



# Kansas Trans Reporter

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

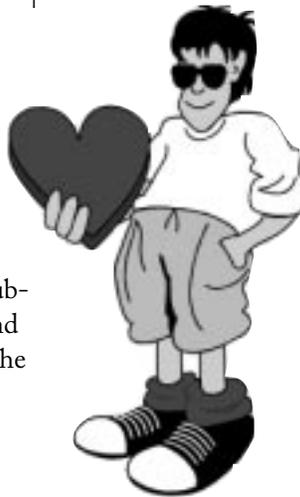
## *Courting* the Older Woman Rider

Sorry, candy won't cut it. But basing your services on older women's transportation needs can make public transit a viable option for them.

by Dawn Jourdan

National population projections indicate that the population of women age 65 and over is increasing at a substantial rate due to increased survivorship and immigration. The increase in this sector of the population is of great interest to transit providers because studies show that a high

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## Concerns About New CDL Requirements Unfounded

by Dawn Jourdan

In the last issue of the *Kansas Trans Reporter*, we reported that there has been concern among transit providers about potential legislative changes by Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding commercial driver's licenses (CDLs). However, according to an on-line *Federal Flash* by the CTAA dated January 20, 2000, worries that the newly enacted Motor Carrier

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## Older Women Riders,

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percentage of these women are choosing means of transportation other than public transit to get them where they need to go.

This article discusses two related questions: Why aren't older women relying on public transit services? What should transit providers do to attract older women riders?

### Why Not Public Transit?

A literature review headed by Dr. Robert B. Wallace of the University of Iowa College of Medicine's Department of Preventative Medicine discusses the principal modes of transportation service available to older women. These include paratransit programs, as well as taxis and private vehicles driven by care-givers or family members.

*Paratransit Programs.* According to the study, paratransit programs exist nationwide. However, the availability of these programs is not an indication of their effectiveness in attracting riders, especially women over the age of 65. Use of these programs is limited by eligibility restrictions, scheduling problems and the unavailability of weekend service.

*Taxis and Privately-Owned Automobiles.* Other modes of transportation frequently relied on by older women include taxi service and privately-owned vehicles operated by friends, family members or care-providers. According to the study, these modes of transportation are more convenient for older women, offering door-to-door service at times set by the passenger. However, using a taxi service or hiring a care provider is often a costly expense. Transportation needs/desires of

Social events frequently occur on evenings and weekends. Consider expanding your service hours to provide transportation for older women to attend these events.



elderly women sometimes go unmet when they rely only on friends or family members to transport them from place to place. For these reasons, many older women continue to drive their own cars.

### How to Make Transit Attractive to Older Women Riders

Wallace identified a number of steps public transit providers might take to further the use of their services by older women.

- *Reduce Restrictions on Eligibility*—Restrictions on the income of riders must be reduced, if not eliminated, to serve the growing population of older women.
- *Simplify Scheduling Procedures*—Many riders find it difficult to understand bus schedules and procedures for scheduling rides. Transit agencies should simplify schedules, descriptive materials and procedures as much as possible. In addition, staff should always be willing to answer a question with patience, regardless of the number of times the question has been asked.
- *Provide Door-to-Door Service*—Door-to-door service is especially important to older women who suffer from physical or mental disabilities. This service provides riders with confidence that they will get where they need to go—quickly and safely.
- *Offer Extended Hours*—Not all activities important to older women occur within the confines of business

hours. For example, social events frequently occur on evenings and weekends. Transit providers should consider making services available to riders on evenings and weekends to meet these needs.

- *Make Public Transit the Most Affordable and Convenient Travel Option*—The price of public transportation has decreased in recent years due to increased public funding. Transit agencies, as well as state and federal agencies, should continue to work to keep costs down. Otherwise, the public transit system will not be capable of reaching its intended constituencies.

Attracting older women to transit services may require some rethinking about present agency programs and policies. Transit agencies must attempt to fiscally and operationally prepare themselves for the potential demand for transportation services caused by the growth of the population of elderly women.

### Source

Robert B. Wallace and Daniel Franc, *Literature Review of the Status of Research on the Transportation and Mobility Needs of Older Women*, prepared for the National Safety Council and the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration. This report was posted in December 1999 at: [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/olddrive/nscprt.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/olddrive/nscprt.html) ▲

**CDL Concerns Unfounded,**  
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Safety Improvement Act might affect small transit providers are unfounded. After some review, the CTAA has concluded that there is no pending regulatory or legislative action that would require operators of vehicles carrying 8-15 passengers to obtain CDLs. And even if there were, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and its successor in these matters, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), have documented intent to exempt small transit providers from such requirements.

This being said, both the FHWA and FMCSA are considering adopting some other rules that would affect vehicles carrying 8-15 passengers. These proposed requirements include: 1) registering as a motor carrier with FMCSA; 2) marking vehicles with an identification number; and 3) maintaining an accident register. Rule-making is slated to occur this Spring.

**Source**

[www.ctaa.org/fednews/flashes/20000120.shtml](http://www.ctaa.org/fednews/flashes/20000120.shtml) ▲

**Free Online Resources**

The Transportation Research Information Service (TRIS) web site contains abstracts for more than 40,000 books, journal articles and technical reports in transportation research from the 1960s to the present. Information is provided free of charge.

