

## **INITIATIVES AND INNOVATIONS IN QUALITY**

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**Quality** for public transit service refers to a range of attributes—convenient and reliable service, effective service design to meet needs, well-trained courteous drivers, good public information about the service, and a *customer service* focus. Improving the quality of public transit requires broad-based efforts targeted at many of transit's functional areas—planning, operations, maintenance, and marketing. Initiatives to improve service quality may focus on one aspect of quality or may be broader based. Presented in the next section of the Guidebook's Part II are a number of initiatives/innovations aimed at improving quality. Some of these overlap with other categories of initiatives/innovations in this Guidebook; for example, a multi-modal terminal such as that developed in Logan, Utah, and highlighted in this section

improves service quality with new connectivity but may also serve to increase productivity with the new connectivity and potentially new riders.

Several of the initiatives in this section are programs and services that have been seen in various settings around the country, such as visitor shuttle service in a tourist environment, and are not unique. But one such shuttle service presented in the next section of Part II has been developed in a popular National Park and has not only decreased traffic, congestion, and related environmental impacts but has improved the visitor experience with increased sightings of wildlife and new socialization of tourists. This was a new transit solution to the Park's extreme traffic and congestion problems—a major change for the Park and its ad-

ministrators and innovative for its setting.

And quality initiatives go beyond programs and strategies to improve services for transit's traditional constituency. In Zanesville, Ohio, a new childcare shuttle program serves children as young as two to three months! This program, developed as part of local welfare-to-work activities, transports young children to their daycare sites allowing their lower-income parents who are reliant on public transit to go directly to work, without the added trip to daycare that makes the workday particularly long and difficult.

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### **PRESENTED IN THIS CATEGORY:**

1. **Defining and Incorporating Organizational Core Values**—Special Transit, Boulder, Colorado
2. **“One-Stop” Call Information Service: One Phone Number for Information on All Public Transit Services in the County**—Regional Transportation Program, Portland, Maine
3. **Homegrown ITS Solutions: Automatic Vehicle Location for Rural Transit, Simulated with Spreadsheet Application**—Sonoma County Transit, Santa Rosa, California
4. **Intercity Bus Coordination: Improving Rider Convenience and Generating New Revenue Through Commissions**—Logan Transit System, Logan, Utah
5. **Childcare Shuttle Bus**—South East Transit Authority, Zanesville, Ohio
6. **Community Partnership: Collaboration with a Disability Organization**—Rabbit Transit, York County, Pennsylvania
7. **Shuttle Service in National Parks: Reducing Congestion and Improving Tourist Experience**—Zion National Park, Springdale, Utah
8. **Intermodal Facility: City Buses, Greyhound, and Taxis**—FREDericksburg Regional Transit, Fredericksburg, Virginia
9. **Fixed-Route Service Improvement: Focusing on Customers, Quality, and Image**—Basin Transit System, Klamath Falls, Oregon

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## **Defining and Incorporating Organizational Core Values**

## **Special Transit Boulder, Colorado**

### **Organization Highlights**

Special Transit is a private, non-profit organization providing door-through-door, wheelchair accessible, driver-assisted, demand-responsive transportation for elderly, disabled, low income, and rural residents of Boulder County, Colorado. Incorporated in 1978 specifically to develop and operate transportation services, Special Transit had, by April 2000, grown to operate a total fleet of 50 vehicles with a staff of over 80 drivers providing demand-responsive transportation for the agency's clients, operating fixed-route bus service in Boulder under contract to the City of Boulder and providing ADA paratransit services in the Boulder area.

In April 2000, Special Transit agreed to assume operational responsibility for all ADA paratransit services in the Denver metropolitan area for the Regional Transportation District (RTD) upon mutual termination of the contract with RTD's existing contractor. With nine days notice, Special Transit assumed operation of an additional 150 paratransit vehicles and added 150 staff to its organization.

### **Background/Objectives**

Upon joining Special Transit in 1991, the current executive director was faced with employee turnover approaching 72 percent on an annual basis and operational philosophies that were not closely aligned with the organization's values and mission. After being introduced to the concept of organizational values at a transit managers workshop in 1992, the director began work-

ing with Special Transit's board and senior staff to define the agency's values and operating principles. This effort, combined with management and procedural changes, resulted in reduced employee turnover and more stability within the organization.

Over the next five years, the organization tripled in size from its basic demand-responsive program and a staff of about 30 to operation of 50 vehicles and a staff of 100. During this period, Special Transit initiated operation of a fixed-route service and ADA paratransit services in Boulder, the first under contract to the City of Boulder and the second as a subcontractor to RTD. This growth, however, led to problems of communication and integration with a larger and continually-changing staff.

Although moderated by earlier organizational efforts and management changes, by 1997 employee turnover had once again crept up to an annual rate in excess of 50 percent. About this time, the book, Built To Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies, by James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras<sup>1</sup>, came to the attention of Special Transit's senior management staff, and they recognized the potential of this book's concepts to refocus earlier strategic planning and to help address Special Transit's organizational issues.

One of the essential concepts of Built To Last is that organizations need to define their underlying beliefs system to identify



their "core values and purpose" - that is, their guiding principles and reasons for existence - and then to incorporate these into every aspect of their organization: into policies, processes, organizational culture, management behaviors, customer service, pay and reward systems, administration, community relations, etc. A central concept to this set of precepts is that of alignment: "...that all the elements of a company work together in concert within the context of the company's core ideology and the type of progress it aims to achieve..."<sup>2</sup>

Special Transit undertook to identify its organizational values and principles to foster consensus building within the organization between the Board and senior management staff as well to address day-to-day operating issues of employee recruiting and retention. In addition, Special Transit was also being pulled into the delivery of transportation services outside its traditional geographic service area and to new clientele. The identification of core purpose, values, and mission assisted Special Transit's board in focusing on the strategic question of whether these new op-

<sup>1</sup> HarperCollins Publishers, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Built To Last, p. 202.

portunities should be undertaken or declined.

## Description

Special Transit's definition of organizational core purpose and values was initiated at its annual board retreat in 1998, building on prior strategic planning and its 1997-1999 strategic plan. At the 1998 board retreat, the board of directors and senior staff worked on identifying the organization's core purpose, values, and mission statement. For those involved, this workshop process has been described as not really one of "creating" these values and principles so much as one of recognizing and describing the values and principles that were being practiced in the organization and its operations, thereby building consensus with these now-articulated purposes and values.

The retreat input was then used to develop a draft statement of values and principles by senior staff over the following weeks. This effort resulted in a concise, one-page statement of the organization's core purpose, core values, and mission statement. The core purpose, for example, reads:

*Special Transit was established "to develop and operate a transportation program for the elderly, handicapped, low-income and others with special needs in the Boulder County, Colorado area..." As Board members and staff members of Special Transit, we share the following beliefs:*

- *We believe that all people are entitled to live as independently as possible within their life circumstances.*

- *We believe that freedom of movement is a fundamental necessity in our society.*
- *We believe that everybody counts (regardless of age, health and income) and has a contribution to make.*

Once drafted and adopted by the board, staff has worked to incorporate these values and principles into Special Transit's hiring practices, new employee orientation, personnel policies and, overall, to ensure that the organization exhibits a consistent image to the public and its employees.

Among other refinements in its recruiting practices, for example, instead of posting a sign on the back of its vehicles stating "now hiring" as is done by many transportation companies, Special Transit vehicles carry the following sign:

**Make A Difference In  
Peoples' Lives.  
Our Drivers Do.  
Apply Today.  
Special Transit  
[Phone Number]**

When a potential job applicant arrives in Special Transit's offices, the message that *this isn't just another driving job* is reinforced by a short job description including, among other bullets, that the working environment offers a "friendly/family atmosphere" and is "community/people oriented" and a brochure that provides a description of Special Transit's mission, history, services, and clientele. Once an application for employment is completed and submitted to Special Transit, the screening and hiring processes are designed to look

*As an organization, we believe that all people are entitled to live as independently as possible within their life circumstances and that freedom of movement is a fundamental necessity in our society. Special Transit's purpose is to promote independence and self-reliance by removing the mobility barriers that limit autonomy.*

for a "fit" between the applicant and the organization in terms of values and mission. For example, applicants will be asked about their internal motivators, why they left their prior jobs, and why they want to work at Special Transit.

Orienting new employees to Special Transit's values and principles is one of the first topics covered as they begin their training, starting with a brief videotape overview of the organization highlighting some of its employees and clients followed by a presentation of core values, mission, and history by the executive director or another member of the senior staff.

For all employees, the organization values and principles are continually reinforced through the employee newsletter, awards programs, emphasis on caring for others, and "family feel" of the workplace.

Although Special Transit has been working on this effort for more than two years, the process of incorporating these core values and principles into the organization's procedures, policies, management, administration - and so forth - is ongoing.

## **Resources**

Special Transit has done most of the core purpose/values process on its own. Reliance upon its existing management and senior staff to lead the workshops and draft the core purpose/values and carry out this process, while in part a financial decision because there wasn't the funding to hire outside resources, may have been possible due to staff's familiarity with the general concepts of organizational and strategic planning. Many of the Built To Last concepts, however, strike one as common sense and capable of being implemented by local staff once there is a commitment to the program.



## **Results**

In its third year of utilizing these concepts, the management of Special Transit feels this approach has allowed their recruiting efforts to keep up with the major service expansions of the past two years. Although employee turnover is presently at an annual rate of 27 percent, this needs to be viewed as acceptable considering an unemployment rate of two percent or less in the Denver metropolitan area. Moreover, Special Transit's focus on and reinforcement of its purpose and values have had a beneficial impact on the morale of staff throughout the organization.

The emphasis on organizational values and principles has also

shown up in Special Transit's present and ongoing assessment of new opportunities to provide additional contracted public transit services. In these situations, Special Transit is assessing whether and in what capacities these opportunities would further its core values and mission or detract from their pursuit.

## **Barriers/Constraints**

The principle constraints to undertaking an organizational effort to identify core purpose, values, and mission and then to incorporating these throughout the organization is the willingness and commitment to do so on the part of those involved. For many managers and Board members, this activity may be colored by their prior - often unsatisfactory - experiences with strategic planning. For others, organizational planning might rank low on their listing of daily priorities. In either case, reluctance to undertake or assign priority to organizational planning might be overcome by the participation of representatives of successful agencies or outside facilitators in the early stages of the identification efforts and by focusing the effort on specific operational objectives.

## **Transferability**

While the book, Built to Last, focused entirely on for-profit, private companies, the authors note that the concepts apply in any type organization, although the form might vary.<sup>3</sup> The authors go on to note their suc-

cessful application in a variety of nonprofit organizations. Special Transit's implementation of these precepts and success in doing so confirms their application to non-profit organizations, in which there is often a predisposition to emphasize mission and purpose. Indeed, non-profit organizations—as compared to publicly operated transit agencies—may find it somewhat easier to be innovative and to get support from their appointed Boards.

Public transit operators and agencies, be they municipal transit systems or separate transit authorities, may have inherently different "corporate cultures" from either private for-profit or non-profit entities, yet each has its own core purpose, values and mission which can be identified for the overall agency as well as for sub-groups. Although the purposes, values and missions of public agencies may differ from those of nonprofit transportation providers, their identification is no less important to the alignment of the organization and its policies, procedures, and practices.

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<sup>3</sup> Built To Last, p. 245.

## **"One-Stop" Call Information Service: One Phone Number for Information on All Public Transit Services in the County**

**Regional  
Transportation Program  
Portland, Maine**

### **Organization Highlights**

The Regional Transportation Program (RTP) is a private non-profit organization serving Cumberland County, Maine, the most populous county in Maine. The organization provides a variety of services, including non-emergency Medicaid transportation, countywide scheduled bus service, ADA complementary paratransit service on a contract basis for the county's two fixed-route providers, commuter service between Portland and Bath, and a "Rider's Choice" program that incorporates the "one-stop" call information service, an innovative way to provide centralized information about public transportation services in a large area. The agency has a fleet of 34 vehicles.

### **Background/Objectives**

As part of the diverse transportation services offered, the RTP began its Rider's Choice program through a contract with the state Department of Mental Health (DMH). This contract stipulated that RTP would assure transportation for DMH clients 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Given that the contract allowed only \$25,000 annually to make this assurance, RTP had to build on the available network of public transportation providers in the area, as it could not operate all of the service directly with available funding.

Based on a tip from RTP's telephone company, RTP staff implemented "off premises, call forwarding" to establish direct phone links with the other public transportation providers in the area. Using the telephone company's off premises/call for-

warding technology, the Rider's Choice program can meet its objective of assuring direct access to not only the RTP's transportation service but also other public transit providers in the county. RTP advertises Rider's Choice with the phrase *where one call does it all*.



*Where one call does it all.*

### **Description**

Through the RTP's Rider's Choice program, the agency established a "one stop" call forwarding procedure that serves as a central clearinghouse for public transportation information in Cumberland County. As appropriate to the caller's request, RTP staff provide information about the various transportation services that it offers and can also forward a caller directly to the office of the five providers linked to the RTP - four public transportation providers (three transit providers and the local ferry service) and an after-hours emergency mental health program.

After agreements were reached with the five other participants, the RTP had five new phone lines installed in its office and

purchased five new phones, because a line and phone are needed for each organization involved. Training was also provided to the "receiving" organizations so that their staff could anticipate the types of calls coming from the RTP. When RTP staff receive a call from a mental health client or from someone from the general public asking about information for a specific transportation service that is provided by another provider, for example, the local ferry provider, RTP staff will inform the caller that the information is available from another organization to which the caller can be transferred, put the caller on hold, and then transfer the caller directly to the other provider, in this case, the ferry service office. RTP does not have to refer the caller to the ferry provider and then hang up, but rather with a simple phone transfer, sends the caller directly to the office of the ferry service where a person at that organization can provide the specific information needed.

Research has shown that when a caller cannot obtain the required information with the first phone call, the caller is less likely to follow through and find the necessary service. The off premises, call forwarding technology allows the caller to obtain necessary information with the first phone call. It should be noted that to meet the requirements of 24 hours per day, 365 days per year stipulated by the DMH contract, the RTP has arranged that during off hours when its office is closed, a mental health client is referred to an after-hours emergency mental health service that screens the caller to verify the

caller's status and then finds appropriate transportation, such as RTP's regional paratransit services or taxi service.

The Rider's Choice program, including the off premises/call forwarding technology, took about nine months to implement and began in 1998.

### **Resources**

Off premises/call forwarding implementation costs were less than \$1,000, including installation of the five additional lines, new phones, and staff time.

Ongoing costs include approximately \$720 per year for phone charges and approximately \$1000 in call-handling staff time per year, based on a volume of about 155 calls per month.

Funding for the program comes predominately from the DMH contract.

### **Results**

The RTP reports that there are approximately 155 calls per month to the Rider's Choice program, which incorporates the off premises/call forwarding technology. Not all callers are transferred to other providers, though, as the RTP's services will meet the needs of some of the callers.

The RTP can provide more effective information and referral service to its callers because it is linked "telephonically" to the other public transportation providers in the area; it does not have to "refer" the caller and then end the call. With direct connections to the other organization, callers can talk immedi-

ately with the appropriate agency.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

There was suspicion on the part of the other public transportation providers, who feared some element of "control" over their service with the telephonic link-up and were afraid that RTP might unfairly favor one provider over another when "assigning" calls. These fears were allayed through several means:

- RTP met with and talked to the other providers through an existing provider forum which included all transportation providers in the county to explain the program and the off premises/call forwarding service.
- Once the phones were installed, the RTP invited the other providers over for "show and tell," impressing their colleagues with the "phone bank," which included one phone clearly labeled for each of the participating providers.
- The RTP asked for and went through a formal audit of its Rider's Choice program by local professionals in the mental health field to determine how the services were being provided and received.

### **Transferability**

While the RTP established its off premises/call forwarding procedure to meet the needs of a specific clientele (mental health clients) for a specific

contract (the DMH), the notion of a "one-stop" call telephone clearinghouse information service is transferable to many situations, particularly where an organization serves as a clearinghouse or mobility manager for a range of transportation services.

It is a very low cost initiative, simple to implement with readily available, proven technology (telephone) that provides a very useful *information clearinghouse* service to callers where there are multiple transportation providers and options. However, an organization interested in setting up such a service must determine what is the best technology for its purposes. For the RTP, with mental health clients being the initial audience, the organization wanted to use proven technology, which would be simple to use, not something potentially frustrating or intimidating. Moreover, until more technologically sophisticated tools such as the Internet are widely available to the average transit dependent person, the telephone remains a logical solution for providing a direct-to-provider, information clearinghouse service.

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## **Homegrown ITS Solutions: Automatic Vehicle Location for Rural Transit, Simulated with Spreadsheet Application**

**Sonoma County Transit  
Santa Rosa, California**

### **Organization Highlights**

Sonoma County Transit (SCT), managed and administered by the Sonoma County, California, Department of Transportation and Public Works, provides countywide fixed-route service along major travel corridors in rural Sonoma County, north of San Francisco. The transit system also links together most small towns and communities and all nine incorporated cities in the county. The system consists of a mix of 22 local and intercity transit routes.

The county has an estimated year 2000 population of 450,100. Santa Rosa is the county's largest city with a population of 142,000, about one-third of county residents. Other cities range in size from Petaluma with 53,000 to Cloverdale with 6,400 persons. One third of county residents live in unincorporated areas.

Fixed-route services are provided with a fleet of 57 vehicles, of which 24 are powered by compressed natural gas. Approximately 1.5 million trips were provided in 2000.

### **Background/Objectives**

As interest in automatic vehicle location (AVL), automated fare collection, and passenger information systems gained ground as parts of a larger ITS panorama, SCT followed the trail of route and vehicle location information but in a manner more appropriate and affordable for a medium-sized transit operator.

The SCT route system resembles a tree trunk - sturdy near the base between Rohnert Park and

Santa Rosa, straggly straight up toward Cloverdale with two drooping side branches toward Sonoma to the east and Petaluma toward the west. A city bus system serves Santa Rosa, but the base of the trunk and the branches are served by the county transit system. SCT links with Santa Rosa CityBus and Golden Gate Transit for regional travel south into Marin County and San Francisco.

Within the realm of ITS, computerized dispatching, mobile data terminals, AVL, Global Positioning Satellite (GPS), and passenger information kiosks promise greater system efficiency and passenger convenience. Information, when automatically obtained and displayed, can provide the information link that allows passengers to move smoothly to and from remote locations and between different transit systems.

Initiated in the mid 1990's, the Sonoma County venture proved to be the beginning of a series of efforts that eventually led to the current innovative application of off-the-shelf computer software to illustrate the "scheduled" location of deployed vehicles. Initial attempts to develop modest AVL/GPS transit/passenger information systems proved unsuccessful and costly given the limited information they provided. SCT's initial AVL attempts relied on data transmission via cellular phones and wireless paging systems. After earlier attempts failed, SCT staff developed the TransTrack information system.

