle most problems in-house, assign a full-time employee who already has some basic computer knowledge and who works well with other members of your staff. It is possible that your staff already have a person they go to with technical questions.

Why full time? A part time employee will not always be available to assist when problems occur.

### Respect your employees' time

Develop a hierarchy for handling technical problems. The designated technical support person probably has another job to do, and his or her time needs to be respected. When employees have basic questions they should seek assistance from those around them. If the problem cannot be solved, call in your technical support employee. He or she should not feel forced to do their own job plus help everyone else in the office.

By incorporating the suggestions made here you will be better able to manage technology issues in your office. Attempting to deal with problems after information is lost or employees are on edge is not management. Make sure that you have a system in place for dealing with issues as they arise.

### Sources

"How To Support Your Computer and Internet Systems," by Coyote Communications, [www.coyotecom.com](http://www.coyotecom.com)

"Technology Planning," by Anna Mills, [www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org) ▲

### State your mission,

*continued from page 10*

There you have it, basically," she said.

This is a great example of the process for generating a mission statement described above. Harmon sought input from others and, keeping the basic values of the agency at large in mind, sat down and wrote a mission statement. It's not necessarily easy, but it can be simple.

### So now what?

You've gone through all the trouble of getting your Board to agree on the big picture, sampled opinions from employees and based your new mission statement on that. Your Board has reviewed the new statement and they are impressed. It's bold, it's inspiring, it's who you hope to be as an agency. So now what? Put it on the web site? At the head or foot of office memos? Hang it in the buses?

Sure. Those are all possibilities, and there are many more. These possibilities will be explored in greater depth in the next issue of the newsletter. And if you'd like to share some innovative or effective ways your agency is using its mission statement, e-mail Ira Allen at [iraa@ku.edu](mailto:iraa@ku.edu) or call (785) 864-2598.

In our next issue we will also give some tips for boards of directors in asking the big-picture questions necessary to create a mission statement.

Once you've written your mission statement, don't let your efforts go to waste. Put it out there. Make it visible. Let your staff know it matters. Make it matter to you. State your mission, and state it loud.

### Sources

"Mission Statement: A Facelift Can Make a Difference" from *The NonProfit Times*, August 1, 2002; *KUTC Mission Statement Packet* (compiled by Pat Weaver). ▲

## Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

January 12-16, 2003  
 TRB 82nd Annual Meeting  
 Washington, D.C.  
 Contact: Transportation  
 Research Board  
 Phone: 202-334-2934  
 Fax: 202-334-2003  
 Email: LKarson@nas.edu

January 25-29, 2003  
 APTA General Managers  
 Seminar  
 Tampa, FL  
 Contact: Tom Urban  
 Phone: (202) 496-4853

February 9-11, 2003  
 South West Transit  
 Association 23rd Annual  
 Conference and Expo  
 Sheraton Old Town,  
 Albuquerque, N.M.  
 Phone: (210) 366-1436

March 13-16, 2003  
 Making Our World a Great  
 Place to Grow Old, 2003 Joint  
 Conference and Exhibit of the  
 National Conference on Aging  
 (NCOA) and the American  
 Society on Aging (ASA)  
 Sheraton Chicago Hotel &  
 Towers  
 Email: [www.agingconference.org](http://www.agingconference.org)

March 24, 2003  
 Workshop: Toolbox for Transit  
 Operator Fatigue  
 Kansas City, MO  
 Sponsored by FTA and NTI  
 Phone: (732) 932-1700, ext. 31  
 E-mail: [safety@nti](mailto:safety@nti)  
[safety@nti.rutgers.edu](mailto:safety@nti.rutgers.edu)

March 26-27, 2003  
 NYSDOT Rural & Specialized  
 Transit Conference  
 E. Syracuse, NY  
 Contact: Paul Ouderkirk  
 Phone: (518) 457.8335  
 Email:  
[pouderkirk@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:pouderkirk@dot.state.ny.us)  
[www.dot.state.ny.us](http://www.dot.state.ny.us)

May 4-8, 2003  
 American Public Transit  
 Association Bus and  
 Paratransit Conference  
 Milwaukee, WI  
 Phone: (202) 496-4800

May 18-23, 2003  
 CTA Annual Expo  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 Contact Charlie Dickson  
 Phone: (202) 661-0208  
[www.ctaa.org/expo](http://www.ctaa.org/expo)

---

### Editor's Note:

To include meetings or work-  
 shops in our calendar, send  
 information to Kansas Trans  
 Reporter, KUTC, 1530 W. 15th  
 St., Room 2011, Lawrence, KS  
 66045.  
 E-mail: [weaver@ku.edu](mailto:weaver@ku.edu)

## KDOT hires New Drug and Alcohol Testing Program Coordinator

**H**ave you met KDOT's new Drug and Alcohol Testing Program Coordinator yet? If you haven't, you are likely to meet her in the near future. Sandy Flickinger, on the job at KDOT's Office of Public Transportation for the past few months, will soon begin calling on Section 5311 providers to offer technical assistance with administration of their drug and alcohol testing programs.