<http://tris.amti.com/>

# Creating Livable Communities Through Transit Initiatives

.....  
by Stephanie M. White  
.....

Public transportation has a deeper significance than merely getting citizens from one place to another. As explained by Stephen Burrington and Bennet Heart, authors of *City Routes, City Rights: Building Livable Neighborhoods and Environmental Justice* by

**Developing a Sense of Community**

Transit-oriented development is planned with a transit station or stop as its focal point with various types of activities located within easy access. By planning development around public transit stops, transit riders can take care of the majority of their daily needs without requiring the use of a car. This is especially beneficial in areas with high con-

*Transit-oriented development fosters a better sense of community by creating a walking environment, discouraging crime and increasing local economic activity.*

*Fixing Transportation*, "Transit can be part of a neighborhood revitalization strategy to bring several needed improvements to a neighborhood that work together to create a more livable community." If properly planned and designed, transit stops can function as main points for shopping, economic, social, and community activities.

Recognizing the need to enhance public transit's role within local communities, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) began the Livable Communities Initiative in 1993. This program provides federal funding for transit-oriented community development. The initiative is based on the premise that the FTA's business is about people, the conviction that "the community is the core of life," and the belief that transit must serve the general population as well as respond to specific mobility needs.

centrations of low- and moderate-income families.

Beyond improving access, transit-oriented development fosters a better sense of community by creating a walking environment, and increased activity discourages crime and fosters local economic activity.

Consider a stop located near a grocery store where a passenger can stop off on her way home from work to pick up something for dinner. Across the street is a bank where she can deposit her check and next door is the day care center her son attends. For individuals without cars, this stop can be especially convenient and time-saving.

The Livable Communities Initiative encourages transit-oriented development by:

- Making land use decisions with transit in mind, especially the sites of

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## Livable Communities,

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schools, businesses, and health and recreational facilities.

- Improving access to transit systems which are often the life lines to many local businesses.
- Recommending early and continued community involvement in transit programs.
- Backing flexible highway and other public funding programs with leveraged funds like those provided by empowerment zones.

### Tips for Getting Started

Burrington and Heart suggest several tips for transit providers and city planners for creating transit-oriented development:

*Find a champion of change, or be one.* Consider the time, creativity, and resources required for development projects and find an individual with the commitment and vision to get the job under way. Burrington and Heart recognize that LANI would not be where it is today without the dedication of its Executive Director, Joyce Perkins.

*Don't rely entirely on government.* Because of potential delays in government funding, it is a good idea to seek out community development corporations and private sector companies to assist with some components of the project. The best efforts can go unrealized if your agency does not strive to collaborate with other local organizations. Collaboration efforts also increase the stakes within your community. But the task of putting all of the pieces together is not easy and must begin with a clear vision and strong commitment from all involved.

## Healthy Places and Transit: An Example from Los Angeles



The Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) brought together residents, businesses, schools, and community institutions to form eight neighborhood coalitions. These coalitions, called “recognized community organizations” (RCOs), are dedicated to making modest transit and transit-related improvements within their communities. LANI strives to use these improvements to create stronger ties within the community and to initiate revitalization in some of the city’s lower-income, transit-dependent neighborhoods. Joyce Perkins, LANI’s Executive Director, explains that “What makes LANI work is the fact that, to the greatest extent possible, we give control and funding to the community to actually realize its vision. It’s not just a plan that sits on a shelf.”

LANI’s goals are to engage the communities in making improvements and launch organizations that continue to serve the communities after the initial projects are completed. LANI began working on improvements like new bus stop shelters, benches, lighting, better signage, and small pocket parks adjacent to bus stops. LANI received initial funding from FTA’s Livable Communities Program and used it to leverage additional support from public and private funders for other revitalization efforts. Leveraging has played a vital role in the city’s development reform process.

To ensure the continued success of LANI’s community organizations, each RCO either forged a partnership with established business improvement districts, merchant districts, or community development corporations or created new nonprofit community organizations. These partnerships were based on mutual needs of the partners. In some instances, transit providers worked with business improvement districts or merchant districts to encourage economic activity within the neighborhood. Other partnerships were forged between social service providers and transit community organizations. These partnerships work to foster pride and respect in the neighborhoods by sponsoring cleanups or incorporating new transit routes in areas that don’t have good access to jobs. These new organizations and private sector partnerships have further created neighborhood transit focal points that are continually spurring investment in the community.

*Leave no source of funding untapped.* Since transit improvements overlap into economic development and housing, consider a wide array of potential funders. Search out federal programs, private foundations, and user-specific funding sources. Also, be

aware that banks are obligated under the Community Reinvestment Act to invest in programs within the communities they serve.

*Catalyze the private sector.* Often with a little public investment, the private

sector will likely be interested in investing in community transit projects. For example, LANI turned a vacant lot into a bus stop park with an attractive mural, and that investment prompted a restaurant to move in next door. Since then, the restaurant has donated over \$50,000 for park improvements.

*Get the zoning right.* Some aspects of zoning ordinances may need to be amended to ensure community needs are being met. Zoning around a bus stop should generally encourage relatively dense development with a variety of potential land uses.