### **Description**

Originally designed for intranet in-house communication between SCT's dispatch office and its public information office, TransTrack now provides graphical information monitoring all aspects of transit system operation for in-house supervision and passenger information via the Internet and public kiosk displays. The system, built using Microsoft Excel, consists of over 40 page screens tracking SCT operations including, among others:

- Current System Status - operating status/statistics illustrating number of trips currently operating, daily trips complete and remaining, and number of vehicles deadheading, in revenue service, and deployed;
- Service Distribution - current number of operating trips by route and direction;
- Run Status - illustrates current run status (i.e., out of service, in-service, deadheading, etc.);
- Current Trip Status - graphically illustrates operating trips and trips reported late;
- Holds! - lists current and standing trip holds for transfers, etc.;
- Today's Lost & Found; and
- Transit Center arrival and departure display pages (includes SCT and other operators as applicable).

TransTrack Current System Status provides up to the minute status on all aspects of system



operations. Innovatively mimicking a space launch command and control center, TransTrack uses integrated display screens to provide data on deployment, system performance, service distribution, and the current status of all operating trips.

Via its web site at [sctransit.com](http://sctransit.com), SCT uses TransTrack to provide web viewers a graphical view of SCT operations. TransTrack presents "scheduled" bus location information by route. It also shows "scheduled" bus arrivals, layovers, and departures from major transfer centers.

TransTrack presents a graphical listing of timepoints by route. Highlighted timepoints indicate the last timepoint a scheduled bus has passed. When no timepoints are highlighted, no buses are currently operating on the selected route.

TransTrack's Passenger Advisory notice changes by time of day to indicate possible delays in minutes due to traffic, passenger load, road construction, etc.

TransTrack screens associated with transfer centers illustrate scheduled bus arrivals, layovers and upcoming departures.

Since November 1999, a TransTrack kiosk has been used at the Sonoma County Airport to display "next" scheduled bus departure information for transit and airport shuttle buses serving the facility. TransTrack also provides "next" scheduled flight arrival and departure information as well.

### **Resources**

TransTrack requires clear, enforced procedures on schedule exception reporting and a communication system that enables the information to be relayed to a central office and posted into the TransTrack system.

TransTrack efficiently operates on a Windows NT/2000 network or stand alone on a Pentium based PC. TransTrack requires programming updates only when schedule revisions or vehicle deployment changes are made.



### **Results**

TransTrack is now in operation, improving communications about transit services both within SCT and with the riding public.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

A number of attempts were made to adapt cellular phone and pager technology to the transit passenger information requirements of SCT. All were unsuccessful and the problem was solved with available commercial software and use of the Internet as the communication vehicle.

### **Transferability**

TransTrack occupies a small, otherwise technologically minimally served niche of the transit market. An estimated one-fourth to one-fifth of the overall transit market is of medium-size (50 vehicles or less) with a dispersed population served by a system with 45 minute to one-hour headways. For these systems, a simulated AVL system like Sonoma County Transit's TransTrack might be appropriate. Once deployed and in use, TransTrack has no ongoing operating cost.

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## **Intercity Bus Coordination: Improving Rider Convenience and Generating New Revenue Through Commissions**

**Logan Transit System  
Logan, Utah**

### **Organization Highlights**

Located 60 miles northwest of Salt Lake City, Logan is home to Utah State University and a growing concentration of high-tech industries. The City has a population of 55,000 with another 50,000 in the surrounding Cache County area. The University alone constitutes a population of almost 15,000 students.

Public transit services were initiated in Logan in 1992 following passage in 1991 of a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cent sales tax dedicated to the provision of public transit. The system began with 6 pulse-coordinated fixed routes operating on 30-minute headways using 25-passenger buses. An important early policy decision was that the Logan Transit System would be "free-fare," with funding coming entirely from the dedicated sales tax. From its initiation, public transit in Logan has been hugely successful. Now in its ninth year of operation, Logan Transit District transports over 1.2 million passengers each year, regularly achieving productivities of 40 passenger trips per vehicle service hour.

### **Background/Objectives**

Since 1992, Logan Transit has refined and modestly expanded its services and support capabilities, now operating 7 pulse-coordinated routes with an 8<sup>th</sup> route planned. The 25-passenger buses have been replaced with 31-passenger buses, and the system carries 4,200 passengers on an average weekday. The system operates out of a dedicated transit facility, housing administration, operations, and maintenance, which was completed in

1999. Logan Transit is also in the early construction phases for a downtown Transit Center in central Logan.

Expansion of public transit services will continue in the surrounding areas of Cache County with passage of a ballot issue in November 2000 creating the Cache Valley Transit District with its own dedicated  $\frac{1}{4}$  cent sales tax. Cache Valley Transit's services will be operated by Logan Transit District and will begin operation with a system of 2 commuter routes and a local route providing service to North Logan.

Discussions began with Greyhound representatives in 1998 concerning the relocation of their local terminal from the Logan Airport to a location which could be served by public transit, possibly the downtown Transit Center then being planned. These discussions became more focused in early 1999 as the local agent, the Logan airport authority, lost interest in continuing its relationship. These discussions resulted in Logan Transit becoming the local agent for Greyhound passenger and package services and relocation of these operations to Logan Transit's

facility concurrent with its opening in April 1999.

Logan Transit's interest in becoming the local representative of Greyhound and in relocating the local terminal came about through continuing requests for transit service to the Greyhound terminal, then located about 3 miles out of town at the Logan municipal airport and not served by Logan Transit, and by early planning for the Transit Center. The Center has been planned as a multi-modal terminal, to eventually include Greyhound. Assuming responsibility as the local Greyhound representative was also seen as a means of funding the Transit Center information staff.

### **Description**

The City of Logan entered into an agreement with Greyhound to operate as Greyhound's local agent and to provide a terminal location, package storage, and a passenger waiting area. As part of its responsibilities, Greyhound installed a dedicated telephone number for passenger information and a pay telephone. The agreement also requires Logan Transit to provide dedicated staff to answer the



Greyhound phone line, sell tickets, and handle incoming and outgoing packages from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. On Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, Logan Transit provides no staff support to Greyhound services. When the dedicated Greyhound staff is not needed for ticket sales, information calls or package services, this individual supports Logan Transit's customer service and administrative activities.

Initially relocated to the Logan Transit operating facility as an interim location pending construction of the Transit Center, this location continues to be used for Greyhound in deference to concerns about traffic and increased passenger activities at the pending Transit Center downtown. At the Logan Transit facility, Greyhound buses use a bus pull-out constructed in front of the building's entrance, which makes for convenient passenger access as well as package and baggage loading. The Logan Transit lobby area provides some seating plus bathrooms and vending machines. The lobby is connected to the Transit Dispatch Office, where dispatch staff answer the Greyhound phone line and handle ticket sales and packages. When packages arrive on Greyhound, Logan Transit staff call to notify recipients.

The Logan Transit facility is served by its Route 4, allowing Greyhound passengers direct connection to the public transit system. From the time an incoming Greyhound passenger boards a Logan Transit bus, they can be almost anywhere in Logan within 30 minutes at no cost.

## Resources

Becoming the local Greyhound agent required a limited investment of management time to develop the arrangement and to negotiate the agreement between the City and Greyhound. Once agreement was reached, Logan Transit had only to provide dedicated staffing to handle telephone calls, ticket sales, and package services since the new facility had suitable though somewhat modest facilities for ticket sales, passenger waiting, and package services.

## Results

On average, more than 100 Greyhound passengers depart from the Logan Transit facility each month, with close to half purchasing round-trip tickets for their return to Logan. In an average month, 144 packages are dispatched from the Logan facility and 200 arrive on Greyhound.

Logan Transit receives a 15 percent commission on all Greyhound ticket sales and packages taken in for express service. During the most recent year, this commission totalled \$27,720. This funding covers the partial cost to Logan Transit of one full-time staff position, thus increasing the level of customer services, telephone information and dispatch staffing that can be provided to the larger public served by Logan Transit.

## Barriers/Constraints

Logan Transit management sees no inherent barriers to other transit agencies entering into

agent agreements with Greyhound or other intercity carriers. Greyhound has expressed its support of this concept and is actively seeking similar opportunities and interested agencies to establish this important connection to local transit services in other areas.

## Transferability

Logan Transit management has few changes they would make to this arrangement based on their experience thus far. If the opportunity arose, they would redesign their facility to provide a somewhat separate lobby space for waiting Greyhound passengers and a suitable package storage area.

Coordination between Logan Transit and Greyhound exemplifies the increasing numbers of partnerships that are being established in rural areas between transit systems and intercity bus carriers. Such coordination improves service and convenience for passengers and provides additional revenues to the transit system through commissions, which can then support other transit system services such as the customer information function at Logan Transit.

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**Organization Highlights**

The South East Transit Authority is a public transit system serving the City of Zanesville, Ohio, and surrounding Muskingum and Guernsey Counties, with a service area population of about 85,000. The Authority, known locally as Z-Bus, operates both fixed-route and para-transit services, with a fleet of 33 vehicles.

**Background/Objectives**

The objective of the childcare shuttle bus service is to transport young children to and from day care. This gives parents dependable transportation to the day care site for their child (or children) and allows the parents to go directly to and from work, without the added trips associated with getting the child to and from the day care facility.

Z-Bus management had been discussing transportation concerns of community residents with staff of Early Start, a state-funded organization providing support to lower income families with very young children. One of the problems faced by Early Start families was transportation, and, for parents transitioning from welfare to employment, there was a particular problem with getting children to day care before the work trip. While Z-Bus provides considerable public transit for a rural area, there was not a ready answer to assist such families specifically with the difficult logistics of getting to the day care site and then to work for parents who were totally dependent on public transit. Z-Bus management came up with the idea of a special service that would focus on getting the

children of Early Start families to and from their day care sites.

**Description**

After a planning period of about three months, Z-Bus initiated its childcare shuttle bus service in August 1999. Implementation had the following components:

- All licensed day care providers, both public and private, in the agency's core service area were identified and located.
- The transit agency obtained a donated school bus from a local private school. This was an older vehicle that required some work by Z-Bus maintenance staff to restore it to full operating condition.
- The vehicle was decorated to appeal to young children. Z-Bus worked with a local sign company to design and produce the artwork for the bus, with drawings of colorful puppies, kids, and toys. Z-Bus management expressively wanted the vehicle to be "fun" and appealing for its young intended ridership. The sign company donated

its efforts as part of community service, including its company logo on the vehicle in exchange.

- Child safety seats were donated by a local rotary club.
- Z-Bus hired a part-time attendant for the service who would ride on the bus with the children, helping with safety seat securement, monitoring the children while in transport, and then getting the children into their day care site.
- Training for the attendant was provided, including first aid and CPR. The attendant was also required to have medical vaccines for working with young children, including TB and hepatitis.

The childcare shuttle service operates on a first-come, first-served basis, with 24-hour advance notice required. Transportation begins as early as 5:30 a.m. for the morning shift, with the return shift operating until the early evening. Initially, the service was available only for children of lower income families, but once the colorful vehicle was out in the community,



the general public began asking about the service. Priority is given to families who are clients of the State Department of Human Services (DHS) and Early Start, and most, if not all, riders come from these families. Although it is open to the general public, the service has not been marketed to the community at large. However, Z-Bus believes that marketing would increase usage.

For the priority clients of the DHS and Early Start agencies, the agency schedules the ride for the client's child, and the agency is then billed on a \$1.20 per mile basis at the end of each month of service.

Fares for general public families are set at \$2.00 each way for the first child, and \$1.00 each way for any additional children.

Since transportation is for the children and not the parents, the attendant's role is very important. Z-Bus hired a "grandmother-type" person on a part-time basis who has a very flexible schedule, accommodating the program in its early months when ridership levels were not known. In addition to helping get the children settled on board the bus and then taking them into their day care facility, the attendant keeps the children busy on the vehicle, singing songs, handing out crayons and coloring books. Recognizing that families must have a comfort level with the service, Z-Bus can arrange for families to meet the attendant before using the service.

## Resources

Costs for the childcare shuttle service include both start-up as well as ongoing operating costs. Start-up costs included Z-Bus staff time for planning, although key equipment was obtained through donations, including the vehicle, vehicle "decorations," and car seats. Ongoing costs include labor for the attendant and driver as well as operating and maintenance costs for the vehicle, which is operated only on a part-time basis. There are some additional administrative and accounting costs associated with billing the agencies whose clients use the service.

Costs for the childcare shuttle service are about \$45 per service hour. With about five hours per day for the service (though this varies with demand), the weekly cost is about \$1,125.

Initial funding for the service came from the Early Start program, with a grant of \$50,000. Other revenue includes that generated from use of the service, generally with payment from the Department of Human Services and Early Start, which subsidize their clients' use.

## Results

The childcare shuttle service averages up to 12 rides per day. Usage is lower in the summer months and higher during other times of the year.

Its impact on families who use the service to get their children to day care has been significant and positive. These families - predominately single mothers -

and the social service agencies that serve them have been very pleased with the program. Response from the community has also been positive, with much local press generated. But Z-Bus recognizes that the service is not highly productive and, given that it is so specialized, it is unlikely that the service will ever be productive. For the transit agency, then, the childcare shuttle service has been more of a program to generate goodwill among staff and the community.

## Barriers/Constraints

The transit agency faced a number of issues with implementation of its childcare shuttle service:

- The donated school bus had to be retrofitted with seat belts so that child safety seats could be used.
- The vehicle decorations were done with vinyl material, which has since proved less durable than anticipated. The vinyl is lifting in places, and the transit agency realizes that paint may have been a better medium.
- After the start of service, questions were raised as to the age of children for eligibility. The transit agency determined that the children should be at least eight weeks old to use the service, though there has been some thinking that this may still be too young.
- The transit agency had not anticipated interest from the general public when the service was planned. But

once the vehicle was out on the street, management had to quickly come up with policies for general public use when the community began calling.

- Since the vehicle is so clearly marked as the child-care shuttle bus, it is difficult to use it for any other transit services. Given that the vehicle was donated, this is not a major issue for Z-Bus, but should an agency invest in a vehicle for such a program, it might be difficult to have a vehicle that is so specialized.
- There have been a few occasions when the vehicle arrives to drop off the child at the end of the day but no parent or other adult is home. Z-Bus has not adopted any formal policies to deal with this issue to date, but concedes that it may be necessary if the problem escalates.
- Keeping the child safety seats clean became an issue that had not been anticipated. Z-Bus was able to locate car seat covers which were much easier to wash than the actual seats themselves.

## **Transferability**

Transporting young children to day care sites could be a very useful adjunct to transportation programs focusing on welfare-to-work. For families reliant on public transit to get to their new jobs, the logistics of also getting a child (or children) to the day care site can be formidable, particularly in smaller communities with more limited transit cover-

age. It means a workday that must begin very early—and end late—if there is to be adequate time to get to the day care site by bus and then to get to the work site.

The experience of the South East Transit Authority in Zanesville, Ohio, with the agency's childcare shuttle bus service proves that such a service can be implemented and effective, though the objectives of such a service should be clear at the outset. A specialized service targeted to very young children for day care trips will not likely be highly productive when measured by standard transit industry indicators such as passenger trips per hour. But its worth can be measured in other ways, such as the number of new jobs facilitated by the service as the parent now has dependable transportation for child care, increased community support for public transit with the addition of the highly visible community service and positive local press, and increased staff morale with the implementation of a new, attractive service that is well-accepted by the community.

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## **Community Partnership: Collaboration with a Disability Organization**

**Rabbit Transit  
York County, Pennsylvania**

### **Organization Highlights**

Rabbit Transit is a small urban and rural transit agency serving York County, Pennsylvania, located in the south central part of the state. York County is predominately rural, with one small city - York. The county's year 2000 total population is estimated at about 370,000. The City of York has an estimated 42,000 population, with a considerably larger surrounding urban area. Rabbit Transit operates fixed-route and paratransit services, with a fleet of 30 buses and 30 paratransit vehicles. The transit system is a public authority, created by the county in 1974 through state enabling legislation, with a 12-member board of directors appointed by the county commissioners.

### **Background/Objectives**

Providing transit services for persons with developmental disabilities in the community, Rabbit Transit developed a relationship with ARC of York County. When that agency decided to pursue a grant through Easter Seals' Project ACTION in 1998, ARC approached Rabbit Transit as a partner for the project, called *Mobility Planning Services*, which focused on fostering collaborative efforts between disability organizations and public transit agencies for training and other services to improve public transit for persons with disabilities. ARC was awarded a grant of \$100,000 and the two organizations worked together to set up several joint programs.

### **Description**

After a two-year planning effort, Rabbit Transit and ARC of York County developed several collaborative projects. First, ARC now does all of the sensitivity training for Rabbit Transit drivers and other employees, part of initial and ongoing training requirements. This involves a 16-hour session on the range of issues involved in providing public transit for persons with disabilities.

Second, ARC is responsible for Rabbit Transit's ADA paratransit eligibility certification. ARC uses functional testing to determine ADA eligibility, including the cognitive testing developed by ACCESS in Pittsburgh, a sophisticated methodology using a simulated bus trip through photographs, slides, and other testing aids.

Third, a more recent project has been assistance with Rabbit Transit's welfare-to-work *case management* project conducted through a state welfare-to-work grant. With case management, the transit agency is tasked with working one-on-one with individuals with disabilities who are transitioning from govern-

ment welfare to jobs. ARC works directly with the disabled individual on transportation and use of public transit to support employability.

Fourth, ARC provides *quality assurance* monitoring for Rabbit Transit. In this function, ARC uses a network of individuals with disabilities who travel about the community to report back, in a systematic way, on their experiences using public transit on specific measures, including driver announcement of stops on fixed-route service, use of wheelchair lifts on buses, and on-time performance of ADA paratransit service. The individuals are volunteers, trained by ARC to collect the appropriate data. With data reported back from the users, ARC prepares a monthly report for Rabbit Transit about its performance on the specific measures.

### **Resources**

For the first two years of the Mobility Planning Project, the various collaborative efforts were funded by the Project ACTION grant. When the grant ran out, Rabbit Transit con-



tracted with ARC to provide the stipulated services, including driver training, ADA paratransit eligibility certification, welfare-to-work case management, and quality assurance monitoring.

Driver training is paid on a hourly cost basis, at \$16 per hour, and ADA certification is paid on a per assessment basis, at \$80 per individual. Rabbit Transit uses its regular operating revenues to fund these services as well as the quality assurance program. Case management is funded through a state grant.