While Sandy is new to this program, she has worked for the State of Kansas for nearly 25 years, mostly in human resources. She was a human resource generalist at the Topeka Correctional Facility and at KDOT's Bureau of Personnel Services. Her first position at KDOT was drug & alcohol testing program coordinator for KDOT

employees who hold commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), helping prepare her for her new position.

As Drug and Alcohol Testing Program Coordinator in the Office of Public Transportation, Sandy oversees KDOT's Drug & Alcohol Testing Program for all Kansas transit providers receiving FTA Section 5311 grant funds. She is responsible for assuring that KDOT's Office of Public Transportation, the program's third-party administrator (The Consortium, Inc.), and 5311 providers across the state are in compliance with the FTA rules and regulations governing the program.

If you have questions about your drug and alcohol testing program or need technical assistance, call Sandy at (785) 368-7091, or email her at [sandyf@ksdot.org](mailto:sandyf@ksdot.org). ▲

---

### Tips about taking medications, from page 4

OTC) about alternative treatments, medications, dosages, or schedule of use. You may be able to avoid the negative side-effects by simply shifting the dosage schedule to take your medications following your shift rather than before.

**10** Do not perform safety-sensitive duties while impaired. In instances where no alternative is available, you must inform your supervisor and follow your employers Rx/OTC procedures for removal from safety-sensitive duty. Do not perform any safety-sensitive duty while you are impaired by any medication.

Reprinted from *Summer 2002 FTA Drug And Alcohol Regulation Updates*, Issue 22. ▲

## Resources Order Form

THESE RESOURCES are distributed free of charge, unless noted otherwise, as a service of the Kansas Rural Transportation Assistance Program. Please use the order form on this page to order the publications and videos described here. Videos are available for two-week loans; please request no more than two videos at a time.

### Publications

**Volunteers in Transportation: Some Issues to Consider** (6 pages). Transportation Assistance Brief #1. National RTAP, revised 2001. Explores advantages and disadvantages of establishing volunteer transportation services. Download from [www.kutrc.ku.edu/rtap/tech](http://www.kutrc.ku.edu/rtap/tech) or check the box if you need a hard copy.

**A Handbook for Effective Advertising and Marketing of Community Transit** (78 pages). This handbook was developed by CTAA to help a community transit manager develop and implement effective advertising and marketing programs. Written by Ilium Associates, Inc., 1989. Download from [www.kutrc.ku.edu/rtap/tech](http://www.kutrc.ku.edu/rtap/tech) or check the box if you need a hard copy.

### Videotapes

**Problem Passengers, Challenging Situations.** This training module is designed to help drivers and other personnel who deal directly with the public recognize, avert and control disruptive behaviors. By applying the principles featured, drivers can make professional choices about communicating with the problem passenger—without letting a situation get out of hand and jeopardizing the safe transport of others. National Rural Transit Assistance Program, 2002.

### Where to Send Order Form

Fax your completed order form to 785/864-3199 or send it by mail to:  
Lending Library Request/Transit  
KUTC  
1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2011  
Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7609

Name		Title	
Agency		Phone	
Street Address		Email Address	
City	State	Zip + 4	Date Materials Needed

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

The *Kansas Trans Reporter* is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Kansas Department of Transportation. The purposes of the program are to: 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

January 2003, Volume 16, number 1. Copyright © Kansas University Transportation Center. All rights reserved. Reproduction of material appearing in the *Kansas Trans Reporter* requires written permission.

For a free subscription to the *Kansas Trans Reporter* or to contact one of our faculty or staff, call toll-free **800/248-0350** (in Kansas) or **785/864-2595** (outside Kansas). Send correspondence to *Kansas Trans Reporter*, Kansas University Transportation Center, 1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2011, Lawrence, KS 66045. Send e-mail messages to Patricia Weaver at [weaver@ku.edu](mailto:weaver@ku.edu) or Lisa Harris at [LHarris@ku.edu](mailto:LHarris@ku.edu). Visit our web site at **[www.kutc.ku.edu](http://www.kutc.ku.edu)**

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

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

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

Project Director ..... Pat Weaver  
Editor ..... Lisa Harris  
Editorial Assistant ..... Ira Allen  
Student Writers ..... Ira Allen, Erika Stanley  
..... Matthew Kaufman, James Holland

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

University of Kansas  
Transportation Center  
Kansas Trans Reporter  
1530 W. 15th Street, Room 2011  
Lawrence, KS 66045-7609

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
<b>PAID</b>
Lawrence, Kansas
Permit No. 65

Return Service Requested