*Enlist your local community development corporation.* Alliances with community development corporations (CDCs) can be valuable assets to your livable community project. Good CDCs generally have solid resource bases and working relationships with community leaders and public officials that can help pave the way for community improvements.

For more information about making transit-related improvements, check out the following web sites:

[www.tlcnetwork.org](http://www.tlcnetwork.org), a great resource for people working to create more livable communities by improving transportation; [www.larryville.com](http://www.larryville.com), a Lawrence, Kansas web site that contains information about smart growth and Lawrence-area transit concerns; and [www.sustainable.org](http://www.sustainable.org), the Sustainable Communities Network with excellent resources and links concerning smart growth, creating community, and living sustainably.

### Livable Communities Resources

The following reports are available through the American Public Transit Association:

- *The Role of Transit in Creating Livable Communities* (TCRP Report 22), Transit Cooperative Research

## Healthy Places and Transit: An Example from Wellston, Missouri

Wellston is an economically distressed city near St. Louis, Missouri. In 1992, the slaying of an 11-year-old boy near an abandoned manufacturing facility spurred members of the community to work on the revival of their neighborhoods. Dennis Coleman, chief of the St. Louis County Economic Council, created the Cornerstone Partnership to develop a job-training center for both young adults and workers laid-off from the manufacturing facility. The rest of the property was turned into an industrial park to encourage better paying jobs in the area. Metrolink, St. Louis's rail system, operates in several of the neighborhoods around Wellston, providing a way for people to commute to the industrial park.

As the job-training center and new industrial park gained strength and the number of Metrolink passengers increased, it became evident that more could be done with the Metrolink station building near Wellston. Metrolink and other agencies began to collaborate on station site improvements. Eventually, the combined efforts of Metrolink and other Wellston community organizations improved the sidewalks, lighting and landscaping in the area. They also resurfaced the road serving the park-and-ride lot and installed better signage, bicycle racks, and an information board on activities at the job training facility. In addition, a day care center is being built near the station. Approximately one million dollars of federal funds (much of it FTA Livable Communities Program funds) has been obtained for the transit station improvements alone.

Program, National Academy Press, Washington, DC (1997);

- *The Role of Transit in Creating Livable Metropolitan Communities*, a nine-minute companion video to the book listed above;

- *The Transit Amenity Handbook and the Transit Design Game Workbook* (TCRP Report 46), Transit Cooperative Research Program, National Academy Press, Washington, DC (1999);

- *How Transportation and Community Partnerships Are Shaping America*, Project for Public Spaces (1999).

For more information about these reports contact:

American Public Transit Association (APTA), 1201 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 898-4000

Fax: (202) 898-4070

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

### Sources

"Livable Communities," *The Military Engineer*, No. 584, April-May 1997.

Burrington, Stephen and Bennet Heart. *City Routes, City Rights: Building Livable Neighborhoods and Environmental Justice by Fixing Transportation*. Conservation Law Foundation, June 1998.

"Rebuilding Neighborhoods, One Bus Stop at a Time," *Project for Public Spaces*, 1998. ▲



# Salary Management

by Todd A. Larson

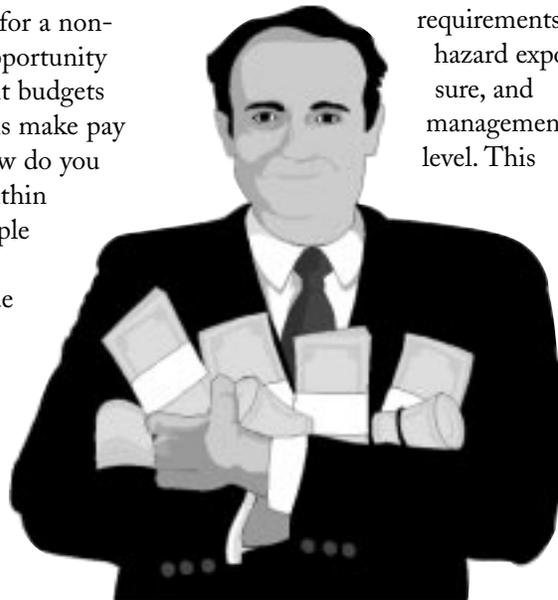
**C**ongratulations! You earned a raise! This statement is what every employee wants to hear and every manager would like to say. But when working for a non-profit organization, the opportunity to say it may be rare. Tight budgets in non-profit organizations make pay raises difficult to give. How do you provide salary increases within your budget and keep people happy and motivated?

The best way to decide who should receive a raise is to have an organizational policy for salary increases—and follow it. If your agency does not have such a policy, it is in your best interest to create one. By doing so, you can help eliminate future headaches. Organizations that do not have written policies tend to deal with pay raises on a subjective basis, thus creating inconsistencies among the staff and leaving themselves open to accusations of favoritism.

The job description and the particular employee need to be separated. Often, in smaller organizations, staff build strong personal relations that can bias the decision process. Never give raises for character qualities—always base raises on work performance.