## Results

The partnership with ARC has been beneficial for Rabbit Transit in a number of ways, according to management:

- Sensitivity training for transit agency staff has improved markedly. Training is no longer perfunctory, but provided with energy, passion, and direct participation of trainees with participant exercises and role playing.
- ADA certification is thought to be more accurate with functional testing. While the transit agency makes the final determination as to eligibility, Rabbit Transit questions ARC's recommendations rarely. This program works because of the level of understanding and trust between the two organizations; the transit agency knows that the disability organization understands the ADA and is not trying to certify all disabled individuals in the community for paratransit. Given the relatively small

size of Rabbit Transit's staff, independent assessments of ADA paratransit eligibility also lend greater objectivity during client appeals of determination decisions. Essentially, when an appeal occurs, ARC staff can act as the advocate for the determination decision, while Rabbit Transit staff can more objectively judge the merits of the appeal.

- The quality assurance program provides an independent assessment to Rabbit Transit management about certain indicators related to performance of its transit services for disabled users. Based on the monthly findings, Rabbit Transit can then target areas that need improvement. The assessment is also shared with the transit agency's board and available for the community at large, providing a window on agency performance for one of its important ridership groups. And having the assessment performed by a disability organization gives credibility to the findings, certainly more so than if the assessment was done by only the transit agency itself.
- The project greatly increased ARC's understanding of the ADA, giving the transit agency a strong partner in the community for ADA issues. In many communities, ADA is misunderstood, with ensuing high expectations about what ADA requires for disabled individuals. When the local transit services do

not match up to those misperceptions, problems can follow. In York, a major disability organization now fully understands the ADA and can support the transit agency when ADA questions or issues arise in the community. Such support - coming from a disability group - carries significant weight.

## Barriers/Constraints

The most significant barrier to this program was financial. During the term of the Project ACTION grant, the extensive funding permitted full-time program staff to be dedicated to the project. After expiration of the grant, Rabbit Transit funding and other local resources were insufficient to maintain this presence. This issue was resolved through negotiation of the "fees by activity," with fixed costs for activities like driver training and ADA eligibility determination. ARC staff who currently perform these tasks share time with other ARC programs, like assisted employment.

Another smaller barrier early on were perceived "slights" of other agencies working with clients with disabilities. Several agencies expressed the opinion to Rabbit Transit that they were in a better position to work with the transit provider. This criticism tended to disappear when it was explained that the ARC actually generated the funding for the project, not Rabbit Transit.

The expansion of funding for the program through the state Welfare-to-Work grant also required some convincing that helping workers transitioning from welfare to work fit into the mission of a disability organization. As it became clear that many of the individuals referred to the new program also had disabilities, this became a non-issue.

### **Transferability**

Development of a meaningful partnership between a community's public transit agency and the disability community can be started "one organization at a time," and the experience in York County shows that such a partnership can result in real benefits - for the transit agency, the disability organization, and the community at large. However, a level of understanding and trust as to the intent and requirements of the ADA is critical to building such a relationship and mandatory for maintaining an effective partnership.

While the seed money obtained through Project ACTION helped develop the relationship between Rabbit Transit and ARC of York County, such funding is not a prerequisite. Transit agencies interested in establishing such a relationship and improving services for their disabled riders might approach a local disability organization for assistance in several key areas, such as sensitivity training for drivers, quality assurance monitoring, and ADA certification. While the latter may require considerable planning and time to implement, assistance with driver training and performance monitoring should

not be as time-intensive. Moreover, there are many resources available through Project ACTION and other industry sources on sensitivity training that can be utilized by localities.

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### **Additional Resource**

[www.projectaction.org](http://www.projectaction.org)

## **Shuttle Service in National Parks: Reducing Congestion and Improving Tourist Experience**

**Zion National Park  
Springdale, Utah**

### **Organization Highlights**

Zion National Park stretches over 150,000 acres in southern Utah, attracting more than 2.5 million visitors each year. The park is administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

### **Background/Objectives**

Traffic in Zion National Park and its gateway community of Springdale had been increasing over the years, creating congestion and environmental impacts within the park as well as within Springdale, a small community of just 350 year-round residents situated at the southern entrance of the canyon park. Of particular concern was traffic created by the visitors who chose to travel up the six-mile canyon road in the upper part of the park. The Park Service estimates that about one-half of visitors take that trip. On an average summer day, more than 2,000 vehicles traveled up the canyon road, competing for just 300 parking spaces scattered along the six-mile roadway. Traffic and congestion impacts then spilled into the down canyon part of the park and into the community of Springdale as well.

Shuttle service had been discussed for Zion as early as the late 1970s to mitigate traffic impacts. By the late 1980s, the situation had become so extreme that a five-day transit service experiment was conducted in 1988. Based on success of the experiment, the Park Service began public planning in 1991 and serious transportation planning for shuttle services in 1994. Of significance for the planning effort was the involvement of

the gateway community. Springdale asked to be involved in the planning process, recognizing that it could be part of the solution and also improve its own quality of life. The Park Service was very receptive to the community's involvement, recognizing that the boundary between the park and its gateway community was transparent and that transportation improvements could assist visitors in Springdale as well as in the park.

Shuttle service planning targeted both the park and Springdale. For Springdale, transportation planning efforts incorporated community design elements to enhance a streetscape and create an attractive environment to encourage visitors to park and get out of their cars. The partnership that developed between the Park Service and its gateway community enabled the planning and design of the shuttle service to focus on improving quality of life for residents of Springdale, as well as mitigating traffic and its associated impacts.

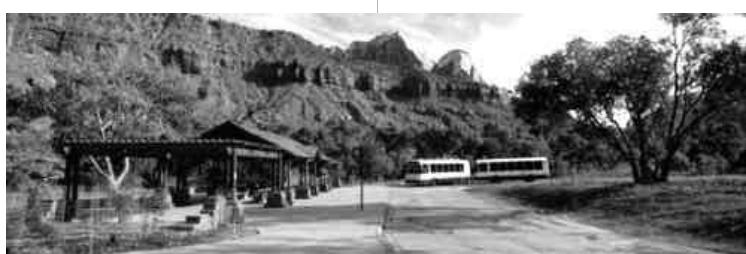
### **Description**

The NPS initiated shuttle service in Zion National Park and Springdale in May 2000, after six years of planning. Shuttle operations include two loop routes, one serving the town of Springdale and the second serving the park. The two routes

converge at the new visitor/transit center complex, which serves to introduce visitors to Zion as well as functioning as the transfer point for the two routes. The routes operate seven days per week, from 5:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., April through October. Service frequency ranges from six minutes during peak periods to 30 minutes in the early morning and late evening hours. Almost 50,000 annual revenue hours of service are to be provided each year. Service is operated on a contract basis by a private contractor. The fleet consists of 30 propane buses and 21 trailers. Service in the park uses the trailers to provide additional capacity, though in the town, the trailers are not used.

The new visitor/transit center, providing park information and interpretative services, was designed with an emphasis on energy efficiency. This facility consumes 70 percent less energy than a traditional visitor facility through the use of sustainable design features and construction practices.

Visitor parking is provided in several locations. Over half of the estimated 1,000 spaces needed to support shuttle use are available within the park, through existing campground parking and spaces constructed at the visitor/transit center. The remaining parking requirements are provided by on-street and



off-street parking in Springdale. The on-street parking is located on State Route 9, which provides entry into Springdale and Zion. While state highways do not typically permit on-street parking, officials agreed to such use based on community interests and the cooperative planning with the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT).

Private vehicles are no longer allowed in the upper six miles of Zion canyon. Access to the upper canyon is restricted to shuttle service, registered overnight lodge guests, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Private vehicle use remains throughout other parts of the park and Springdale.

## Resources

### *Capital Costs*

Total capital costs for the new transportation system, which includes the visitor/transit center, the shuttle vehicle fleet, maintenance facility, park and town shuttle stops, campground and trail rehabilitation, and private investments in Springdale lot was \$27 million.

### *Operating Costs*

Costs for shuttle service operations were \$1.8 million for the first five-month season in 2000 and projected up to \$2.5 million per seven-month season in subsequent years. At this time, shuttle service operates from April through October, with plans to expand eventually to year-round service.

## *Funding for Transportation System*

Capital funding came from both public and private sources. On the public side, funding was provided by National Park Service construction appropriations and TEA-21 funds administered through both NPS and UDOT programs. Private funds, which paid for the northern terminus of the town shuttle loop, tour



bus parking, and a camper store/restaurant facility within the visitor/transit complex, were provided by a private concern—the Zion Canyon Theater.

Operating funds for the shuttle service come from a percentage of the visitor entrance fee to the park, resulting in a self-supporting transit operation.

## Results

The NPS had estimated that about 1.2 million visitors to Zion would use the new transportation system on an annual basis. Experience during the first summer of service found projections were exceeded: about 1.5 million visitors used the shuttle service.

For the town of Springdale, results included a decrease in traffic congestion and related environmental impacts, as well as the new relationship with the

Park Service that has made the boundary between town and park more transparent.

For visitors to the park, the quality of the park experience has improved. Visitors are able to see more of the park from the shuttle vehicles, and there is new socialization among visitors which did not occur when traveling by private car or scrambling for limited parking. Additionally, increased wildlife sightings and a significant drop in noise in the upper canyon of Zion are benefits attributed to the decrease in vehicle traffic.

## **Barriers/Constraints**

Challenges to the project included: successful partnering efforts and associated time requirements, capital and operations cost control, and legislative authorities. The public and private partnering efforts, which were very effective and successful, required significant and unexpected time commitments, though this additional time allowed more community planning and participation that yielded tremendous community support. Capital and operating cost containment strategies were ever-present and initiated innovative facilities and operational practices. Existing legislative authorities required new legislation for operations and federal capital expenditures outside of park boundaries as well as extended contracting time limits as required for contractor investment.

NPS staff indicated that possibly the most significant constraint to the Zion shuttle service was the amount of time and effort needed for develop-

ment—about six years and extensive staff time. However, this time and effort did allow the NPS to involve the public and specifically visitors in planning the service and certainly contributed to the strong partnership that evolved between the NPS and the community of Springdale.

Another constraint was the large capital cost—\$27 million. The maintenance facility, in particular, was expensive but required to maintain the fleet of propane vehicles.

### **Transferability**

Shuttle services can be part of traffic mitigation strategies for tourist areas, particularly when coupled with parking facilities, streetscape, and community design features that encourage visitors to get out of their vehicles, and policies to increase shuttle



use. Certainly, the closing of a roadway to private vehicular use is a policy that will increase shuttle use.

Additionally, the Zion project has shown that shuttle service can actually improve tourists' experience. At Zion, shuttle use provided improved views of the park and new socialization among tourists, with sharing of experiences and backgrounds,

such as identification of nationalities or home states.

The project has also shown the benefits of working closely with the neighboring community. In many tourist areas, there is a tense balance between the tourist attraction and its neighboring community. The community's livelihood may thrive on the tourist economy, but many of the residents may be negatively impacted by tourist traffic, crowding, and price increases during peak seasons. Those responsible for the tourist attraction can improve the relationship with the neighboring community and ease the balance by involving the community residents in planning strategies to mitigate tourist impacts, specifically traffic.

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## **Intermodal Facility: City Buses, Greyhound, and Taxis**

### **FREDericksburg Regional Transit Fredericksburg, Virginia**

#### **Organization Highlights**

FREDericksburg Regional Transit (FRED) is a small urban transit system in Fredericksburg, Virginia, located about halfway between Washington, D.C., and Virginia's state capital, Richmond. The Fredericksburg area has a population of about 75,000 and is known for the colonial and Civil War history of its surroundings.

FRED, with a fleet of nine small transit vehicles, operates six routes, Mondays through Fridays. Two of the routes extend into neighboring Spotsylvania County. Additional service is provided evenings during the school year to benefit students of the local college, a service funded completely by the local college.

#### **Background/Objectives**

When the City of Fredericksburg began route planning for its new community-level service in the Spring of 1996, it had no facility to house the new transit system. While a downtown location may have made sense, the city's historic downtown was already congested with local and tourist traffic on its narrow streets. At about the same time, Greyhound expressed an interest in leaving its Fredericksburg site and finding a local agent to sell tickets. Once route planning was underway, the city realized that the Greyhound facility - located along Route 1 - was situated roughly at the geographic center of the new service area. The city saw an opportunity - to make a deal with Greyhound to take over their facility - and moved forward to finalize an arrangement.

#### **Description**

The city's transit system, FRED, moved into the Greyhound facility just before service began in December 1996. The facility became the transfer point for the original four routes of the system, earning its local name of FRED Central. The site had adequate parking for the transit system's nine smaller vehicles and office space for the new system's staff. And Greyhound buses continue to serve the location, with 17 buses arriving and departing each day.

FRED staff serve as the Greyhound agent, selling tickets for Greyhound during their office hours - Monday through Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Saturdays 7:00 a.m. to

3:00 p.m. When the office is closed, Greyhound passengers board at the Fredericksburg facility and then pay for their tickets at the next office on route that is open, or they may buy tickets in advance when the FRED office is open. Even though FRED operates no service on Saturdays, the office is staffed to sell Greyhound tickets; the revenue received through commissions more than covers the staffing costs for Saturdays. FRED has also negotiated some flexibility with Greyhound in terms of staffing the office for ticket sales. If there is an emergency and FRED's staff are called away temporarily to meet FRED's needs, a sign is posted notifying any boarding Greyhound passengers that they should purchase their tickets at



the next open Greyhound station. With a small staff that must “wear many hats,” this flexibility is important for FRED.

In addition to serving as the hub for the local routes and Greyhound, local taxis have established a taxi stand on one side of the facility, and there is generally a taxi waiting at the stand, particularly when there is an arriving Greyhound bus. FRED management is trying to interest one of the local taxi companies into setting up a dispatch operation at FRED Central, which would provide staff at the facility on a 24-hour a day basis.

FRED Central is also served by the transit system of a neighboring jurisdiction - Colonial Beach Transit. This provider serves the site on an on-demand basis, allowing riders to transfer from one system to the other and expanding travel opportunities.

After more than four years at the Greyhound site, the city is negotiating to purchase the site. Virginia’s Department of Rail and Public Transportation has provided the city with federal and state funds for acquisition and building a new facility.

## **Resources**

### ***Costs to Fredericksburg***

The city’s current arrangement with Greyhound has the city leasing the facility for a small fee and the city has taken over payment of annual property taxes.

### ***Revenues***

The city, through FRED, acts as the Greyhound agent, generating about \$300,000 to \$400,000 in ticket sales on an annual basis, which provides close to \$5,000 in commission sales on a monthly basis. This is an important revenue source, budgeted at almost seven percent of total expected revenue for FY 2000.

### ***Purchase of the Property***

The City of Fredericksburg is in the process of buying the Greyhound property. To meet federal funding requirements, the city has been conducting site inspection work to ensure compliance with environmental regulations. Once all issues are resolved, the site can be purchased. Depending upon funding available, the city will then build a new facility on the site or remodel the existing older building. The city plans to continue the current arrangement, with the new facility serving as the offices for the local transit system, FRED, and the Greyhound office as well. Funding for the purchase and new facility is being provided through federal grants predominately, with the Commonwealth of Virginia and the city contributing as well.

### ***Results***

The co-location of the city’s transit system, Greyhound and local taxi providers has benefited the providers as well as the riding public in the following ways:

- FRED provides direct service to Greyhound, as most of the FRED routes meet at the shared facility, known as FRED Central.
- Ridership on Greyhound has increased at Fredericksburg, due, in part, to the improved access that FRED has provided to the intercity carrier.
- Revenue from commissions is an important part of overall FRED revenues.
- The initial coordination of FRED and Greyhound at the location spurred additional coordination, with local taxis establishing a taxi stand at the site and at least one neighboring provider serving the facility.

## **Barriers/Constraints**

The current older facility is too small for FRED’s operations. Office space is cramped and the restrooms are accessed only from the outside, an arrangement set up when the building was only a small Greyhound station but inconvenient for FRED staff, particularly in colder weather. Until the city builds a new facility or remodels the existing one, the day-to-day office environment is too small.

Additionally, with the local rail station located in downtown Fredericksburg, the city bus system was not able to co-locate with rail service. However, FRED does serve the rail station, allowing access to both AM-TRAK and Virginia Rail Express (VRE), which provides commuter rail service into the Washington, D.C., area. It should be noted, though, that current FRED service hours do not start early enough in the day to provide viable connections to VRE, whose commuter runs start in the very early morning hours.

Another issue has been the need to address the public and open nature of a bus station. While the advantage of co-locating with Greyhound has benefited FRED and the community in many ways, the nature of a busy bus terminal is such that, on a few occasions, proper security and coordination with the local police have been needed. FRED has worked with the police and the department ensures periodic visibility of its officers.

### **Transferability**

Co-locating a public transit facility with Greyhound, or another intercity carrier, requires the presence of the intercity service and, clearly, interest on the carrier's part. Across the country, there are examples of Greyhound establishing relationships with local public transit agencies willing to serve as the ticket agent in exchange for commissions, and Greyhound is interested in such coordination. A public transit system can benefit from the coordination as well as the increased revenue, though there may need to be changes to

the transit system office if the facility is not set up to serve the public on a daily, ongoing basis.

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## **Fixed-Route Service Improvement: Focusing on Customers, Quality, and Image**

### **Basin Transit System Klamath Falls, Oregon**

#### **Organization Highlights**

Basin Transit Service is the public transit provider for Klamath Falls, serving a commercial and residential area with a population of about 45,000 on Oregon's southern border with California. Basin Transit is organized as an independent Transportation District under Oregon law and is directed by an elected seven-member Board.

Basin Transit operates fixed-route services on five routes using five buses in peak service and paratransit services using three vehicles. Service is provided weekdays and Saturdays.

#### **Background/Objectives**

In 1993-94, Basin Transit management recognized that the fixed-route system did not correspond to passengers' travel patterns, as evidenced by a high rate of transfers - research showed that about 25 percent of all passengers had to transfer in the course of their travel - and a complaint rate that was running at about 30 per week. Obtaining Federal funding through the Oregon Department of Transportation for planning assistance, Basin Transit developed a Request For Proposals and selected a consultant to evaluate the system and develop recommendations for "nuts and bolts," real-world improvements that could be easily implemented by local staff.

In addition to the consultant's efforts, Basin Transit's management was concurrently taking other actions in the areas of organizational structure, complaint handling, bus stop and shelter maintenance, and graffiti pre-

vention to maximize the quality of services being delivered, the system's responsiveness to its public, and to ensure the highest possible public image for the transit system.

While these actions were taken individually and not as an integrated management plan, they constitute a coherent system improvement program focused on achieving a more user-friendly transit system, increased customer satisfaction, and a more positive image within the community.

#### **Description**

**System Design:** Prior to implementing the consultant's recommendations, Basin Transit had a system of pulse-coordinated, circular "loop" routes. This system necessitated a high volume of transfers in order to complete

travel and, due to the "loop" structure of the routes, required passengers to often take long rides for fairly short trips. The consultant recommended a route structure based on a couple of "main line" routes along the main streets coordinated with feeder routes accessing neighborhoods. The recommendations were presented in an "operating manual" format with sufficient detail so that they could be immediately implemented by local staff. Completed in 1994, Basin Transit staff indicated that the report is still valid today and serves as a reference document.

The results of the system redesign were to drastically reduce the need to transfer - dropping the transfer rate from about 25 percent to 9-10 percent - and reduce travel time for some trips from an hour or more to 15 to 20 minutes.



**Organizational Restructuring:** Basin Transit had developed an administratively top-heavy organization. Based on a philosophy of “operations first,” Basin Transit’s manager eliminated department heads and redeployed existing staffing levels to provide operational supervision whenever transit services are on the street. Of the present total staff of 32 positions, only four are management and administration.

**Complaint Administration:** To address Basin Transit’s complaint level (though it should be noted the transit system operates on a fairly liberal interpretation of what constitutes a “complaint”), a complaint process has been implemented in which every complaint is recorded, logged-in and sent to the manager for review and assignment for investigation and response.

Every complaint is specifically addressed and the individual receives a follow-up call to clarify the complaint within 24 hours of the initial call. Once the complaint has been investigated and appropriate action taken, a final contact is made with the individual making a complaint to explain what was found and the remedial actions. This process has contributed to a reduction of complaints to approximately 50 annually, or about four per month in all categories.



**Bus Shelter/Stop Maintenance:** Basin Transit believes that each bus stop and shelter is a public representation of the transit system and that if the system can’t afford or manage to keep them neat and clean, it would be better to remove them. Basin Transit has implemented a policy that requires that each bus shelter be visited by maintenance staff each operating day to keep the shelter and surrounding area (up to ten feet around the shelter) clean and litter-free. Damaged glass is replaced immediately. This program is highly visible and has had a significant positive impact on the system’s image in the community.

**Graffiti Prevention:** Basin Transit addressed a growing problem with on-bus vandalism, particularly of window glass, by replacing vandalized glass immediately and placing a sticker on the replaced windows announcing a \$100 reward for information on vandalism leading to a conviction. This program has resulted in tips to system management regarding vandalism, direct warnings to suspected individuals, and has eliminated vandalism on the buses.

## Resources

Basin Transit has an annual operating budget of \$1,218,701 for FY 2000-01 and a capital budget of \$1,184,000. The capital budget is unusually high during this year due to replacement of several large and small buses and improvement of a major transfer location all in the same year.

Funding support for Basin Transit comes through a local

dedicated property tax (50%), State of Oregon subsidies (15%), farebox recovery (20%), Federal Rural Transportation Program-S.5311 (10%), and miscellaneous revenues such as interest on deposits (5%). The system has a target of achieving 20 percent passenger fare recovery and expects to achieve just about that figure for the current year. Interestingly, the system has eliminated several fare discounts other than its monthly pass and now has a higher farebox recovery than previously on a lower ridership total (ridership numbers are down due to lower transferring rate).

The major single expense related to the system redesign was approximately \$65,000 for the consultant study. Significant expenses were also incurred, some in terms of staff time, in revising and reprinting system timetables, relocating and replacing bus stop signs, and in marketing and advertising the new routing and schedule.

## Results

Basin Transit’s commitment to increased customer satisfaction and an improved, positive image for public transit resulted in higher quality service for the community.

Basin Transit reports that the system design has resulted in a more user-friendly structure, increased customer satisfaction and a much lower transfer rate of from nine to ten percent (as opposed to 25 percent with the prior system design). Ridership averages about 1,100 boardings per weekday, which is actually lower than numbers under the

prior system structure since fewer transfers are now made.

The graffiti prevention program - at very little cost since there have been no convictions for vandalism - has stopped on-bus vandalism.

Basin's complaint tracking shows a significant reduction in the rate of complaints, from 30 per week to an average of about 4 per month. This reduction, of course, must be attributed to the combined effect of the service redesign and other improvements, in addition to more effective complaint administration and response.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

Support of the Basin Transit board and community was fostered through the consultant study by a "team" approach to the project and an active outreach program by the consultants. The board participated in developing the work program and selecting the consultant, then actively participated in the study and development of alternatives. Through their involvement, the board members knew the basis for the recommendations and were supportive of their implementation.

Outreach to the community provided input to the study as well as informed citizens and transit users of prospective and upcoming changes. The system redesign did result in making services somewhat less convenient for some passengers - for example, by moving routes out of crowded parking lots onto public streets - however, these objections were addressed through the development of clear standards

for the placement of stops and bus stop amenities that addressed criteria of safety and use.

### **Transferability**

While Basin Transit's management contends that none of these improvements and programs are "innovative," together they represent a significant program of committed actions that increase the responsiveness of this transit service to its community - by focusing on transit's customers - and present a positive, strong and professional image for transit in the community.

With the exception of the consultant's redesign of the system, the improvements and changes made by Basin Transit were not particularly costly, but required redeployment and commitment of existing staff to new responsibilities and programs. Evidenced by the small size of this transit system - a fleet totaling ten fixed-route and three paratransit vehicles - these programs can be undertaken by a transit system of any size.

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## **INITIATIVES AND INNOVATIONS IN FUNDING**

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Generating funds for public transit is an ongoing endeavor for smaller transit systems in rural and small urban areas with the limits of public grant programs. Pursuit of new funding has spawned many creative and innovative initiatives at the local level and a number are included here. For example, the Baldwin Rural Area Transit System in Alabama “sells bus seats” to employers—a creative twist on the more traditional subscription bus services for employers.

Some of the initiatives highlighted in the following section, however, have been around for years. Serving shoppers through targeted shuttles, for example, is not novel. But Citibus’s shopper shuttle program in its community of Lubbock, Texas, is in-

cluded because of its scale, origins, and success. Implemented, in part, to use available capacity during off-peak times when fixed-route buses were idle, Citibus’s shopper shuttle program was designed in partnership with one of the community’s large grocery store chains, now providing 4,900 annual hours of service, serving close to 50,000 annual trips, and generating \$180,000 for the transit system in FY 2000, fully covering the operating costs.

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### **PRESENTED IN THIS CATEGORY:**

1. ***Public-Private “Partners” Program: Generating New Funds For Transit***—FREDericksburg Regional Transit, Fredericksburg, Virginia
2. ***Employment-Oriented Services: Seeking New Service Markets and Expanding Funding Base***—Rabbit Transit, York County, Pennsylvania
3. ***Grocery Store Shuttle Services***—Citibus, Lubbock, Texas
4. ***Program Transportation Transitioning to General Public Tribal Transportation Service***—Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises, Inc., Zuni, New Mexico
5. ***Buy Groceries, Ride the Bus for Free***—Rabbit Transit, York County, Pennsylvania
6. ***SunSweep and the Fringe-Toed Lizard: Services Beyond Passenger Transportation***—SunLine Services Group, Thousand Palms, California
7. ***Selling Bus Seats to Employers***—Baldwin Area Rural Transit System, Robertsdale, Alabama

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## **Public-Private “Partners” Program: Generating New Funds for Transit**

### **FREDericksburg Regional Transit Fredericksburg, Virginia**

#### **Organization Highlights**

FRED is a small urban transit system in Fredericksburg, Virginia, located about halfway between Washington, D.C., and Virginia's state capital, Richmond. The Fredericksburg area has a population of about 75,000 and is known for the colonial and Civil War history of its surroundings.

FRED, with a fleet of nine small transit vehicles, operates six routes, Mondays through Fridays. Two of the routes extend into neighboring Spotsylvania County. Additional service is provided evenings during the school year to benefit students of the local college, a service funded completely by the local college.

Fares are 25 cents. Certain groups of riders can travel without charge, for example, students of the college when showing college ID, because free fares have been negotiated with specific local organizations that contribute to the transit system through the Partner program.

#### **Background/Objectives**

In the early 1990s, local officials and community leaders began discussing initiation of public transit in Fredericksburg; the city was, at that time, one of only a few in Virginia with a four-year college and no public transit system. Based on increasing local support and after an extensive community-wide survey effort conducted with the help of the local college, the city initiated its deviated fixed-route system in December 1996.

The Commonwealth of Virginia, through the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, was very supportive during the planning stage and provided state funding to initiate service (no federal funds were used initially). To match the state funding, the City of Fredericksburg built on strong community support for local transit and specifically looked to its larger community organizations for funding - the local college, Mary Washington College, and the local hospital, MediCorp Health System. Both organizations stood to benefit from the new transit service.

funds evolved, as did the term “Partners” program.

FRED then approached neighboring Spotsylvania County<sup>1</sup> to seek support: one of the FRED routes served the Spotsylvania Mall. The city wanted to serve this important destination even without first securing support from the county. But the county quickly came through - with a first year contribution of \$25,000.

With the opening of a large new retail development at the outskirts of the city during FRED's first year, FRED saw another

opportunity and approached the developer. The development company, anxious to become a “good neighbor,” agreed to become a Partner and contributed \$25,000.

FRED built upon these early successes and has furthered the Partners program with a more formal structure and extensive efforts to “sell” itself to the local organizations and prove its worth.

The stated objectives of the Partners program are: “building community support which guarantees long term success, helps defray the costs of providing transit service, and keeps fares at a quarter, which is affordable for the entire community.”

## **PARTNERSHIP POWER...**



For FRED's first fiscal year, the hospital contributed \$50,000 and the college, \$25,000. These were intended as first year only contributions. However, given the ongoing needs for funding to continue the service and limits of state assistance, FRED recognized that it must continue to obtain local funding. According to FRED's transit manager, it became necessary to “sell” the transit system to the community. The notion of building public-private partnerships to obtain local

<sup>1</sup>In Virginia, cities and counties are distinct and separate jurisdictional entities; cities are not part of counties.

## Description

### *Structure of Partners Program*

The Partners program has become more formalized. There are now four levels of partnership reflecting the amount of assistance given to the transit system:

- Senior Partner - Contribution of \$50,000 or more annually.
- Partner - Contribution of \$25,000 to \$49,999 annually.
- Junior Partner - Contribution of \$7,000 to 24,999 annually.
- Sponsor - One-time contribution of up to \$7,000.

Partners receive certain “benefits” in return for their contribution.

- Routing specifically serves each Partner’s location.
- Partners at the top two levels are given a seat on FRED’s Public Transit Advisory Board. The Board’s monthly meetings provide ongoing opportunity to discuss local transit and give FRED access to important community leaders and the ability to keep a finger on the pulse of the community. FRED also uses this Board to recruit new Partners; one of the Board’s three standing subcommittees is devoted specifically to finding new Partners.
- Partners at the top two levels are listed on FRED’s schedule and rider information materials and identified in all press releases and

public service announcements.

- All Partners receive a detailed annual report, which spells out all the benefits of the partnership and is specifically tailored to each Partner organization. For example, the annual report prepared for the hospital - now a senior Partner - includes, among many other items:
  - Statistical analysis of ridership related to the hospital; boardings at stops serving the hospital and related medical facilities are tracked and reported. Thus, the Partner can track ridership to its location(s).
  - Detailed report on special transportation services provided to the Partner, for example, FRED provided shuttle services for the hospital’s Centennial Volunteer Luncheon.
  - Copies of press releases and press articles on FRED, with a highlighting (literally, in yellow highlighter pen) of every mention of the hospital. FRED is very careful to ensure that its higher level Partners are specifically credited in each discussion with the press and then takes the time to show the hospital each and every article and press release where the hospital’s name appears.
- Expense and revenue breakdown, with data on the funding contributions of Partners.
- Information on awards and recognitions received by FRED, which include identification of all of the Partners. Every mention of the hospital is highlighted (again, literally, in yellow highlighter pen) and credit is given to the Partners for the successes of FRED.

When detailed and packaged attractively in the annual report with the showcasing of the Partner receiving the report, these “benefits” become real and powerful. It is hard “proof” to the Partner’s CEO or top managers of what their contribution has “bought” - transportation service for their customers (or employees or students), delivered to the Partner’s location; a seat on the transit system’s advisory group, with input into the planning process; advertising via videos on the buses and through the rider information materials; considerable press in the local and regional newspapers; and, importantly, the goodwill created by supporting the city’s public transit system, which provides other less tangible benefits such as community stature and, probably, access to the local political structure.

### *Managing the Partners Program*

FRED expends considerable effort, particularly in management time, on the Partners program. This effort includes:

- Managing the data reporting process that generates the detailed data by stop so that ridership by Partner can be tracked;
- Developing each of the detailed annual reports for the Partners;
- Meeting with the Public Transit Advisory Board, specifically the subcommittee on Partners to assess and plan efforts to recruit additional Partners;
- Giving numerous presentations and other speaking engagements in the community, extolling the transit system and benefits of the Partners program, essentially, recruiting new Partners; and
- Responding to special transportation requests by the higher level Partners, for example, the shuttle services for the hospital's special Centennial Volunteer Luncheon.

#### **Possible Enhancements to Partner Program**

The Partners program is now over four years old, and FRED management, staying one step ahead with new thoughts and ideas, expects there may be changes in the near term future. As FRED's manager suggests, it is probably easier to generate support for a new transit system; sustaining such support over time may take more creativity and effort. FRED believes that its Partners, to sustain their participation, may ask for more specific "benefits." For example, the grocery store Partner may want to have free ride tickets

that it can give to its customers after purchase of groceries. This is the type of enhancement that the transit system is prepared to consider.

#### **Resources**

##### **Revenues**

The Partner program generates considerable revenue for the transit system. During FY 1998, audited data show that contributions from Partners amounted to 25 percent of total revenue (the remaining amounts came from fares and Greyhound ticket sales commission, at 14%, and from state funding, at 61%). For FY 1999, the Partners program contributed significantly more, providing 56 percent of total revenue.

One interesting aspect to the Partners program is that local government entities, in this case the city and county, are heralded and identified as Partners. Many transit systems "expect" local government contributions. But in FRED's philosophy, local government bodies are showcased as Partners, building a foundation of the Partners program, creating momentum for the program, and encouraging others to join as Partners. For example, for budgeted revenues for FY 2000, 64 percent are identified as Partner contributions, with about three-quarters of this portion coming from the city and county Partners. Budgeted contributions from the other Partners (including, among others, the hospital, college, a community college, and Fredericksburg Social Services) total \$125,000, which is 16 percent of total budgeted revenues.

Budgeted revenues for FY 2000 also include, for the first time, a federal grant. In keeping with FRED's philosophy, this funding, too, is considered as coming from a Partner.

##### **Costs**

Costs to FRED to manage the Partners program are predominately management time, which FRED has estimated at up to 40 percent of the manager's time. However, the Partners program is so integral to FRED that many management activities are done with the Partners in mind. There are also incidental costs for printing the annual reports; however, much of this is done in-house with desk-top publishing and a color printer.

An additional cost to the system is revenue not collected from those riders who travel for free due to the contribution from their Partner organization. However, at 25 cents per fare, given current ridership levels and in light of the contributions from the sponsoring Partner organizations, these losses are small.

#### **Results**

The results of the Partners program include both the additional funding generated as well as the strong community support created for the transit system.

As noted above, the Partners program, including contributions from local government, generated \$506,990 for the transit system - 64 percent of total budgeted revenue for FY 2000.

Local government's share of this Partners' total is the majority. However, funding obtained from other local organizations, such as the hospital and college, added up to \$125,000 for FY 2000—16 percent of total budgeted revenues, an important proportion.

Another important aspect has been growth in the number of Partners and sustained participation. During FRED's first year, the Partners included the two local governments (city and county), the hospital, college, and a local developer. By the second year, a local supermarket joined. By the third year, the city's social services department joined as a Partner, and in the fourth year (FY 2000), the county's social services department joined as did a local junior college. These more recent Partners have contributed at the lower level of assistance. Significantly, all Partners have sustained their participation.

The community support and relationships created between the transit system and participating local organizations may be as important as the financial assistance. For a new community service, this support has been invaluable as the system has focused on building ridership, marketing its services, and exploring new neighborhoods and destinations to serve.

Moreover, the partnership program has been written up frequently as an innovative approach for funding community transit, and FRED has received press and a number of awards, most recently, the Virginia Municipal League's *President's Award for Entrepreneurial Gov-*

ernment

FRED is not only pleased to receive such awards, but uses them extensively to promote itself to its Partners. Such promotion continues the momentum of the partnership program, with more "ink" to showcase to its Partners and build the case for continued contributions.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

FRED's management dismisses "barriers," operating under the belief that anything (reasonable) can be tried. For the Partners program, there were no specific barriers cited to its establishment. The program does require time and energy, management resources that are typically stretched but critical to sustain the program.

### **Transferability**

FRED's partnership program is a good example of what an industrious, motivated, and unabashed transit system can accomplish to raise funds from the local community. Key elements are the transit services provided to the Partners' locations and ongoing communication between the transit system and Partners as well as the community at large. This includes the monthly meetings of the advisory board, the numerous presentations and speeches given by FRED management throughout the community, and continual feedback to the Partners of the accomplishments of FRED, specifically for each individual Partner but also overall achievements.

FRED specifically recommends that a transit system determine the "right" people in the community to approach, if interested in developing a Partners program. This means identifying the "movers and shakers" of the community whose contributions can be meaningful and those that benefit from the transit system. And as FRED did, a Partners program can build on the contributions of local government.

Also important, clearly, is a transit system that provides quality, effective service to the community and generates adequate ridership levels. These are achievements that can then be touted.

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## **Employment-Oriented Services: Seeking New Service Markets and Expanding Funding Base**

**Rabbit Transit  
York County, Pennsylvania**

### **Organization Highlights**

Rabbit Transit is a small urban and rural transit agency serving York County, Pennsylvania, located in the south central part of the state. York County is predominately rural, with one small city - York. The county's year 2000 total population is estimated at about 370,000. The City of York has an estimated 42,000 population, with a considerably larger surrounding urban area. Rabbit Transit operates fixed-route and paratransit services, with a fleet of 30 buses and 30 paratransit vehicles. The transit system is a public authority, created by the county in 1974 through state enabling legislation, with a 12-member board of directors appointed by the county commissioners.

### **Background/Objectives**

In addition to other transit services, Rabbit Transit operates 11 fixed routes in the core area of the City of York, the majority of which converge at a downtown transfer center every 30 minutes, providing relatively good coverage for the city area. Through relationships established with various employers in the area, the transit agency has added special employer-oriented services to meet specific transportation needs of local employers not well-served by the core routes. The employment-oriented services include: (1) all-day routes designed specifically to serve the area's largest single employer - the hospital; and (2) shuttle services at specific times of the day to support smaller employers' welfare-to-work efforts.