## Assign Job Value and Rank

The first step in creating a salary-increase policy is to determine the value of every job in your agency. Place a dollar amount on each position by identifying its necessary skills, such as educational and technical requirements, hazard exposure, and management level. This



You can manage to give salary increases—even within a limited budget—if you have a salary management plan.

kind of information may already be available in your agency in job descriptions. Keep an eye out for employment ads by other transit agencies in both the public and private sector. See what skills they are requiring for similar jobs—and what they are paying. You may find that the dollar value you place on a posi-

tion is not in line with other agencies, and you may be under-paying or over-paying your employees.

Salary surveys may be available from your state transit association or other state association. Check with these groups to find comparable position-specific values.

The next step is to rank the positions by dollar amount. You may have difficulty ranking them if you have many different jobs with similar dollar values. Grouping the jobs into categories will help. Ten pay categories are easier to keep track of than 30 individual salaries. Generally, the top-ranked jobs are in management followed by middle level positions. The lowest ranked jobs require the fewest skills.

Consider giving special incentives for additional skills not required for the position, if the skills are useful. Perhaps the ability to speak another language could be helpful to your organization. Leave these special skills outside the rankings, however, because they may add confusion to the ranking process.

Merit-based raises are another consideration in budgeting payroll. They may help motivate employees perform better. However, an over-reliance on this method may make money the primary performance motivator for your staff. Your agency's quality of service could decrease if money overshadows the reward of helping passengers.

## Plan When to Give Raises

Devise a time line for giving pay raises. This can help prevent your agency from giving too many raises

in a short amount of time.

Set a minimum length of employment before giving a raise, say six months or a year. If an employee leaves during this time, there are no resources wasted in granting a raise.

Granting across-the-board annual cost of living allowances (COLAs) may be another idea to consider. These yearly increases are small (one to three percent of a salary, usually) to keep up with inflation.

**Tough Decisions**

Many organizations run the risk of losing an excellent employee to a higher-paying position elsewhere. The private sector can often pay more. You may have to make a tough decision: Do we keep the employee by offering a salary increase or lose his/her experience and skill for someone possibly less skilled? If we give the employee a raise, must we pay other employees more as well?

Sometimes you just have to wish that employee well at the new job if the pay needed to keep him or her is out of line with that job category. It's a tough decision, but its fair to your agency and your other employees.

I hope this article will get the ball rolling in your agency toward devising a salary management plan. Good luck!

**Source**

"Salary Management for Nonprofits," by Jeremy Jensen. *The Grantsmanship Center Magazine*, Issue 33, Fall 1997. For a free subscription, write: The Grantsmanship Center, PO Box 17220, Los Angeles, CA 90017.

For more information on salary surveys, contact the Community Transportation Association of America at [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org) or 202/628-1480. ▲

# New Alliance Forming

Program professionals find strength in numbers.

.....  
by Janet E. Blue, Drug & Alcohol  
Program Manager, KDOT  
.....

Last month I mentioned that Kansas and Arkansas will be working closely together to help other states with their drug and alcohol audit processes. At the Multi-State Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) meeting in Florida this past December, further coordination among states was discussed. Twenty-seven states were represented at the meeting along with the Federal Transit Administration, American Public Transit Association (APTA), Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) staff.

At the meeting, I suggested that an association or alliance of Substance Abuse Professionals at the state level be organized to strengthen our input in the FTA regulations. Martha Mary Churchman of FTA agreed, indicating that this would be an opportunity for the states to be involved in the 49CFR Part 40 Regulations updates. These regulations cover specific documentation that transit providers and collection site staff are expected to maintain.

Jim Gilbert with the Arkansas Department of Transportation and I have begun the necessary steps toward establishing the Alliance, which will be supported under AASHTO. Twenty-two states have since sent substance abuse professionals' information to us so that we may begin preparing the framework for the Alliance.

**Reminder To All  
Section 5311 Providers**



Please send your Drug & Alcohol Policy

& Procedures and a copy of your contract with the Consortium to me as soon as possible. Send this information, along with a copy of the original signature page to: Janet E. Blue, Drug & Alcohol Program Manager, KDOT Office of Public Transportation, Thatcher Building, 217 SE 4th Street, Topeka, KS, 66603-1568.

My participation in the alliance will ensure that Kansas transit providers have an active part in rewriting the regulations. Input that I receive from providers in the field will be considered in the regulation updating process.

I am excited about the approval of this alliance and look forward to working with the other states in getting it established. The name of this alliance has yet to be decided but we are leaning towards Alliance of Substance Abuse Program Professionals (ASAPP). ▲



# Turning Traditional Marketing Plans Inside-Out

.....  
by Dawn Jourdan  
.....

**T**raditional marketing schemes require agency managers to determine whether or not they are reaching their targeted customers by looking at the outside world without directly interacting with it. "Outside-In Marketing" has agency managers work with customers as a team in the marketing process to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization and make plans for the future efforts. This article highlights this new approach to marketing in the field of public transit.

## The "Outside-In Marketing" Approach

In the May/June 1998 issue of *Non-Profit World*, Mal Warwick sets forth a number of steps to assist your organization in becoming an outside-in marketer.

**1** *Grow your own marketing research.* This "growing" process begins by drafting a brief position statement or mission statement. This statement should reflect what those within the organization believe is your organizational purpose, i.e. the glue that binds them. Once your agency has described itself and its goals, customers should be given the opportunity to provide their perspective. Ask them what they like and dislike about your organization and its services.