Services for the hospital developed when Rabbit Transit management contacted the hospital after learning the hospital was breaking ground on a major expansion project which would exacerbate an already tight employee parking situation. Rabbit Transit suggested to the hospital that it could operate shuttle services between remote parking and the hospital site.

Services for other area employers developed through the community's welfare-to-work efforts. Since not all employers were readily accessible by public transit and with some companies operating very early or very late shifts, Rabbit Transit began working with several local employers to improve public transit to their sites, building on meetings sponsored by local economic development officials.

Rabbit Transit has been very proactive in identifying local transportation needs that it can solve, approaching employers with ideas for transit solutions. The agency's objectives for these employment-oriented services are several: to meet needs in the community, expand its own service base, generate additional revenues, and indirectly

increase support for public transit in the community.

### **Description**

#### ***Transit Services for the Hospital***

The hospital services now include:

- An all-day route operating between remote parking provided at a shopping mall and the hospital site. This route provides 27.5 revenue hours per weekday, using two vehicles, and generates weekly ridership of about 750.
- A shuttle route operating between the hospital and a remote medical facility affiliated with the hospital. This route is designed to serve employees and patients as well as packages and parcels (paperwork as well as medical supplies such as blood) traveling between the two sites.

Services for the hospital have been operating for more than six years, and the routes are integrated into Rabbit Transit's overall route system and open to the general public, though the majority of riders are associated with the hospital. All riders on these two hospital services ride for free.

These hospital-oriented services are fully subsidized by the hospital, at the transit agency's fully allocated cost level.



### **Services for Other Area Employers**

Through experience, the agency has developed procedures for planning and implementing other employer shuttles. These include:

- The transit system first determines the feasibility of serving the particular employer site, assessing how the service fits with the existing fixed-route system. For example, can the employer site can be served by one of the existing fixed-route vehicles before it starts its regular fixed-route schedule? Or does the employer need service during Rabbit Transit's peak period when all vehicles are in use?
- If feasible and the employer's needs fit with existing fixed-route commitments, Rabbit Transit sets up the employer shuttle as part of its regular urban service, that is, the shuttle route and time are advertised to the public and the regular fare structure applies. The expectation is that the service will focus on employees of the sponsoring employer, but once the shuttle is inserted into regular service, anyone can use the service.
- Given the pulse coordinated nature of Rabbit Transit's urban routes, the shuttle routes typically begin at the downtown transfer center.
- Rabbit Transit then negotiates a *memorandum of understanding* (MOU) with the employer, which functions more as a communication device rather than a

rigid contract, establishing specific points of contact for shuttle operations. The transit agency has found that operation of employer shuttle services can be marred when different individuals at the employer end try to negotiate shuttle operations. For example, the MOU establishes which specific individual can request deviations to the service. Without an MOU, Rabbit Transit found itself in situations with one employer supervisor calling to request a delayed shuttle run because of overtime requirements and another supervisor calling to complain when the shuttle vehicle did not arrive at the regularly scheduled time.

- Employer financial support for the shuttle service is also spelled out in the MOU. Rabbit Transit determines what its "breakeven" ridership level is for the specific shuttle service, using its variable cost per hour. After the first 90 days - where the transit agency operates the service with no financial obligation to the employer - there are three options: (1) service continues with no employer subsidy required as ridership levels provide adequate farebox recovery to meet the "breakeven" level; (2) the service continues without adequate ridership levels to meet the breakeven point with the employer subsidizing the "shortfall;" or (3) the shuttle service is discontinued if ridership levels are inadequate and the employer decides not to



provide the necessary subsidy.

- Rabbit Transit provides monthly operating reports to the sponsoring employer.

### **Resources**

For the hospital services, Rabbit Transit uses three transit vehicles with drivers and operating resources dedicated to that service. The full costs of the service are paid by the hospital, on a fully allocated cost basis. This means that the cost of capital (vehicles) is included.

For the other employer services, Rabbit Transit uses available vehicles and "fits in" these shuttle services to its existing route network. Since no new vehicles are used, the transit agency determines the cost on a variable cost basis. After the 90-day "grace" period, costs for the shuttle services must be paid for (using the variable cost per hour) either through farebox receipts or through subsidy from the employer.

## **Results**

Transit services for the hospital generate a total of about 3,500 riders per month, as well as full cost recovery for the services provided. This income represents about eight percent of total Rabbit Transit operating revenues. For other area employers, Rabbit Transit now operates six different shuttle services for seven employers (two employers jointly sponsor one shuttle). Of these, three are operating without employer subsidy, as ridership levels are adequate, though the other three require employer subsidy.

The employment-oriented shuttle services are a positive contribution to the area's economy, facilitating employee access to job sites and assisting in local welfare-to-work efforts. The shuttle services also contribute to the mix of services that Rabbit Transit provides to the community, with benefits to the agency's standing in the community. Officials at the companies and organizations served by Rabbit Transit employer services become new supporters of public transit, increasing overall community support for transit.

## **Barriers/Constraints**

Barriers encountered with the employer shuttle services include:

- Limited vehicles and resources to meet the needs for all employment-oriented services in the community. While the local hospital can underwrite the full cost of its services, not all employers

can do so; thus the transit agency is limited to its existing fleet and established service and schedule commitments to meeting other employers' shuttle service needs.

- Operational issues related to "who's in charge" at the employer end caused problems when different supervisors at the employer end made changes to shuttle services. Rabbit Transit solved this problem by developing a written MOU that spells out communication channels for both the employer and the transit agency.

## **Transferability**

Employer shuttles are not new to public transit. What is noteworthy about Rabbit Transit's approach is its very proactive style to identifying local employers' transportation needs and approaching employers quickly with solutions that it can offer. Actively looking and listening for needs in the community can result in new opportunities for the transit system. And given new emphasis across the country on employment transportation with welfare reform, this approach is transferable to any public transit agency that is able to expand services and meet new needs. And, as shown in York, such service does not have to be dedicated to a specific employer: a transit agency can build on its existing resources and add a shuttle "here and there" to meet particular needs, though some

creative scheduling may be necessary and such service can be open to the general public and integrated into the regular service schedule.

Also significant from Rabbit Transit's experience is the development of different cost structures for funding employer services so that the transit agency recovers all or some of the costs of service provision, depending upon resources dedicated to the service and written agreements to guide provision of those services.

Probably the most significant factor contributing to the success of Rabbit Transit's employment shuttles has been the partnerships formed with local agencies specializing in the training and employment of low income individuals. By partnering with agencies like the York County Assistance Office (the local "welfare" office) and non-profit agencies providing training and employment assistance, "packages" of employees, training, and transportation could be "sold" to employers. As a result, Rabbit Transit's shuttles are looked upon by employers more as a source of employees than a transportation service.

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### Organization Highlights

Citibus is a small urban transit system in Lubbock, on the high plains of West Texas. The system is managed by the City and operated by a private provider under contract to the City of Lubbock. Citibus operates both fixed-route and paratransit services with a fleet of 60 fixed-route and 22 low floor paratransit vehicles.

### Background/Objectives

In the mid 1970s, Citibus management began exploring new ideas for mid-day bus service, because demand during the mid-day was far lower than peak times. With its fleet sized for peak periods, this left Citibus with idle vehicles during the off-peak.

At about the same time, through active involvement in the community, Citibus management was working with the senior community and a local supermarket chain on a program to transport seniors to its store. Citibus had approached the grocery store chain with the idea, building on its strong ties in the community.

After working with the senior community and the grocery store chain, United Supermarket, over a two-month planning period, Citibus began its first shopper shuttle in 1975. This service - essentially a service route - began well before the term was recognized in the transit industry. The transit system identified larger concentrations of seniors in Lubbock and a route was developed to serve these concentrations and the grocery store. The objectives were to provide

convenient transportation for grocery shopping for the community's seniors and maximize use of the transit fleet by taking advantage of excess capacity during mid-day hours.

### Description

Citibus' first shopper shuttle operated one day per week and served just one grocery store, with the grocery store chain - United Supermarket - paying the full operating cost of the service. Since that first shuttle in 1975, the program has expanded and now there are shopper shuttles each weekday serving two United grocery stores, fully funded by the grocery store chain. The routes operate on a schedule, providing flexible, door-to-door service to riders who have scheduled a trip in advance.

Citibus ensures a personable driver is assigned to the shuttles, one that is friendly with the seniors and willing to provide assistance with shopping bags.

There is no charge to the seniors to use the service.

### Resources

Both vehicles and funding are needed to operate shopper shuttles. Citibus used excess capacity during off-peak times. Funding for operations is provided by the grocery store, covering 100 percent of the operating costs. The grocery store is billed monthly based on the service hours provided. Revenue from the grocery store chain reached approximately \$180,000 in FY 2000, with a cost per trip to United of about \$3.75.

### Results

The Citibus shopper shuttles have been very successful over their 25-year history, now serving about 48,000 trips annually with 4,900 vehicle hours, based on FY 2000 data. Productivity is almost 10 riders per hour.

United benefits with the provision of convenient transportation for an important market segment of shoppers as well as the goodwill and indirect marketing generated in the community by the program. Citibus benefits from more efficient use of their resources and increased



ridership and revenues that the program generates.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

Management did not identify any significant barriers or constraints in the development and operation of the program.

### **Transferability**

Shopper shuttles are easily transferable and, in fact, are used in many communities. A transit system must first determine that it has available capacity to operate shopper service and then identify a willing partner in the community - a supermarket chain, discount retailer, etc. - who will fund the service. The transit system then needs to work with the senior community to identify concentrations of seniors who would benefit from the service, establish the routing and service parameters, and market the service to the intended ridership.

It is also important for the system to have credibility in the community. The themes of pride and respect for the service were emphasized by Citibus management as prerequisites for approaching the local grocery store with the idea for shopper shuttles. Citibus also notes that clean buses, professional staff and a positive attitude are essential to success. Citibus stresses that shopper shuttle drivers should be personable and willing to assist riders with packages when necessary.

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## **Program Transportation Transitioning to General Public Tribal Transportation Service**

**Zuni Entrepreneurial  
Enterprises, Inc.  
Zuni, New Mexico**

### **Organization Highlights**

Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises (ZEE) is a non-profit agency whose central mission is the provision of a broad range of services to persons with developmental disabilities. Located on the 500 square mile Zuni Nation Reservation in western New Mexico, ZEE's mission brings the agency in contact with other needs of the reservation's population of 9,789 residents (1999). In response to general mobility problems, ZEE developed a public transit service that now provides more than 30,000 trips annually, serving a variety of local and long-distance medical, education, work, and welfare-to-work trips.

### **Background/Objectives**

Over its eleven-year history, in order to provide supported employment opportunities for its primary client population of persons with developmental disabilities, ZEE has taken on an economic development role. In a setting where unemployment rates hover between 60 percent to 70 percent, ZEE must create the jobs needed in order to place its 50 to 60 developmental disabilities clients in supported employment positions. Among the jobs and businesses that ZEE has helped create include a grocery store.

Transportation became the critical element for ZEE in making the other components of its human services program work. If consumers couldn't get to their job or training site, they couldn't participate. About five years after ZEE began, the agency initiated a transportation service to serve the transportation needs of

its developmental disabilities clients. However, it was readily apparent that general public members of the Tribal communities of Black Rock and Zuni also had basic mobility needs. Almost 30 percent of the households own no car and 16 percent have no telephone. The median household income was \$16,500 (1990) and is expected to have increased little with the 2000 census.

ZEE's original mission to serve the needs of its developmentally disabled clients has then broadened to include serving needs of the general Zuni Pueblo tribal members where the needs overlap. Transportation is one such area of overlap.

### **Description**

ZEE, initially focused on its social service client base, has built a successful general public transit program. This program, operating on the Zuni Nation Reservation, has successfully developed a mix of funding sources for tribal transportation services that typically do not receive stable transportation dollars for provision of general public transportation.

ZEE provides local transportation service between the two populated areas on the reservation, as well as several contracted services with its five-vehicle fleet. Service operates between Zuni Village, where the post office, Tribal offices, and small stores are located, and the community of Black Rock with its hospital and dialysis facilities. These communities are about three miles apart. Local service is provided on a demand response basis and

passengers pay a fare of \$0.50 per trip. For those without telephones, ZEE has developed an arrangement with local businesses that allow residents to use the business telephone to place the trip request call. ZEE has an 800 number so that there are no toll charges for any calls from local businesses.

Off the reservation, trips are provided by ZEE between Zuni and Gallup, about 45 miles to the north. ZEE makes three round trips daily - in the morning, at mid-day, and in the evening. Passengers include those attending classes at University of New Mexico in Gallup, employees traveling to work locations, and individuals participating in welfare-to-work training programs or job placements. The fare of \$2.50 a trip is paid by several funding sources including a Federally funded Tribal scholarship program that supports higher education opportunities for Tribal members.

### **Resources**

The ZEE transportation budget is now about \$250,000 annually, more than double what it was several years ago at the time of a CTAA article on the Zuni Nation and its transportation connections ("The Secret Passage," CTAA, April 1998). Funds come from a significant range of sources. Operating funds come from passenger fares and a Jobs Access and



Reverse Commute welfare-to-work grant (JobLinks funding). Other sources include State of New Mexico vocational rehabilitation funding, HUD dollars for transportation as a supported service for a housing facility, and the Tribal funding referred to earlier for University of New Mexico students. Transit funding includes Section 5311 funding and periodic Section 5310 capital grants. Private foundations have been a funding source, including the First Nation Development Institute of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

The program's executive director has worked very hard over time to build a network of contacts and information sources to find funding opportunities. The New Mexico Department of Transportation, including RTAP staff, assists in keeping current this flow of funding-related information. Other contacts for funding have been developed and cultivated at both state and federal levels over the decade-long tenure of ZEE's executive director.

## Results

ZEE provided 30,000 transit trips in 2000, representing a 3.0 per capita level of trip-making for the Zuni Nation's almost 10,000 residents, a significant level of public transportation. The system traveled 200,000 annual service miles, reflecting the 45-mile one-way trip to Gallup and the numerous local trips between reservation communities. The annual transportation budget of \$250,000 has more than doubled from several years ago.

## Constraints

In development of its general public transportation service, ZEE dealt with a number of issues, including:

**Tribal Nation Sovereignty** - Indian Nations, about 560 total in the United States, are independent, self-governing entities with sovereign nation status. As the original peoples of the North American continent, the Indian Commerce Clause in the U.S. Constitution protects this status, establishing for tribes a status separate from state and federal government. In the provision of transit services, sovereignty can represent a challenge to both tribes and to local, regional or state entities. Funding for transportation is often available through county, regional and state government entities - both discretionary grants and formula-based grants. Application for these funds may be problematic where sovereign nations are asked to deal with local and regional government, or even state-level agencies. Funding sources may require contractual relationships between a tribe and local or regional government. Funding applications and contractual requirements are often viewed as intrusive by these sovereign nations.

ZEE Transportation is one example where tribal sovereignty is used in advantageous ways to promote on-reservation and off-reservation transit services. Operated by a private, non-profit organization located on the Zuni Pueblo Nation reservation, ZEE has successfully applied for many grants and secured various transportation

contracts with off-reservation organizations. Located on the reservation, it can rightfully use the reservations' demographic characteristics to justify need for various grants. As an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, with a board of directors that includes tribal representatives, requirements of special funding sources are not as problematic as when the tribal government is the direct applicant.

**Funding Sources** - Maintaining predictable, adequate funding is an issue for ZEE's transportation services, as it is for most rural transit systems, as well as no dollars for transportation in the reimbursements of the social service programs ZEE provides. Constant effort is required to locate, pursue, and obtain necessary funding. ZEE's executive director advises that one should never eliminate a possible funding source because it doesn't seem to be quite appropriate. His experience is that so long as one stays very clear on the mission of the organization, and one is equally clear on the requirements of the funding base, it is often possible to find flexible ways to marry the two. Proposals can be shaped to respond both to the funding source's priorities and to the agency's needs.

**Strategic Plan** - As part of ZEE's articulation of the agency's mission, the executive director and its seven-member board of directors developed a strategic planning document, seeing this as an important way to describe their future. The plan articulates its shared vision of just what the agency needs to do, built from the input from

the community at large, as well as the board that includes Tribal representatives, parents, businesses, and consumers. The executive director conveys that once the concept of what needs to be done is clear, it is then a matter of simply finding the ways "to go do it" - namely, locating the resources to help bring about needed services, activities or opportunities.

### **Transferability**

ZEE has the particular status of its location on tribal reservation lands. This does open some funding doors and creates certain opportunities that are not open to non-Indian programs. However, success in pursuing a mix of other funding sources is directly transferable to other small urban and rural transit programs. The care taken in building the information paths that lead to these funding opportunities is noteworthy. ZEE's executive director describes long-term relationships with potential funding sources and the careful monitoring of prospective funding opportunities. This is mixed with a pragmatic appreciation for the need for flexibility. Any program that is very clear on its own objectives can embrace the idea of never automatically walking away from a possible new funding source. A successful proposal can usually be shaped that is responsive to the funding source but supports what it is that the transit system wants to do with its transportation program.

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## **Buy Groceries, Ride the Bus for Free**

## **Rabbit Transit York County, Pennsylvania**

### **Organization Highlights**

Rabbit Transit is a small urban and rural transit agency serving York County, Pennsylvania, located in the south central part of the state. York County is predominately rural, with one small city - York. The county's year 2000 total population is estimated at about 370,000. The City of York has an estimated 42,000 population, with a considerably larger surrounding urban area. Rabbit Transit operates fixed-route and paratransit services, with a fleet of 30 buses and 30 paratransit vehicles. The transit system is a public authority, created by the county in 1974 through state enabling legislation, with a 12-member board of directors appointed by the county commissioners.

### **Background/Objectives**

Rabbit Transit established a relationship with one of the large grocery store chains in its region -Giant Supermarket - when it approached the supermarket to help solve a transportation-related problem. The supermarket decided to close its one store remaining in older, lower-income downtown York, resulting in bad press in the local newspaper and a major public relations problem. Reading in the paper about the situation, Rabbit Transit contacted supermarket officials and offered to help. The two organizations worked out two programs to help the supermarket chain. To repair the public relations problem, the supermarket chain decided to offer a free ride home ticket on Rabbit Transit for anyone purchasing more than \$5 worth of groceries at any of its grocery stores in the area. To

solve the problem related to closure of the downtown store, Rabbit Transit implemented special service from the downtown area to the new suburban grocery store, fully subsidized by the supermarket chain. While the special service has evolved over time, the free ride home with purchase of groceries continues.



### **Description**

In the York area, there are four Giant grocery stores, and these are served by existing Rabbit Transit fixed routes. Anyone purchasing more than the established dollar amount of groceries can take the purchase receipt to the customer service desk at the grocery store and obtain a free ride ticket to use on Rabbit Transit. (A regular one-way ride costs \$1.00 to \$1.50 - depending upon a zone surcharge - on the transit system.) The ticket is good for use anytime and is transferable to another person.

With the free ride ticket, the individual can board any Rabbit Transit bus route and use the ticket for payment. Drivers count the free ride home tickets separately when completing their daily passenger tallies, and monthly counts are prepared. It is also noted that persons affiliated with certain human service agencies in the area obtain the free ride home tickets with purchase of their groceries so that they can turn over the tickets to

the human service agency for client use. While this was not an intent of the program, it essentially expands the *community service* aspect of the program to social service agencies in the area, and the supermarket is aware that this expansion is occurring.

Each Giant grocery store maintains its own supply of free ride tickets, calling Rabbit Transit when re-supply is necessary. Rabbit Transit invoices Giant's main office on a monthly basis for total tickets delivered to its stores.

### **Resources**

Rabbit Transit is responsible for printing the free ride home tickets and distribution to the various Giant grocery stores in the area. Tickets used for the Giant program are the same "all purpose" free ride tickets that the transit agency uses for various purposes, including bulk sale to human service agencies for their client use, "oops" tickets for riders who experienced a problem, etc. Printing and distribution of the tickets are minimal costs.

The supermarket pays monthly for tickets provided to each of its local stores based on invoicing from the transit agency.

### **Results**

On an average month, Rabbit Transit receives about 1,000 free ride tickets in the farebox. While this is a small percentage of overall ridership, the program has a number of benefits:

- Facilitating transit use for those Giant grocery shoppers that ride Rabbit Transit,
- Creating an active partnership with a major regional supermarket chain that in turn builds support for transit in the community, and
- Expanding the transit agency's services and revenue base.

For the Giant supermarket, there are marketing and public relations benefits for both its customers and the community at large.



### **Barriers/Constraints**

The program was relatively simple to set up and implement, particularly because the supermarket was very motivated to get the program up and running quickly to repair the public relations issue. The transit agency reports no significant issues impacting its operation except for the need to adjust the purchase level of groceries. In the beginning of the program, a grocery shopper had to buy just \$5 worth of groceries for the free ride home ticket. Transit-using workers at an office building next to one of the Giant stores realized that if they bought lunch at the grocery store - typically exceeding the \$5 threshold -

they could then get a free ride home ticket, saving themselves the evening bus fare. When this use became apparent, the purchase level was increased to \$10.

It can also be noted that Rabbit Transit's program with Giant succeeded quickly because it had full support of Giant's top management from the start due to the negative publicity surrounding the closing of an inner city store. Other efforts to initiate similar programs with other large, "corporate" co-sponsors have bogged down in bureaucracy within a corporation.

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### **Transferability**

Providing a free ride home ticket after purchase at a retail establishment is transferable for many situations. Where public transit routes serve shopping and retail areas, the transit agency and merchants may find that such tickets help generate additional transit use. But more likely, the tickets will serve "to reward" patrons at stores and shops who use public transit. Given that such patrons tend to be senior citizens and others dependent on public transit, the ticket programs become more of a community service and a way to generate goodwill. Such results clearly have benefits beyond the provision of free bus ride tickets. And where the tickets are fully reimbursed by a sponsoring organization, the only costs to the transit agency are minimal, such as ticket printing, distribution, and reporting.

## **SunSweep and the Fringe-Toed Lizard: Services Beyond Passenger Transportation**

**SunLine Services Group  
Thousand Palms, California**

### **Background**

Located in California's Coachella Valley on the state's southwest border with Arizona, the SunLine organization contains three joint powers authorities and is responsible for providing public transit services as well as other public services and support to its constituent public agencies. These joint powers authorities are comprised of the nine cities within the Coachella Valley and Riverside County and covers an area the size of Rhode Island, with a population of about 280,000 residents.

This organization is best recognized as SunLine Transit, a nationally-recognized innovator in alternative fueled public transit services. Its mission is to provide high quality, cost-effective public services across a large regional area in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. This compliance includes supporting the habitat of an endangered species, the fringe-toed lizard.

### **Description**

The SunSweep program originated through the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, which provides a forum for the joint pursuit and resolution of area wide issues and problems. To address the area's noncompliance with an air quality issue (PM-10), the Association of Governments in 1991 began planning for a regional street sweeping program, initially soliciting private sector bids for its operation. However, once bids were received from private firms, the Association of Governments found inconsistencies in the bids to provide assurance that the job would be done

to the standards necessary to maintain PM-10 air quality. Seeking to implement the regional street sweeping program but not able to move forward with a private operator, the Association of Governments looked to SunLine as a possible operator: SunLine had an organization, vehicle operating experience, maintenance systems, staff resources and experience with environmental and regulatory compliance - all of which could support the operation of street sweepers as well as transit buses.

Starting service in April of 1997, SunSweep began with the regular cleaning of 37,000 miles of roadway. Currently, SunSweep is responsible for the cleaning of 60,000 miles of roadway including contracts for county roadways, 4 of the Valley's nine cities and 11 private communities with a fleet of 9 sweepers. Discussions are underway for SunSweep to expand regionwide, which would increase their roadway mileage to about 100,000 and require a fleet of approximately 15 sweepers.

The fringe-toed lizard is a reptile on the endangered species

list that thrives in sandy desert settings. The SunSweep vehicles deposit cleaned sand, collected from their rounds, in habitat areas of the lizard. On the side of each SunSweep vehicle is a fringe-toed lizard that SunLine's general manager affirms is "a smiling lizard."



SunSweep vehicles are operated with clean natural gas fuel and painted white to promote the notion of cleanliness. Each has a painted mural of a golf course landscape on the back of the vehicle. This underscores to any driver or passenger in cars following the clean images of the SunSweep service.

The SunSweep program is closely incorporated into the overall SunLine organization, sharing many of the same systems and staffing. Operating employees, for example, can bid equally on SunLine Transit



or SunSweep assignments and employees have moved between the two services as openings have occurred. Through negotiations, wage rates are closely similar between the public transit and sweeper positions.

### **Resources**

The SunSweep program is organized for funding purposes into two distinct pieces: the regional program supported through federal congestion and air quality funding and the city program supported through local funds. In addition, the program presently provides sweeping services under contract to a number of private communities using excess capacity not required for the federal or local programs. These private contracts allow SunLine to accumulate funds for capital match and to cover additional costs of the SunSweep program.



The total SunSweep program has an annual budget of just under \$700,000 and, while covering a prorata share of the organizational overhead, is not costed to return a profit to the organization.

### **Results**

The SunSweep program has been highly successful both in the communities it serves and within the SunLine organization. SunSweep is recognized for the

quality of the services it provides and the commitment of its employees to their jobs.

This innovative and successful program has also set high standards for meeting federal, state, and local ordinances related to street sweeping operations.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

Management feels that undertaking a program like SunSweep must begin with commitment of the organization's board of directors to the exploration and initiation of new services, particularly in a case like this where they are not directly related to existing transit programs.

### **Transferability**

The major lesson of the SunSweep experience is that transit systems should look for opportunities that make use of their existing systems and resources in new and different ways. While SunSweep carries no transit passengers, it uses many of the operating and organizational systems created for SunLine Transit - right down to the routing and scheduling systems - in the operation of street sweeping services.

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## **Selling Bus Seats to Employers**

### **Baldwin Rural Area Transit System Robertsdale, Alabama**

#### **Organization Highlights**

Baldwin County is located in lower Alabama just east of Mobile across Mobile Bay. It is the largest county in Alabama at 1,600 square miles, with a population of about 150,000. The county is a unique combination of resort communities along the Gulf of Mexico, suburban Mobile on its western edge, and isolated rural lower-income areas, particularly in the northern and eastern parts.

Baldwin Rural Area Transit System (BRATS), a department of the Baldwin County government, is the rural public transportation provider for Baldwin County and receives limited FTA Section 5311 funds from the Alabama Department of Transportation. The system is based in Robertsdale, a town that calls itself "the Hub" because of its central location in the county. With a total fleet of 52 vehicles, BRATS provided about 680,000 one way trips in FY 2000, operating 62,200 hours of service.

#### **Background/Objectives**

With the growing popularity of the Gulf Coast in the 1990s, BRATS realized the potential for employment-oriented transportation to the Gulf of Mexico resorts and tourist attractions located along the county's southern Gulf coast and developed a program to sell bus service to the wide variety of hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions that draw workers from across the county. This program was first set up as a formal initiative, with BRATS offering 6-12 month contracts with companies that needed employment

transportation. Most businesses, however, balked at such an arrangement, with payments of over \$1,500 per year for transportation for one employee. Moreover, the contracts had to be approved by the county commissioners and Alabama DOT, steps which complicated the process.

But BRATS believed that such a program for work trips was worthwhile and could be successful if packaged in a different way, so management persevered. After input from local businesses - the customers for the program - BRATS simplified the program. Instead of selling formal, longer term contracts to businesses with an annual or semi-annual fee, BRATS revised the program to provide more flexibility, with the transit system selling individual seats in the buses by the month: "businesses want it cheap." BRATS's director likened the vehicle to a pie: "You sell each slice until it's all gone."

These creative changes, developed from the failure of the first attempt, met the needs of the businesses, and the employment

transportation program has become very successful, generating significant funds and support for the system.

#### **Description**

Interested employers purchase a specific number of bus seats from BRATS each month, corresponding to their needs. There is no formal contract, just a "handshake" agreement. BRATS bills the employer before the start of the month for the specified number of seats, so that payment is received in advance. The charge to the employer is \$100 per month per seat (regular fares are between \$3.50-\$5 per one-way trip) and the riding employees pay no fare.

During the tourist season which extends over 9 months, BRATS fills 5 to 6 mid- to large-sized buses with county residents traveling daily to jobs at resorts and tourist sites along the Gulf coast. Routes are set up, originating in different residential areas, predominately in the eastern and northern rural parts of the county.



## **Resources**

BRATS invested considerable staff time in planning and implementing the program of *selling bus seats*, in part because the first effort failed. The transit system also must plan effective routes to meet the needs of the employers, matching residential origins of employees with destinations in the resort and tourist areas of the county, and these needs change with employee changes so there is ongoing effort needed to ensure effective routing. And a significant resource is the actual operation of the vehicles on a daily basis.

## **Results**

BRATS's program of *selling bus seats* provides over 40,000 work trips annually, generating over \$100,000 each year for the transit system. With 5 to 6 buses filled with employees traveling daily to their jobs, BRATS is helping local businesses by providing guaranteed transportation to and from work for many entry level and service employees. Reportedly, about 10 to 15 employers participate in the program. From both the employers' and employees' perspective, the program is successful.

Importantly, this program has also established BRATS as a credible business partner in the county, working successfully with a number of large and nationally-based companies and earning their respect and support. This, in turn, builds the standing of BRATS in the community, giving the transit system the status and latitude to continue with new programs and services.

## **Barriers/Constraints**

Among the issues addressed in implementation of BRATS's *selling bus seats* program were:

- BRATS's initial effort to market and sell employment transportation to the county's resort area employers failed, because the transit system did not appreciate the business community's interest in a flexible, shorter term commitment to transit. Once BRATS understood the preference for a program with more flexibility and less financial outlay, the transit system created a program that works.
- Staff time - a perennial problem for smaller transit agencies - is needed to market and "sell" the program to the area's employers, and additional staff time is needed to maintain the program with ongoing changes to employee travel patterns.

## **Transferability**

A program of selling bus seats to employers or others sponsoring transportation is transferable to many transit situations. Essentially, it is a creative variant of programs operating across the country with employers, colleges, or other organizations sponsoring transportation for their employees, students or clients by negotiating with the public transit system for provision of specific services to meet the organization's needs. The BRATS program's innovative aspects include its flexibility, in that employers sign up only for

short periods of time; its low cost, as an employer may sign up for only one or two seats at a time rather than a complete route or busload; its marketability to employers (it's more enticing to suggest the sale of a "bus seat" than a route or charter-like service); and its market niche and timing, as employers in the resort area were competing for lower-wage employees with the robust economy and provision of a "bus seat" to get to and from work was a benefit that the employer could offer.

BRATS suggests such an effort must recognize the time commitment necessary to work with the business community and that some effort is continual - it is not enough to just put the service out on the street and hope riders will come.

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## **INITIATIVES AND INNOVATIONS IN TRAINING**

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Our TCRP research project identified several training programs that are effective approaches developed to address local and statewide issues and ultimately to improve transit. Training surfaced as a priority area for a number of the transit systems visited through the research project's investigation of the *culture of innovation* and discussed in Part I. Training is seen as an important way of bringing new ideas, even new thinking to managers and staff.

One of the training programs identified is a creative response to a recognition of the tension between some rural transit systems and their boards, whose members do not always understand how transit "works." This training program, developed

through the Arizona RTAP program, is a day and a half training program geared to governing body officials on the basics of transit operations, funding, and governance. Educating these local board members, often elected officials, about transit has improved communication and relationships, which in turn should give transit managers greater support to pursue *change* and new programs for service improvement.

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### **PRESENTED IN THIS CATEGORY:**

1. ***Rural Transit 101 for Elected Officials and Transit Board Members***—Rural Transit Assistance Program, Arizona State Department of Transportation
2. ***Statewide Collaborative Driver Training Innovations***—Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers, and Nebraska Safety Center
3. ***Transit Forum: Networking Transportation Providers to Improve Countywide Transit***—Sierra Vista Public Transit and Catholic Community Services, Cochise County, Arizona

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## Rural Transit 101 for Elected Officials and Transit Board Members

## Rural Transit Assistance Program, Arizona State Department of Transportation

### Organization Highlights

The Arizona DOT is responsible for administration of approximately \$1 million in funding for general public transit systems in rural and small urban areas.

ADOT funds 13 cities, counties, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations to operate these systems at the local level. Approximately 2.3 million miles of passenger service are provided annually to more than 470,000 passengers with over 80,000 hours of service provided in or between rural communities. The state's 113,000 square miles outside the urbanized areas of Phoenix and Tucson translate to a density of approximately ten persons per square mile.

### Background/Objectives

The RTAP coordinator, in his routine field visits with rural transit operators across the state, became aware of conflict or tension between the transit operators and their TACs (technical advisory committees). These TACs usually consist of a mix of community representatives, including board members, elected officials, and other community stakeholders. From the RTAP coordinator's point-of-view, the TACs and operators were not working together, sometimes not relating to each other well at all.

These tensions appeared to be partly due to the fact that the transit operators had not communicated clearly to their city councils or governing boards just what they were doing. Council or board members had little knowledge of the routing of services or the funding under which they operated. The RTAP coordinator conceived of the

notion that further training geared to the governing bodies on the basics of transit operations and transit governance would help.

### Description

"Wake Up Transit Arizona" was the theme of a day and a half training session attended by sixty people and held at a central location that representatives from several operators' TACs could easily attend. An attractive facility was selected, with easy driving access, excellent food, and accommodations, to attract elected officials and other TAC members. Enticing transit board members to come was a major consideration in the design of the program. Various strategies were employed, including giving them free promotional items just for showing up - coffee cups, t-shirts and tote bags with the *Wake Up Transit Arizona* logo. The workshop design included several mock public hearings on transit issues. The hearings addressed such issues as:

- Costs of transit operations,
- Need for local match funding, and
- Answering questions such as "Why are the buses empty so much of the time?"

A unique feature of the conference was that for a period of time, elected officials were treated to a "closed session" with no state or local transit personnel in attendance. A nationally recognized consultant responded to issues raised by the elected officials. He also addressed a number of so-called

"dumb" questions that could be asked without local transit staff present. Such questions included the definitions of basic transit terminology and how to judge what makes a "good" system. There was discussion during the closed session on how to interpret transit-related numbers, including productivity measures for fixed-route and demand response services.

The structure of the general training sessions consisted of case studies and role-playing by audience members. Using the services of two outside consultants, simple case examples filled with transit operations issues were created. In small group sessions, participants had to make budgetary and programmatic choices on behalf of these systems, usually requiring that they prioritize how to spend available dollars. Actual transit managers, selecting those with strong presentation skills, presented these case ex-



amples. The transit managers also showcased their own systems, focusing on what “makes their systems shine” to communicate the strongest aspects of their operations.

The content of the training sessions was geared towards educating participants in the fundamentals of transit, how it works, what levels of funding are required to run individual service components, and the sources of that funding. An important secondary purpose was to bring together various participants - TAC members, transit management, and some community members - for more informal communication than is possible in regular TAC meetings or more formal board meetings.

### **Resources**

The RTAP coordinator worked with a budget of \$20,000 for the consultants, facility rental, and accommodations. Some promotional items were donated while others were purchased for the conference. Local transit managers assisted with the invitation process, following-up to encourage board member attendance.

### **Results**

The RTAP coordinator observed some immediate positive changes in the ways in which boards and transit staff worked together for those transit programs whose board members had attended. Transit managers appeared “calmer” and seemed to work more effectively with various local stakeholders.

In those cases where transit staff participated but their board members did not attend, the

workshop coordinators commented that staff nonetheless benefited from seeing active, thoughtful board members. Transit staff commented that they developed a better understanding of how to communicate with board members and could therefore more easily shape and prepare reports.

Perhaps because of increased confidence on the part of boards and staff together, several communities subsequently sought new funding opportunities to expand their respective transit services.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

The major barrier lies in getting the elected officials to free-up almost two days, or a day and a half, to participate in such a conference. Getting any elected official to spend more than one hour on a project or read more than one page can be a significant challenge. Although some elected officials did participate, there were not as many as expected. The central location, nice facilities, and easy access were thought to be critical. It would be desirable to have larger numbers of elected officials participate in similar events in the future. Possibly extending the invitation through another elected official, rather than the RTAP coordinator or transit manager, could help improve attendance by elected board members.

### **Transferability**

Lessons learned included:

- Check scheduling against possible conflicting region-wide events in which

elected officials might be expected to participate.

- Don’t skimp on the facilities - carefully select the accommodations with attention to driving accessibility and amenities.
- The “closed” session was very popular, giving elected officials a safe setting in which to ask the most basic questions without losing face.
- Such training must be part of a continuing process - this type of conference can be done periodically, given turnover among both staff and elected officials, but should be part of a larger training continuum.
- There was no formal evaluation of this program although one could be simply implemented, with a straightforward before and after questionnaire, ideally administered off-site after the conference has concluded.