Your agency's mission statement should be compared with their insights. From this, a revised statement can be "grown." The new statement will reflect the path the agency needs to take in order to achieve the goals set from within and outside of the agency. Customers will know that your agency has heard them when you reflect their comments in the final statement of purpose.

**2** *Evaluate your agency's promotional materials.* Effective promotional materials honestly and simply promote agency services—in a creative and inspired way.

*Simplicity helps make a message memorable.* A convoluted message will either confuse or turn off potential patrons. A simple message, on the other hand, will be readily understandable and quickly recalled.

*Honesty is the best policy.* According to Warwick, honesty in advertising is important for two reasons: 1) It's the right thing to do; and 2) It works better that way. A message that is honest will build customer trust, a key element in building lasting relationships with your riders.

*Be sensitive to customer needs.* For example, if wheelchair accessibility is one of the primary needs of your customers, your promotional materials should highlight how your agency addresses this need.

*Add pizzazz.* Promotional materials should inspire enthusiasm.

Whether the materials are colorful, eloquently phrased or contain catchy slogans, they should contain a message that is unique to your organization, emphasizing its mission to provide high quality services to current and potential customers. Existing materials that do not inspire excitement about the services provided by your agency should be revised.

**3** *Conduct a preliminary marketing audit.* In this phase, the organization should consider five things: product, price, place, production capability and promotion.

The term "product" refers to services provided. Being able to define the scope of the product being offered will assist your agency in understanding if the product being offered is keeping pace with consumer demands.

Analyzing the price of services compared to overall operating costs provides a better understanding of whether current fare rates, along with state and federal subsidization, cover your costs.

Place of service is an element under constant scrutiny by transit agencies and should continue to be so. Agencies must routinely compare routes or service areas with demand.

Production capability is a technical-sounding term that simply refers to how well an agency is able to meet current demand. Knowledge of production capability is also useful in projecting the effect of future

demands on the allocation of agency resources.

Finally, promotional efforts should be reviewed for effectiveness. It may be time for a change.

**4** *Revise your traditional marketing plan.* Once your current marketing plan has been assessed, your agency should take steps to revise that plan with the knowledge gained from the market research process.

First, customer comments should be included in the plan. Failure to do so will appear, from the outside, as a lack of responsiveness. Next, your agency should reformulate its advertising strategy to ensure that it coincides with the agency's mission statement.

The principles mentioned earlier for evaluating your existing promotional materials also apply here. The new message should be simple and honest. This message must be shared over and over and over... in this way, customers will become acquainted with your newly improved agency. Last, but certainly not least, the new marketing strategy must be a catchy one. After all, the new agency will still have to appeal to existing and future markets to continue thriving.

Public transit is a commodity to be sold. Agencies must develop a clear understanding of the characteristics of customers and their needs in order to sell transit services. "Outside-In Marketing" is one way agencies can make sure that they are truly meeting customer needs—by involving them from the get-go.

**Source**

"Outside-In Marketing: A New Way to Look at Marketing for Nonprofits," by Mal Warwick, *Nonprofit World*, May/June 1998. ▲



# Got Intelligibility?

Peter Schauer provides tips to help your agency information be better understood.

.....  
by Stephanie M. White  
.....

**F**or some riders, accessing public transit is as difficult as filling out income tax forms. Riders can become intimidated and frustrated by confusing schedules and procedures, getting so discouraged that they choose not to use the services. Public transit should be designed in a way that customers can easily and quickly learn how to use the system, how to access the services, how to pay, and how to appropriately conduct themselves within established policies.

**Measuring Intelligibility**

Peter Schauer, a transportation consultant, asserts that it is vital for transit providers to approach their system intelligibility not just from the management standpoint but from the visual and psychological standpoints of the customers. There are several ways to assess how well your system is understood by your customers, including focus groups, passenger surveys and public education events.

*Focus Groups.* Include current and potential riders in focus groups to determine how well customers understand your services. When designing a focus group, include 10-20 riders and at least one representative from each of your departments. Have your drivers talk with their riders to determine interest in participating in a focus group and then try to include riders from various segments of your population. Ask participants their

opinions about schedules, route maps, and brochures. Encourage them to offer suggestions to make these materials easier to understand. Focus groups also provide a good forum to pre-test new schedules or written material.

*Passenger surveys.* These can help track transit system intelligibility by providing an avenue for customers to describe problems they've had understanding your agency's information or policies. You can use a series of surveys over time to track understandability as you make changes.

The Ontario Urban Transit Association has published a report called *Survey Your Way to Success*, designed to assist transit managers and planners collect and use survey data effectively. The report describes methods for addressing community needs and assessing customer attitudes about the transit system. These surveys can also project future trends, helping transit managers plan for and justify necessary changes.

*Community Events.* Attend community events to educate the public about your services and answer any questions they have. This will give you another opportunity for assessing how well your informational materials are understood.

**Enhancing Intelligibility**

Once weaknesses in intelligibility are identified, you can increase customer understanding in the following ways:

*Develop a Comprehensive Marketing and Public Information Program.*

A good marketing program can

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## Intelligibility,

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attract and retain riders while promoting public transit as an essential community service. Marketing generally involves developing an identity for your system; providing clear, easy-to-use passenger information; designing a customer service program; conducting public relations activities; and developing advertising and promotional activities. It is essential to maintain a consistent look and image throughout the various components of the plan.