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**Statewide Collaborative  
Driver Training  
Innovations**

**Nebraska Department of Roads,  
Nebraska Association of Transportation  
Providers, Nebraska Safety Center**

**Organization Highlights**

Nebraska is home to a population of 1.7 million (U.S. Census, 2000) across the state's 77,000 square miles, with about two-thirds clustered in the three urbanized areas of Lincoln, Omaha, and Sioux City. In the state's 93 counties, there are close to 60 small Section 5311-funded transit systems, many of which operate in isolated rural communities, providing a critical support service to their constituents. During FY 2000, these providers served approximately 583,000 passenger boardings, traveling about 1.8 million vehicle miles.

**Background/Objectives**

Enticing small operators to routine and specialized training programs has been a particular focus in Nebraska over the past six years. A collaboration developed with the state agency responsible for transit, the state transit association, and a university-based training center. This resulted in a comprehensive and well-attended annual training program. Numerous strategies - some of which are novel - are used to select topics and to ensure attendance, either to the central annual location or to dispersed local sites across the state. Drivers, supervisors, and maintenance persons may spend up to six hours traveling to the Kearney, Nebraska, where the annual state transit association "rodeo" and training sessions are held. Or they may spend much less time traveling to more

proximate locations, closer to their rural operations.

**Description**

The strategies employed to support transit-related training include:

- Poll drivers to select training topics: Drivers and local managers are surveyed to identify the areas or topics in which they desire training.
- Take training out to rural locations: Training is provided at dispersed locations across the state in daylong sessions each spring.
- Careful site selection is important to drawing and retaining personnel at training sessions. Rather than asking local operators to host training, an attractive facility - hotel or conference center - is selected.
- Use accident reports to target training: The Nebraska Safety Center reviews quarterly reports provided by transit systems to look for accident patterns and targets training to any such patterns found.
- Drivers' salaries are reimbursed through RTAP so that small operators can fund relief drivers to cover operations while drivers are away at off-site training. RTAP funds from minimum wage up to \$12.40 per hour for participating drivers.

• Web-based instruction is now being developed and tested with the state's driver pools through the Nebraska Safety Center. This holds promise for better linking the most-distant providers with current, up-to-date information by directly connecting them with resources that they may need, when they need them.

The annual training calendar includes the spring series of five or six one-day training sessions, each about five hours in length. Curricula include topics drawn from drivers and managers polled at the annual statewide transit association meeting. Fire extinguisher use and vehicle evacuation were among topics requested by drivers in the most recent polling. The Spring 2000 training sessions addressed:

- Stress management on the job.
- Safety restraints and child restraints in current legislation.
- Management of wheelchair riders.
- Give and take session to identify further training needs.

Facilities selected are usually hotels or convention centers. The decision not to locate the training at the transit operators'



yards makes it possible for all attendees to truly take a day away - participants focus on the training topics rather than being pulled into day-to-day operational problems. All local arrangements are made by the Department of Roads or the Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers (NATP). Instructors are generally provided by the Nebraska Safety Center. These spring workshops help to shape the curriculum for the daylong training that precedes the association's rodeo meeting.

Various standardized curricula are used or adapted for training sessions carried out around the state or offered in advance of the annual association meeting. *Operation LifeSaver*, sponsored by national railroads training consortia, is routinely included in the curricula. Nebraska has many at-grade crossings, due to the number of miles of Union Pacific railroad lines following the North Platte River Valley across the plains. Now with extensive double tracking and even triple tracking in many parts of the state, these crossings can become a recipe for disaster. The training curricula and materials provided by the railroad industry are readily incorporated into the RTAP training programs and reintroduced about every three years to accommodate new drivers.

Other curricula include the *Passenger Assistance Training* (PAT), somewhat modified from the original Texas program, which is presented about four times a year in different areas of the state. A new *Passenger Assistance Safety and Sensitivity* (PASS) is now being tested in

some parts of the state and may augment or replace PAT. Considerable training resources are invested in teaching regulations - both state and federal - that impact drivers and transit managers. State-level regulatory changes are routinely incorporated into training sessions. A *drug and alcohol testing and training* program, developed by a company formed by the state's trucking association, was later modified for use by the transit industry in Nebraska. It is now utilized in Nebraska's field training sessions.

### Resources

RTAP funds are used to pay for the instruction, facility expense, and travel of instructors. Field training sessions cost about \$2,200 per training day. The annual pre-rodeo training session is somewhat less expensive, about \$1,800 because there is minimal instructor travel and lower facility costs. Additionally, NATP pays the luncheon costs at the annual pre-rodeo training session with costs varying by the number of participants.

The Nebraska Safety Center provides much of the training on a contract basis to RTAP constituents. This center was established, through state legislation, to serve a number of training needs, including school bus drivers, mine safety and health, and training for driver education instructors. Training for public transit drivers, managers, and maintenance persons is a good fit with these. The transit training contract is held between NATP and the Nebraska Safety Center.

### Results

The levels of participation in training are higher than they were over five years ago before this approach to training was undertaken. At the recent day-long training session that precedes the annual rodeo, NATP reports that an estimated 75 percent of the state's 5311 operators were represented. These annual sessions attract between 80 to 140 participants. The workshops around the state are much smaller, about 15 to 20 participants each - usually, but not always drivers. About one-half of the state's Section 5311 operators annually attend the field training sessions. Many travel substantial distances and send participants who might not otherwise attend training opportunities.

### Barriers/Constraints

A perennial problem for training is convincing those involved with the provision of transit that good training is important. The Nebraska Safety Center works with the Department of Roads and NATP to educate supervisors and managers on the value of training. This is, they report, a continual and sometimes uphill process. Among the benefits that the training center cites are that the training saves lives, saves human resources, and saves dollars.

Another barrier to small operators is obtaining current resources where they can find their own information, when needed. Towards this end, the Nebraska Safety Center maintains and develops listings of current web site addresses.

Such addresses may not be readily located by small agencies whose personnel have little time for searching out critical web resources. But these sites contain information valuable to transit operators and other Nebraska Safety Center constituents.

### **Transferability**

Readily transferable are a number of strategies, including surveying drivers and transit managers in the areas of training and then of transporting this training to them as well as funding relief drivers so that the smaller transit systems can continue to operate while regular drivers are off at training. The transit association's director believes strongly that asking driving personnel and their supervisors what they need in training helps to make better transit programs because "you then give them what they feel they need." The spring and fall polling processes give these administrators twice-annual feedback on training topics needed. The Nebraska Safety Center notes that this polling has to be coupled with training that may be needed but not necessarily wanted, such as updates on regulatory changes or the implementation of various new regulations and preventative accident re-training.

Somewhat more difficult to transfer is the resource represented by the Nebraska Safety Center, although many states have comparable school bus training resources that may already play a role in driver training. The value of having such an institution oriented to training is that it can develop the institutional contacts, the working rela-

tionships with others, that the Nebraska Safety Center has very effectively done across transportation industries - railroads, trucking, school bus and public transit. These in turn benefit small transit systems that do not have internal training resources.

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## **Transit Forum: Networking Transportation Providers to Improve Countywide Transit**

### **Organization Highlights**

Cochise County, Arizona, sits on the southeast corner of the state, bordered to the south by Mexico and to the east by New Mexico. Stretched across its 6,200 square miles, the population of 113,000 (1999 U.S. Census estimate) translates to a density of 18 persons per square mile. The county seat of Bisbee had a 1990 population of 6,200; Sierra Vista at 48,000 population is the largest city in the county. Many households are low income, with median income levels ranging from \$17,000 to \$27,000 in most of the communities. Transportation providers in the county include two public transit services, in Bisbee and Sierra Vista, a mix of human service transportation programs, and several private taxi operators. Travel between communities is a perennial problem because most transportation resources serve local trips only.

### **Background/Objectives**

Sierra Vista's Public Transit staff, the area agency on aging and an Interfaith Council developed a new approach to tackle county-wide transportation issues - to bring all providers together, both to learn about and better understand one another's programs and to encourage and develop coordinated approaches to a new funding source - through a Transit Forum.

Specifically, the Transit Forum was intended:

- To inform the existing transit providers about all transportation services in the county, with the objective of improving the ability of residents to travel through-

### **Sierra Vista Public Transit and Catholic Community Services Cochise County, Arizona**

out the county, particularly trips between communities.

- To encourage providers in the county to apply for a new state funding source. Successful application for these funds required educated applicants and coordinated applications for transit services.

### **Description**

The first forum was held in 2000, convened by Sierra Vista Public Transit and its contractor, Catholic Community Services of Cochise County. All of the transit providers of the county were invited and, significantly, all participated. This included several taxi operators, an over-the-road coach operator, the public transit providers of Sierra Vista and Bisbee, and several human service transportation providers. The Area Agency on Aging, American Red Cross, and several Section 5310 vehicle recipients were among the participants.

Attended by 60 persons, the first Transit Forum was a one-day workshop to bring people together to discuss their services and to explore how residents of the county could more readily travel between communities within the county. The forum included a panel oriented to social service case managers, to inform them of what transit could do for them and their caseloads. Various funding opportunities were discussed in the Forum context, including welfare-to-work support for transit and the new state-provided Local Transit Assistance Funds (LTAF) available only through a formalized application process.

This was the first time in recent memory that such a mix of organizations in the county had come together around transportation issues. An immediate outcome of the meeting was the publication and countywide distribution of an Inventory, a 12-page booklet describing all public, non-profit, and for-profit transportation services in the county, written for a general public audience. New lines of communication developed through the forum, and subsequently these providers did approach the county as a group to secure LTAF funding for specific transportation services, including inter-community transportation.



### **Resources**

The Transit Forum was funded with a \$5,000 grant contributed to by United Way and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Welfare-to-Work program of Cochise County. This funded the promotion of the initial forum and development of the countywide

inventory of transportation services. Staff time to coordinate the event was contributed by Sierra Vista Public Transit and Catholic Community Services of Cochise County. Subsequent events for the group of operators have been sponsored by individual hosting agencies.

## Results

Following the April 2000 forum, the operators of the county continue to meet on a monthly and bi-monthly basis, developing funding applications as a group and participating in a variety of training sessions. All applications for funding submitted were funded through the new LTAF. Training sessions, which continue, have addressed such topics as TANF - the Cochise Job Express, the state legislative process, management of volunteers, and good personnel and hiring practices. This loose confederation of rural transportation providers - known as the Transportation Network of Cochise County - now has a legislative liaison through Sierra Vista Pub-

lic Transit's representative on the state transit association's legislative committee.

## Barriers/Constraints

Historically, there was minimal communication between private operators and human service providers. And with the emerging public transit services in Bisbee and Sierra Vista in the past five years, this communication did not automatically improve. Meanwhile, residents had significant difficulties traveling between communities within this large county. The Forum proved to be a valuable mechanism for improving communication, which then in turn has led to successful applications to a new transit funding source.

## Transferability

The mix of organizations extending the invitation overcame uncertainty and mistrust of some possible Forum participants. While the private profit operators, including the over-the-road coach operator, had no particular experience in working with the public and non-profit agencies, the potential of new funding helped to bring them together. Discovery of various common interests and information needs has enabled the group to stay together

as a loose federation, the Transportation Network, which collectively works to improve the mobility of the residents of the county.

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*Catholic Community Services  
of  
Cochise County*

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## **INITIATIVES AND INNOVATIONS IN MARKETING**

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Marketing public transit is important for a number of reasons - providing specific service information to riders and potential riders, informing the community at large about the system and its services, and generating support from community leaders for public transit. But marketing often receives short shrift at smaller transit systems because they often have neither the funding nor the technical expertise to undertake effective marketing and public relations efforts.

This research project found a number of creative initiatives targeted towards marketing for rural and small urban transit systems such as that implemented by the State of Colorado. The state's Transit/Rail Unit initiated the *Transit Visibility Project* to

provide targeted funding assistance to improve the image, visibility and awareness of transit systems and services in local communities, recognizing that smaller systems often do not have the funds to do so themselves.

Another novel marketing program has been developed by the Fredericksburg Regional Transit System in Virginia. This small urban transit system installed video cassette recorders (VCRs) and televisions on its small buses, allowing the transit system to market its services. The VCRs are then made available to community organizations that provide financial support to the transit system, allowing *them* to market *their* services. This initiative is

placed in the *marketing* category but could also be placed in the *funding* category, as it is part of Fredericksburg's creative and aggressive program to general local funds for local transit.

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### **PRESENTED IN THIS CATEGORY:**

1. ***Transit Visibility Project: State Grant Funding for Local Marketing***—State of Colorado, Department of Transportation
2. ***Seniors on the Go: Introducing and Promoting Public Transit to the Elderly***—Aging and Independence Services and Metropolitan Transit Development Board, San Diego, California
3. ***Videos On Board Buses: Entertaining and Informing Riders***—FREDericksburg Regional Transit, Fredericksburg, Virginia
4. ***“Wrapped” Buses: Maximizing Advertising Dollars and Building Community Support for Transit***—Citibus, Lubbock, Texas
5. ***Selling Newspapers on Buses: Serving Riders and Building Rapport with Local Press***—FREDericksburg Regional Transit, Fredericksburg, Virginia

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# **Transit Visibility Project: State Grant Funding for Local Marketing**

**State of Colorado  
Department of Transportation**

## **Organization Highlights**

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for the state's multi-modal transportation system, with a budget of approximately \$966 million. CDOT's Transit/Rail Unit provides assistance to the State's numerous transit systems.

## **Background/Objectives**

The State of Colorado is one of only four states that provides no funding support from the state level for the provision of public transit services. Public transit budgets, consequently, are very lean and few dollars are spent on non-essential programs including marketing, information materials, and public relations activities.

Beginning with the 1998 budget year, the Transit/Rail Unit of the Intermodal Business Group of CDOT - which has responsibility for public transit, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian services - initiated the "Transit Visibility Project" to provide targeted funding assistance to improve the image, visibility, and awareness of transit agencies and services in local communities.

## **Description**

The Transit Visibility Project was created by and is administered by the Transit/Rail Unit within the CDOT's Intermodal Business Group.

Initiated in budget year 1997-98, the program cycle begins with a program announcement published in the fall inviting letters of application. Selection is com-

petitive statewide, with 10 to 11 potential recipient agencies selected each year. Selection in one year does not make an agency ineligible for funding in subsequent cycles, and some agencies have received assistance in more than one year of the program.

Once selected, the recipient agencies are invited to a facilitated planning retreat early in the funding year to refine their projects and ensure that all aspects and contingencies of their projects have been considered. The point of this retreat is to ensure that the projects are realistic about their scope and funding and can be carried out by existing agency staff. The facilitator for this process is a local Colorado marketing consultant with extensive experience in public transit marketing. Unless an agency at this point determines that their project should not be implemented, they continue to work with the consultant to develop and implement their local projects through the spring and summer.

In the fall of the following year, a session at the state transit association meeting is dedicated to presenting the completed Visibility Projects from the prior funding year.

Local projects funded through the Transit Visibility Project

have included: development of new logos, graphics, and color schemes for transit systems, development of promotional and information videotapes, and marketing and information brochures. Visibility Project assistance to the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) helped in the development of the "Colorado Transit" logo, which will serve as the marketing tool re-

presenting the transit industry in Colorado and enhancing its visibility. Among upcoming projects is the provision of speaker training through CASTA to help local transit managers more effectively represent their own systems.



## **Resources**

First funded in fiscal year 1997-1998, this annual program receives a total of \$70,000 from the administrative funding available under federal Section 5311 and 5313 programs. The



program requires a 20 percent match of local funding from the recipient agency, although some larger projects have required a higher level of match from the local agency ("overmatch").

As noted above, from 10 to 11 projects have been funded in each year of this project, each receiving varied levels of funding depending upon the nature of the project.

### **Results**

The Transit Visibility Project has assisted transit agencies in improving their public image and visibility in basic - as well as innovative - ways. Through attractive, identifiable logos and color schemes, clear and interesting information materials, and videotape presentations for community outreach, this program has helped transit systems across Colorado achieve a higher level of visibility within their communities as well as to communicate transit's benefits and services more effectively.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

The effectiveness of this program may be found, in part, in that it works on a limited amount of annual funding and makes that funding available in very targeted grants in conjunction with technical assistance to ensure that the funds are spent wisely and that the projects achieve their desired results. Helping agencies to be realistic in the scope of what can be achieved with the available funding, time, and staff is seen by CDOT staff as an ongoing issue. Each year, one or two funded projects are dropped by

their agencies as being too ambitious, costly, or beyond the realistic capabilities of local staff.

### **Transferability**

This program - including its moderate funding - is seen as applicable in most states where small urban and rural transit systems have a great need for updated public image materials and have neither the funding to undertake such projects nor the technical expertise to know where to begin and how to proceed. In this regard, Colorado's Transit Visibility Project has certainly benefited from the agency's strong relationship with its transit system "customers" because CDOT is not seen as interfering in the business of the local agencies but as providing practical and needed assistance.

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**Seniors on the Go:  
Introducing and Promoting  
Public Transit to the Elderly**

**Aging and Independence Services and  
Metropolitan Transit Development  
Board, San Diego County, California**

**Organization Highlights**

San Diego County spreads across 4,200 square miles of greatly varying landscapes, from the coastal beaches on the west, to the inland valleys and through mountainous and desert regions of the east county. Most of the almost 3 million residents live on less than one-third of the total landmass, clustered in 18 cities along the coastal and inland areas of the county.

Significant proportions of seniors live in San Diego County, many choosing to retire there because of the temperate climate; countywide, close to 12 percent are over age 65, consistent with national distributions. However, selective sub-regions of the county have senior populations well above national and countywide averages, including two predominately rural areas, North County (14% senior population) and East County (19% senior population), as well as numerous suburban communities within the populated areas where senior populations range between 14 percent to 20 percent of the communities' populations.

**Background/Objectives**

Promoting public transit use by seniors has been a priority in this county, stemming from a vocal, active, and large senior population. The county board of supervisors supported a discretionary allocation of \$2 million to identify ways to protect and promote the mobility of the county's growing number of seniors. These funds were provided to the county's Area Agency on Aging, Aging and Independence Services, and used, in part, to fund demonstration projects ori-

ented to problems of senior transportation. One such effort is a collaborative project led by the regional transportation operator that serves the City of San Diego and surrounding areas, the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB).

*Seniors on the Go* was established as a creative, non-threatening way of introducing seniors to public transit, wherever they live in the county. The lead agency, MTDB, sees this program as a way to build consumer awareness and educate seniors on public transit by having fun on transit. Inviting seniors to ride public transit for free, usually with friends, creates a week-long social occasion. A critical by-product is that the experience introduces many new senior users to what public transit can offer.