*Design creative and easily-identifiable names for buses or routes.* For example, the buses for OATS Public Transportation System, a general public transit system in Missouri, were banana yellow when the agency provided services primarily for elderly passengers. The bright yellow buses quickly became synonymous for elderly transit in Missouri.

Schauer recommends naming routes after images your passengers associate with the scenery on those routes as another effective way of marketing services and making them “rider-friendly.” For example, you could name your routes after wildlife if your agency is in an area called Bear Pass or Pine Ridge.

*Use Electronic Media.* With the increasing use of electronic media by the general public, it is important for transit managers to keep up-to-date. Telephone systems should be updated to include voice mail or voice messaging to allow customers to get basic information over the phone. The Internet can be used to provide information about your services including fares and routes. E-mail can allow customers to ask questions or provide service-related comments at their own convenience.

*Create an Understandable Fare System.* To reduce potential confusion about fares and procedures for paying fares, design clear instructions. Ask yourself if your fare structure makes sense. Do fares appropriately reflect the differences in cost to provide different services? For example, if your fares vary for peak hours and non-peak hours or for elderly and non-elderly passengers, are the different prices reasonable?

Make fare information readily available to the public and post it on your vehicles.

Consider the use of smart cards or magnetic strip cards to simplify payment, eliminating the need to provide change. This can make things easier for both the rider and your agency.

*Develop Good Internal Communications.* Establish a forum for good internal communication. A policies and procedures manual can provide a single frame of reference for employees. To compile a policies and procedures manual, assemble any existing policies and procedures and develop new policies for areas that need them.

Use your policies and procedures as guidelines for staff interaction. In addition, always encourage open, two-way communication between agency staff.

*Provide Training in Effective Communication.* If your staff is not aware of the full extent of your ser-

## Intelligibility Checklist

Has your agency has taken adequate steps to provide an understandable transit system? Find out by answering the following questions. Does your agency:

- Provide clear, current, easy-to-read, and accessible printed materials?
- Distribute information at convenient locations? (don't forget the Internet)
- Provide effective and clear information over the phone?
- Have trained, easily-accessible staff members familiar with the entire transit system and its range of services?
- Provide outreach into the community?
- Have an internal e-mail network to facilitate communication among transit staff?

vices, they will not be able to communicate those services to customers. It is vital that they are familiar with the entire system—not just their own area of expertise.

When training staff about your services, include information on effective communications techniques specific to their job. For example, customer service personnel must be able to respond appropriately to comments and complaints from the public while dispatchers must be able to communicate clearly with passengers and be trained in proper telephone etiquette.

Laidlaw Transit Systems has developed a sensitivity training program called Special Words and Tactics (SWAT) to alleviate recurring communication problems. Participants are taught how to communicate sensitively and effectively with both staff and passengers. For more information about this program, call Cheryl Moore at (800) 821-3451, ext. 211.

Schauer suggests training drivers

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# Handle with Care

Inquiring about your riders' needs can help increase safety.

by Stephanie M. White

Many passengers have disabilities that require additional care when safely boarding transit vehicles. And providers must be prepared to meet these needs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit vehicles to be equipped with wheelchair lifts and ramps. In addition, transit drivers must be trained to handle this equipment safely. Having equipment that meets ADA standards, regular maintenance checks, and properly trained personnel will ensure the safest ride your agency can offer to passengers.

When designing safe boarding procedures for your agency, consider situations that will require extra driver attention when loading and unloading passengers. Have you considered the special care needed by passengers with wheelchairs or walkers? Do your drivers know how to care for visually- or hearing-impaired customers? Have you lined the steps of your bus with tactile strips to prevent slipping? Are those strips bright enough to be seen by riders with low vision? Have you trained your drivers to be prepared for any situation and to react with utmost care and safety?

## Train for the Unexpected

During your training for drivers, include a component that will give them skills to meet the unexpected. Brainstorm with drivers about what might possibly occur on the job and have them discuss ways to handle the



*Drivers need as much information as possible about passenger needs in order to provide effective service.*

situations. Arrange for a professional who works with disabled persons to conduct a workshop on the proper care for individuals using wheelchairs, walkers or canes.

Next, train drivers about changes in care-giving procedures required with changes in weather. For example, discuss ways to ensure safe boarding and unboarding when steps are slick from rain or snow. Create a winter policy that drivers carry sand or a shovel in case they need to remove snow or ice inhibiting a safe boarding procedure.

## Obtain Information About the Passengers

A key element in ensuring passengers are boarded and unboarded safely is establishing good communication with them and their caregivers. Ask about special needs—within reasonable expectation—that you could better address. For demand-response routes, give drivers as much informa-

tion as possible about their passengers and any special situations they might encounter.

“Find out exactly what you will be faced with and how to approach it,” says Jerry Land, a driver safety specialist in Kokomo, Indiana.

Knowing more about your passengers and their needs before they get on the bus will help to avoid any future problems.