**Description**

*Seniors On The Go* provides seniors with a free week of public transit, all across the county, during the first week of June. In the first Ride Free Week in 1999, 90,000 seniors picked up Transit Information Kits and nearly 50,000 actually used the system. In the second year's effort in 2000, 100,000 Kits were distributed and over 60,000 senior trips were taken during Free Rides Week. To participate, seniors must pick up their Seniors on the Go Pass and Transit Information Kit at any Ralph's Grocery Store around the county.

Ralph's Grocery Stores and Coca-Cola are the two primary corporate sponsors, providing significant funds and in-kind labor. Aging and Independence

Services, the countywide area agency on aging, is a primary partner, along with the regional transit operators, with the MTDB playing the primary leadership role. Other sponsors include American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), RSVP, and a radio station that is popular with many in the over age 65 crowd.

The week-long event is the centerpiece of an overall program called "Celebrating Seniors on the Go" with the general goal of improving mobility of seniors. MTDB reports that this program works through:

- Assisting seniors in overcoming barriers,
- Providing relevant and effective resources and information about public transit,
- Enlisting business community support in sponsoring and endorsing transit and encouraging seniors to try transit, and
- Making the first experience of transit a positive one.

**The Pass and Transit Kit** - The Seniors on the Go pass entitles unlimited free bus or trolley rides during seven days in June. The Transit Kit also includes two free tickets for Saturday Coaster trips, the rail service that runs along the coast from north San Diego County down to the City of San Diego. The Transit Kit provides extensive information about the County's many transit programs, and it also serves as a "voucher" for various offers presented by the partner business. At the conclusion of the week, the pass becomes the entry form for a

chance to win valuable prizes, but most importantly, is the method for expanding the seniors' database.



Any person age 60 and older is eligible to pick up a pass. To do so, the senior must register, providing the transit operators with an immediate database of seniors with some interest in public transit. All the operators in the county participate, including those in small cities and rural communities to the east and north of San Diego proper.

**The Buddy Program** - The Transit Buddy program is another program element, using volunteers to help new transit users become familiar with how public transit works and where it goes. This relatively new program grew out of the *Seniors on the Go* week-long event and is only operational in those areas of the county where individuals have volunteered. Transit Buddies receive some orientation training from their respective transit operators and can be linked through AARP to the RSVP program for stipends. Transit Buddies help seniors in

their local communities learn to read a schedule, how to identify the right route, how to pay their fare, and where to sit. MTDB reports that Transit Buddies play a very important role in reducing the level of insecurity in using public transit.

**A Seniors and Transit Newsletter** - A *Seniors on the Go* newsletter has been initiated since the 1999 experience, providing quarterly mailings to seniors in the database built from that *Seniors on the Go* week. The newsletter features a number of articles that support and provide ongoing encouragement to seniors' use of public transit. The most recent issue featured an article by the chairman of the MTDB board, himself a senior.



## Resources

MTDB handles the marketing design and printing of the passes, as well as staff time to coordinate the event. The transit district requested a \$13,550 grant to help pay the direct costs of the program. Donated transit services are estimated at

\$20,790 and the printing budget is \$4,125 for materials that are distributed countywide. Direct labor costs of the lead agency are estimated at just over \$5,000. Costs of the other partners are not known but expected to include some significant in-kind labor.

AARP assists in distributing the Transit Information Kits to the stores while Ralph's handles distribution of these kits to seniors themselves. Coca-Cola Bottling Company of San Diego provides the giveaways and contest prizes, valued at about \$40,000.

There is a coordinating committee that meets periodically through the year, including representatives of all the players, to build upon the experiences of the prior year and to plan for the next. The development of this consumer database, now with over 100,000 names, is seen as a key tool to assist local transit in reaching its senior consumers.

## Results

There is great enthusiasm for this project, across many different players, with planning now underway for the third year. The seniors are participating in steadily increasing numbers. Participant survey results show that almost one-quarter are first-time transit users. The partner organizations are equally enthusiastic about the program, seeing this as a "fun-filled" way to experience transit, encouraging seniors to incorporate transit into their daily lives before the time comes when they must give up their own cars.

One story that has come back to organizers revolves around a group of “mall walkers” in La Mesa who now routinely take a group transit trip, at least once a week, after the mall walking routine. The group represents new transit users, some of whom may explore the use of transit for additional trips as the need arises.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

The program’s success has been a bit of a constraint in that daily pass-holding commuters, particularly on the Coaster rail line, were upset by the large numbers of seniors using transit during the free transit week. These concerns were contained by providing seniors with Coaster tickets that are good only on the Saturday during the Free Transit Week. This seems to have alleviated the regular rail transit users’ dismay with the week-long increased number of seniors.

Planners are trying to reach more younger seniors, people not yet having difficulty traveling, to educate them about public transit while it is still just one of a number of travel options available to them. The goal is to reach 25 percent of the senior population, providing them with Transit Information Kits and MTDB hopes to develop means of measuring this.

### **Transferability**

The concept of promoting a week of seniors-ride-free is directly transferable to those systems with the capacity to serve seniors. Partnering with various local agencies is likely to open up a variety of opportunities that will contribute to making it a fun

week. Business community sponsorship can also help with funding and logistics. With the increasing senior population, and the common experience that many seniors live in suburban small cities or in rural communities, it is important that seniors become knowledgeable and comfortable with the transit resources that do exist. A campaign such as this, on a scale appropriate to the local environment, is an effective way of building seniors’ understanding of transit and promoting its use, while they still have a variety of transportation options.

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## **Videos On Board Buses: Entertaining and Informing Riders**

### **FREDericksburg Regional Transit Fredericksburg, Virginia**

#### **Organization Highlights**

FREDericksburg Regional Transit (FRED) is a small urban transit system in Fredericksburg, Virginia, located about halfway between Washington, D.C., and Virginia's state capital, Richmond. The Fredericksburg area has a population of about 75,000 and is known for the colonial and Civil War history of its surroundings.

FRED, with a fleet of nine small transit vehicles, operates six routes, Mondays through Fridays. Two of the routes extend into neighboring Spotsylvania County. Additional service is provided evenings during the school year to benefit students of the local college, a service funded completely by the local college.

#### **Background/Objectives**

During the planning stages of its new local transit service, the City of Fredericksburg determined that it wanted the capability to show videos on board its new buses. The transit manager had heard about several transit systems in tourist areas that provided audio information on the buses and thought it was an interesting idea. Fredericksburg is a tourist area, and the transit manager thought it could take the idea to the next step - by providing video capability. When the City of Fredericksburg ordered buses for its new service, it specified that TVs and VCRs be installed. Reportedly, this was not a major addition to the vehicle cost.

#### **Description**

All of the FRED buses are equipped with televisions and VCRs. FRED management develops a schedule specifying when videos are to be played. For example, when routing and schedule changes were made to the service, FRED developed a video explaining all the revisions, and this video was played for two hours in the mornings and two hours in the afternoons just before and after the changes were implemented. Additionally, FRED had an arrangement with a local radio station where it obtained the morning news tape from the station and then played the news tape on the buses for predetermined periods of time. (At certain times of the day, FRED buses also provide the local news from one of the local radio stations, using the vehicles' radios.)

There are also opportunities to show videos provided by local organizations that provide financial assistance to FRED - its

Partners. One of FRED's Partners - the local hospital - is providing FRED a video on nutrition which will be played on the buses' VCRs.

FRED is judicious in determining the schedule for playing videos. They are aired at selected times and only for predetermined lengths of time.

#### **Resources**

The costs for the videos include the initial installation cost. The TVs/VCRs have been predominately maintenance-free, though there have been a few instances when there were problems with the equipment. In such cases, the transit system had a local repair shop send a technician out to fix the problem.

Playing videos on the buses also requires the videos. Where FRED obtains a video from a Partner organization or another local entity, there has been no charge. However, for FRED to develop its own videos, time and cost resources are necessary. Given FRED's small staff



and funding resources, it has been difficult to make new videos with any frequency.

## Results

The availability of TVs and VCRs on board vehicles has been a selling point when FRED is recruiting Partners for its innovative Partners program designed to generate local funds for transit. With the video technology on board its vehicles, FRED provides its Partners opportunities to show videos to riders. Such videos might be direct marketing or they might be oriented towards community service, such as the nutrition video being prepared by the local hospital, one of FRED's Partners.

According to rider feedback, FRED's riders seem to like the videos, though they would like more variety with greater frequency than FRED can provide.



It may also be that showing videos leads to less vandalism and improved behavior from younger riders, as they have something to watch while on the bus, though there is no data to support this notion.

## Barriers/Constraints

FRED acknowledges that the video capability is not being

used to its fullest. There are additional opportunities to use videos to showcase FRED's Partners, show educational videos, and other useful purposes. However, development of such videos requires time and staff resources, both of which are stretched at FRED.

Another issue is that drivers were hesitant about the video capability at first. They were worried that they would be constantly putting in and taking out videos. But this has not been the case, and management worked with the drivers to listen to their concerns. However, the drivers are not always vigilant in following the schedule for running the videos; during unannounced spot checks, FRED has found that drivers sometimes forget the videos.

## Transferability

Installing TVs and VCRs on board transit vehicles is relatively easy. Working with drivers may not be as easy because there may be some resistance from drivers regarding the ongoing "infomercials" or other videos playing constantly. Yet the technology does allow the transit system to "entertain" its riders in a similar way that local TV news is provided in airports, doctors offices, and other places where members of the public sit for a period of time. VCRs expand this opportunity, allowing targeted videos to be played, which promote selected topics, issues, or, as in Fredericksburg, the local organizations that provide funding for the transit system.

The Fredericksburg transit system also recommends that it is

important to use VCRs that have an automatic rewind capability so that drivers do not have to restart videos manually.

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## **"Wrapped" Buses: Maximizing Advertising Dollars and Building Community Support for Transit**

**Citibus  
Lubbock, Texas**

### **Organization Highlights**

Citibus is a small urban transit system in Lubbock, on the high plains of West Texas. The system is managed by the City and operated by a private provider under contract to the City of Lubbock. Citibus operates both fixed-route and paratransit services with a fleet of 60 fixed-route and 22 low floor paratransit vehicles.

### **Background/Objectives**

One of Citibus staff approached management in 1995 suggesting that the transit system wrap buses with advertising as a way of generating new advertising revenue. While the general manager was initially against the idea, he became supportive with the prospective of the additional revenue and, perhaps more importantly, the potential for developing closer relationships with larger businesses in the community who might be advertisers. If Citibus could interest some of the larger organizations and businesses as advertisers with this new medium, management realized that it could bring additional prestige and respect to the

city bus system. Transit vehicles – “wrapped” in advertising for such businesses and traversing the city - would demonstrate the business community’s support and commitment to local transit, building respect and pride for Citibus - an ongoing goal for Citibus management.

While not the first transit system to use bus wrapping, Citibus has maximized its use through a formal plan for bus wraps, ongoing monitoring of their effectiveness, and ensuring that the advertising furthers broader transit goals of building community support for local transit.

### **Description**

After city council approval, Citibus developed a plan for bus wraps, determining that it should limit the number of buses wrapped to ensure their novelty, visual appeal, and high value. Management determined that no more than 1/3 of its service fleet would be wrapped.

The first customer was Texas Tech University, a local state university. Citibus approached

the university and offered this first wrap at cost, charging the university only the actual cost of installing the wrap, with the objective of getting the new advertising program going and attracting other advertisers. This strategy worked, and soon Citibus had advertising contracts with Southwestern Bell, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, as well as a local large hospital and real estate company. A local convenience store also advertised. Citibus also advertises itself with a wrapped bus. Not all of the resulting bus wraps have been full; some cover just part of the bus.

Instead of using an advertising firm to sell the bus wraps in the community, Citibus decided that it could maximize its revenues and benefits of the new program by handling the sales itself. Citibus encourages its staff to get involved in the community and bring in a sale, giving that staff member a 5 percent commission on the advertising contract.

To advertise through a wrap, the business signs a one-year contract with Citibus, with two



one-year renewals. The business typically develops its own art work and then takes the art to a firm in Houston that creates the wrap using a plastic material. Citibus gets involved to approve the artwork. The advertiser is put in contact with the graphic company that produces the vinyl and arranges to contract out for the vinyl installation. The vinyl advertisement is then placed in 4-foot sections over the vehicle.

## Resources

Citibus expends administrative time to sell and coordinate the bus wrap advertising. Existing staff are used. The cost of the wrap and installation is borne by the business doing the advertising, so there is no direct cost to the transit system. The cost of the wrap and installation for a full wrap is about \$9,100, with a partial wrap somewhat less. In addition, the business/advertiser pays a monthly fee for a full wrap of \$1,100. These prices compare favorably to the cost of a billboard, considered a competing advertising medium.

## Results

Bus wraps bring in about \$150,000 annually to Citibus, roughly 8 percent of their operating revenues. In addition, Citibus believes the advertising program has created new relationships with businesses and

organizations who have advertised with wraps, and this, in turn, has served to build respect for the city transit system in the community.

## Barriers/Constraints

Barriers to Citibus included:

- Initially the city council, described as conservative by transit system management, did not want advertising on its buses.
- The city had a sign ordinance that disallowed such types of advertising.

Citibus management felt strongly about the potential for bus wrapping and, through discussions with the council, was able to persuade the city to allow the wraps. The amount of revenue that could be generated through these public/private partnerships was a strong argument in favor of wraps. Citibus also set up some basic rules for the advertising, excluding any ads that related to politics, religion, or other subjects that might be controversial. These rules satisfied the concerns of the council. The council, according to transit system management, is pleased with the program.

The sign ordinance was amended to allow bus wraps.



## Transferability

Bus wraps are now used by transit systems across the country. The early bus wraps (which were painted rather than using plastic, as is done now) were seen in the 1980s, developed in a rural area in South Carolina, evidence that such advertising can be used in small, rural communities as well as larger, more urban areas. Today, bus wraps are printed on vinyl that is easily removed from the vehicle without damaging the paint underneath.

Citibus stressed that a transit system must first establish its credibility as respected and effective, providing a service that advertisers would be proud to associate with. As part of this, the transit vehicles must be clean, well-maintained and without dents. Advertisers will not advertise on a bus if the local system is not respected. Transit systems interested in expanding traditional advertising revenues might consider bus wraps. Community concerns about inappropriate advertising may be allayed through well-established policies and rules governing subjects that can be advertised.

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## **Selling Newspapers on Buses: Serving Riders and Building Rapport with Local Press**

**FREDericksburg Regional  
Transit  
Fredericksburg, Virginia**

### **Organization Highlights**

FREDericksburg Regional Transit (FRED) is a small urban transit system in Fredericksburg, Virginia, located about halfway between Washington, D.C., and Virginia's state capital, Richmond. The Fredericksburg area has a population of about 75,000 and is known for the colonial and Civil War history of its surroundings.

FRED, with a fleet of nine small transit vehicles, operates six routes, Mondays through Fridays. Two of the routes extend into neighboring Spotsylvania County. Additional service is provided evenings during the school year to benefit students of the local college, a service funded completely by the local college.

### **Background/Objectives**

The local newspaper, the *Free Lance-Star*, asked FRED if the transit system was interested in placing newspaper racks at selected fixed-route stops. FRED decided it would rather provide the papers for sale on board the buses. FRED had concerns that newspaper racks would not "fit" in certain neighborhoods and that they might not be maintained properly. Selling the papers on the buses gave FRED more control over the arrangement.

### **Description**

The local paper had plastic newspaper racks installed in the buses. Copies of the local newspaper are delivered to FRED's offices each weekday (FRED operates only on weekdays).

Drivers are then responsible for taking a set number of papers and placing them onto the rack on their bus.

Riders wishing to purchase a paper simply drop 50 cents into a locking container on the newspaper rack and take a paper. Drivers are responsible for the newspaper copies on their bus, returning any copies not sold and delivering the locking container with cash collected (along with the farebox vault) at the end of the day back to the FRED office. Any papers not accounted for at the end of the day must be purchased by FRED.

FRED receives a commission of 10 cents for every newspaper sold. Additionally, the transit system receives free ads in the *Free Lance-Star*.

After experience with the plastic newspaper racks showed some problems, the newspaper has re-designed the racks; the new ones are more durable, made of aluminum.

### **Resources**

Costs to construct and install the newspaper racks and for daily delivery of papers are borne by the local paper, with no costs to FRED. There are some operating costs to FRED in terms of driver time to stock the racks and account for revenue received. Moreover, if any unsold newspapers are not returned to the *Free Lance-Star*, they must be purchased by FRED. Because the sale of the papers is based on an honor system, there are invariably a few copies that are taken without payment.

Despite the need to compensate for taken papers, the transit system gains some overall revenue from the sale of papers, though it is minimal. With about 30 to 50 papers sold each day, the commission would yield about \$3 to \$5 per day. However, given that FRED must buy some of the papers, the commission yield is adjusted. FRED's philosophy has been that the transit system should at least break even on a cost basis: sale of the newspapers is considered a passenger amenity and a way to help maintain a positive relationship with the local press, not a way to generate revenues.



### **Results**

A major benefit from the arrangement is receipt of free advertising for FRED in the local paper. FRED management reports that free ads are provided when there is a specific need, for example, before some special event. However, given that the ads are provided for free, FRED is not able to demand placement for guaranteed times. If FRED wanted to place a large ad at Christmas time, it would likely have to pay regular advertising rates.

Another result of the arrangement with the local newspaper is improved relations with the local press. FRED's relationship with the local press had already been positive before the arrangement: FRED had generated considerable local interest through its early implementation stage, and the local newspaper reported on progress. However, this arrangement, along with the continued growth and popularity of the transit service, has contributed to a strengthening of the strong relationship between FRED and the local paper.

FRED also reports that the riders seem to like the ability to purchase newspapers on the buses.

### **Barriers/Constraints**

One of the primary constraints in introducing the newspaper sales program was resistance from the drivers who were not enthusiastic about yet another responsibility. FRED management spent considerable time "selling" the concept to the drivers to overcome their resistance. Eventually, the drivers have come to accept the program but there is still the daily responsibility of stocking the racks, accounting for sold and missing papers, and cleaning up their buses when riders leave newspapers behind.

Another issue was the original design of the racks, which was not satisfactory. However, the *Free Lance-Star* was able to redesign the racks using aluminum and the second version seems to work.

### **Transferability**

Sale of newspapers on board buses works in FRED's small community. The transit system and the newspaper have courted each other in Fredericksburg, with a very positive relationship resulting. Such a strong, good relationship with the local press can benefit any small transit system, providing on-going coverage of the system that is often better than paid advertising. The notion of selling papers on buses may be one step towards establishing—or strengthening—a positive relationship between a small transit system and the local newspaper company. Importantly, however, such a relationship requires considerably more than just sale of papers: it takes concerted and sustained efforts to keep channels of communication open, for example, periodic meetings with management and editorial staff and honest, straightforward responses to issues of interest.

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