When dispatchers become aware of unusual circumstances drivers might encounter, they can notify drivers en route if your agency relies on cellular or radio communication. If that's not possible, dispatchers should obtain information from passengers prior to driver's departure. Create a list of standard, brief questions for dispatchers to ask passengers about possible special considerations.

## Design Specific Boarding and Unboarding Procedures

It's a good idea to establish a set of procedures to address the special needs of passengers when boarding the bus. Again, solicit the help of professionals who work with disabled persons and work with them and your drivers to design the most effective procedures. Once your proce-

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# Red-Light Runners Have States *Seeing Red*

by Dawn Jourdan

**R**ed, yellow, green. Every driver knows these colors and what they mean. Some drivers, however, have created their own interpretations of these colors for traffic signals. While green certainly means go, yellow has come to mean go faster and, to some, red means “floor it.”

The number of collisions caused by running red lights has skyrocketed in recent years. In 1998, an estimated 260,000 crashes occurred as the result of red-light running, and 750 of those crashes were fatal. In light of these facts, it's important for drivers to re-think how to approach and travel through intersections controlled by traffic lights.

## Characteristics of Red-Light Runners

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) conducted a study of accidents caused by drivers running red lights and identified some common characteristics among them. According to Richard Retting, senior transportation engineer, drivers who run red lights tend to be in a hurry and for various reasons are overly aggressive in their driving.

The most distinguishing characteristic of red-light runners is that they are three times more likely to have two or more speeding convictions on their driving records. The IIHS study also concluded that individuals who are red-light runners tend to be younger than average and often suffer from a history of alcohol abuse.

## Laying Down the Law

The typical method of catching red-light runners has been to post police officers near intersections. This method is not an effective deterrent because police departments do not have resources to keep a squad car at each intersection all day long. As a result, a number of states and localities have been using a different tactic to reduce the number of accidents caused by red-light runners, i.e., cameras.

According to Joe Schulein, owner of ITS Seminars, 10 states, including New York, California and Virginia, allow local law enforcement agencies to post cameras at intersections. Other states are considering similar legislation. These cameras are installed on traffic signal poles and take images of automobiles that pass through red lights. Tickets are sent to the red-light runners.

Unlike the traditional method used to catch violators, the use of a camera is an effective deterrent. For example, officials in Oxnard, California, maintain that the installation of cameras at nine intersections caused a 42 percent decrease in red-light running during a nine-month period.

## Protect Yourself

Even if you are a conscientious driver who would never run a red light, there are some steps you can take to help make sure that red-light runners do not jeopardize the safety of your passengers. While you cannot govern the driving habits of others, you can be prepared for them.

- ✓ Make sure that everyone in your vehicle wears a seat belt in case you have to make a quick stop.
- ✓ Wait a few seconds after the light has turned green before proceeding through the intersection and make sure that cross traffic has stopped completely.

- ✓ Never pass through a yellow light that is about to turn red.

Source: Kate Bertrand, “Save a Life: Stop on Red”, *Safedriver*, August 1999. ▲

## Handle With Care,

*continued from page 11*

dures have been developed, mail copies of them to regular transit riders and post a copy inside each vehicle. Make sure all of your transit personnel are familiar with these procedures.

Source: “Stay Alert for Safe Delivery,” *Safedriver*, October 1999. ▲



## Is Your Computer Making You Sick?



.....  
by Dawn Jourdan  
.....

**F**eeling under the weather? Don't be in a rush to diagnose yourself with the flu. It is possible that your symptoms represent an entirely different problem: Your personal computer might be making you ill. Knowledge of the symptoms of computer over-use can help you fend off the symptoms.

### Effects of Prolonged Use

Excessive computer use may cause you to have:

- headaches;
- tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ears);
- head, neck and lower back problems; and
- shoulder tension

At the appearance of these symptoms, you might assume you are starting to come down with the flu, ignoring other possible circumstances that could cause those symptoms. So the next time you begin to feel achy, consider the amount of time you have spent in front of your computers, as well as the comfort of your workstation.

More serious medical problems have been linked to computer use, as well. These include:

- carpal tunnel syndrome;
- stress-related mental and physical illnesses;
- eye dysfunction and sight deterioration;
- varicose veins; and
- pregnancy complications.

Due to the potential for serious health effects caused by computer use, if you spend a significant amount of time in front of computers, take steps to protect your health.

### Combating Computer Sickness

You can reduce your chances of catching a computer-related illness by taking short breaks from computer work. During these breaks, stretch your neck, back, shoulder, arm and leg muscles to alleviate stiffness.

A software program has been created to remind the avid computer user to take breaks. The software, *Stretch Break*, shows animations of people stretching on the screen at 30-minute intervals. The cost of the software is \$44.95 and may be purchased by calling (714) 546-8619.

Another way to combat computer-related illnesses is by changing the environment of the workstation. All too often, a poorly positioned chair, desk or computer monitor can cause physical strain. The components of your workstation should be aligned to match your physical stature. While computer salespeople can advise you on innovative ergonomic products, only you will be fully able to determine the comfort level of the work space. As a result, you should continue to adjust your workstation until it feels right.

Better technology can also help reduce such side effects. Computer and software manufacturers have created a number of gadgets to assist with the reduction of computer-related symptoms. For example, the chances for developing carpal tunnel syndrome may be diminished with the purchase and use of a wrist support and "natural" keyboard. These products may be purchased at most computer and office supply stores. Further, voice recognition software and scanners can help reduce the number of repetitive actions. An alternative to the use of voice recognition software is to create macros programmed to type out frequently-used text.

Eye strain is another effect of computer use. Michael Goldstein, former editor of *PC LapTop*, estimates that at least 50 percent of people who use computers experience visual discomfort and eyestrain. In response, computer manufacturers have created glare filters to lessen glare and electric and magnetic radiation emissions. If you are presently unable to budget the cost of a glare filter, you can place a piece of cardboard on top of the monitor to serve as a temporary glare hood.

While computers make many tasks much easier, be aware that using them can make you sick. Knowledge of the symptoms of computer-related illnesses will help you distinguish them from illnesses like the flu.

### Source

"At Risk: Your computer can make you sick," by Michael Goldstein, *Successful Meetings*, March 1998. ▲

## Rural Transit Conferences and Workshops

### April 5-6, 2000

Transportation, Who Needs It: Working Together to Eliminate Barriers, Wichita, KS. For more information contact Ron Straight at (785) 625-2018.

### April 17-19, 2000

27th Annual Conference of the Mid-America Congress on Aging, Springfield, MO. For more information, call (888) 879-7678.

### April 25-27, 2000

Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance, Helena, MT. For more information contact the FTA/Transportation Safety Institute at (405) 954-3682.

### May 9-11, 2000

ADA Symposium 2000: The Americans with Disabilities Act. Kansas City, MO. For more information call the ADA Project at (800) 949-4232 or e-mail: hamburgl@missouri.edu

### June 3-9, 2000

CTAA Expo 2000 Annual Conference, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. For more information contact Charles Dickson at (202) 661-0208, by fax at (202) 737-9197 or via the CTAA's web site at <http://www.ctaa.org/expo>.

### June 6-8, 2000

Annual Welfare Reform Evaluation Conference sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services, Arlington, Virginia. For more information contact Larry Wolfe at (202) 401-5084.

### June 20-22, 2000

Substance Abuse Management and Program Compliance, Chicago, IL. For more information contact the Federal Transit Administration/Transportation Safety Institute at (405) 954-3682 or by fax at (405) 954-0367.

### November 12-15, 2000

TRB National Rural/Intercity Conference. Lake Tahoe, Nevada. For more information contact Peter Shaw at (202) 334-2966.

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### Intelligibility, continued from page 10

to tell passengers about any deviation from normal routes. Often, riders associate their route with specific landmarks along the way. For example, if the bus is taking a detour, the driver should announce that the bus will not be passing the Episcopal Church today. That way, passengers will not be alarmed when they pass by other landmarks instead.

*Conduct Community Outreach Activities.* An effective way to increase community understanding of your transit system is by conducting community outreach activities. During outreach activities, highlight your agency's services and how to use them, emphasizing your commitment to courtesy and customer service.

*Install Clear Signage.* Make sure that all agency signage throughout the community has current, clear information that assists customers in identifying your agency and how to access

your services. At bus stops, be sure to include the name and logo of your agency, the telephone number, and the name of the route that includes that stop. If possible, it is also a good idea to display a timetable for that stop—and a route map. Inside each vehicle, clearly display trip information, any pertinent ADA regulations, and safety procedures.

When designing your signage, consider whether the information sends a clear message. Schauer warns against placing confusing advertisements on buses because visual cues help passengers determine which bus to ride. Buses that carry a hamburger ad one day and an ad with a shopping-related image the next day can create confusion for some customers using a transit system.

Schauer recommends creating consistent product information and identification that allow riders to quickly recognize their bus and where it's going. Schauer recalls an

instance when he was managing a transit system and an elderly man boarded a bus without knowing where the bus was going. "This instance really alerted me that it is essential for transit providers to do a good job of spelling out what the bus is about and where it is going so that riders do not get confused."

Buses that advertise a specific destination can be confusing. Passengers may assume that a bus that says "Meadowbrook Mall" will take them to the mall rather than the zoo that happens to be on the same route. Look at your signage through your passengers' eyes.

### Sources

"Managing for Understandable and Intelligible Transit Systems," *TCRP Report 54*, National Academy Press: Washington, DC, 1999.

Interview with Peter Schauer, January 25, 2000. ▲

## Resources Order Form

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

### Publications

- Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation.** (40 pages). FHWA, 1996.
- Evacuating Elderly and Disabled Passengers from Public Transportation Vehicles in Emergencies.** (67 pages). 1991.
- Mobility Management and Market-Oriented Local Transportation.** (50 pages). USDOT/UMTA/International Taxi Cab & Livery Association, 1991.
- Public Transportation Marketing Evaluation Manual.** (82 pages). UMTA, 1997.

### Videotapes

- Caring for an Aging Society.** (56 min.). Hospital Satellite Network and Age Wave, Inc. Focuses on the role of the health care provider in an aging society. Topics include: issues of an older population; the health care system and the elderly; models of care delivery; and solutions for providers.
- Red Light Running.** (11 min.). FHWA, 1994. Focuses on safety issues at intersections with traffic signals.

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