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Our New Website

As was stated in the July Tidbit, our New Website design is live.

Please feel free to give me feedback as to items you would like added, changed or any comments you would like to make.

www.dakotatransit.org

Thank you.

- Jacque Senger

Bis-Man Transit Director Robin Werre retires, bussing system celebrates 25 years

Article Submitted by: Stewart M. Milakovic

Picture Submitted by: LeAnn Eckroth

Wednesday marked three milestones for Robin Werre: her 70th birthday, her retirement and the 25th anniversary of the public transit system she helped organize and has headed since 1990. All were celebrated at the public transit building, 3750 E. Rosser Ave.

As the transit system's only director until early this year, she was repeatedly praised for pulling several agencies with separate transportation systems under one umbrella.

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Dean Mastel holds the frame as Robin Werre unwraps a retirement gift for her 25 years as executive director of Bis-Man Transit during a celebration and reception on Wednesday. In the background is Gary Schumacher, left, owner of Taxi 9000, which contracts with Bis-Man Transit and interim Transit Director Al Wangler. For a video of the celebration, go to bismarcktribune.com.

Werre

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Via her direction, the program advanced from using a cab company and used buses to transport the disabled, then branching into a bus station to house three public transportation systems at the Rosser Avenue transit station: Bis-Man Transit for those with disabilities and the elderly, Capital Area Transit for public transportation routes and as the stop for the Jefferson bus lines (formerly Greyhound).

Werre said her empathy for those with disabilities began early when she suffered from the effects of polio. Through a brace, she was able to walk independently for most of her life, but 10 years ago needed to rely more on an automated riding devices to move her about.

Her concerns continued as a Job Service North Dakota employee when she found it difficult to help unemployed people with disabilities because their transportation was limited. Werre later helped in the startup of Pride Inc. to help those with disabilities find jobs. There, she found a big part of her job was organizing rides for clients unable to drive to work sites themselves.

The awareness drove her to push for transportation for those with disabilities through a more collaborative system among different agencies.

"I was on the original board. I wasn't on the selection committee for director. The committee interviewed several people and then they asked, 'Will you do this temporary for us?' It's 26 years later. "

She carefully started fitting a better transportation system into place by pooling the different agencies' transportation resources. Through a Developmental Disabilities Grant, in 1990 she first enlisted the help of Taxi 9000 to shuttle the workers and a handful of used and new vans from various organizations. The need for transportation

was obvious, she said.

"There was no way to transport those people. Those agencies would transport their own, but that's all they did," she said.

Combining resources helped, she said. "It put everything together and gave us much more service for everyone eligible — the disabled and elderly," she said.

Through the city, the program was later able to secure federal grants to buy newer, larger buses to transport clients. Mandan and Bismarck voters later supported funding part of the transit system with mill levies.

"Twenty-eight years ago, she had this dream," said Gary Schumacher, owner of Taxi 9000. "She started this. She started everything. Everybody is jealous. Everybody wants what she did. She had a job and had a handicap. She understood the need."

Marge Ellefson, president of the Bis-Man Transit Board, said the board has faced a big challenge in replacing Werre. "There are some big shoes to fill. Robin took a look around from what started as nothing to what it is today. It's amazing," Ellefson said.

Late in the ceremony, it was announced Werre was nominated to be the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Interim director Al Wangler assumed many of Werre's responsibilities after she experienced health problems. He said 30 people have applied for her position and the transit expects to announce who the new director will be within the week.

"She is a tough act to follow," he said. "She could always find how to get the money. She convinced them in the end, if you take six buses and put them out there, if they all pull into the same place, you are going to wait a lot longer than if the six buses can become part of one group."

PASS Training Cost Will Be Raised

Jacque Senger, Executive Director
Dakota Transit Association

We have received quite a few inquiries from agencies who are not Dakota Transit Association Members asking if they can be included in our PASS training sessions. Due to the costs involved in putting the training sessions together, the DTA Board of Directors has decided to charge **non-members** a slightly higher rate.

A new price schedule for PASS Training will go into effect October 1, 2015. [These prices are for Non-Dakota Transit Association Members.](#)

They are as follows:

- PASS - \$200.00
- PASS Recertification - \$70.00
- Defensive Driving - \$60.00
- Mal-Treatment Awareness - \$60.00
- Defensive Driving Recertification - \$30.00

PASS Training - Linda Freeman, PASS Coordinator

We've had several classes in South Dakota over the summer months. A BIG thanks to Mike Mullaney and Jay Caylor from Brookings and Mike Kayras and Barb Cline from Spearfish for doing the classes. Also a big thanks to Stan Cassagnol for the classes he has none in North Dakota. You and your agencies personify the meaning of "giving back!"

New Class Option: We have purchased the rights to provide a Defensive Driving Recertification Class called "Coaching The Van Driver Refresher Course". Since the course only takes 1 ½ hours at the most, it works to add to a PASS Recertification class and they both can be done in a one day time span. So if you have drivers who only need to be recertified in the PASS and Defensive Driving classes, let us know and we'll set up a one day session for you. The cost of the Defensive Driving refresher course is \$20.00 per participant.

We do need to have at least 10 trainees to make it worthwhile to send a trainer to your agency. If you have less, and know that there are agencies near you that could send some people to be trained, we can set the session up.

Remember = there will be some great training for everyone at the 2015 Rodeo and Conference so be sure to sign up your people.

Hope everyone's summer has been great! Linda

2015 Fall Conference Minot, ND September 18-23

Jacque Senger, Executive Director
Dakota Transit Association

Your Board of Directors has been working very diligently trying to find the right speakers for this year's Fall Conference. We think we did just that. We are hoping to see as many of you as possible attend.

Remember, we are staying at the Grand Hotel, Minot, ND. When booking your rooms, ask for the Dakota Transit Association (DTA) block, phone number is 701-852-3161. A block of rooms are being held until September 3rd.

Please remember to check your website. The TENTATIVE agenda and all the registration forms are on the web.

Your Conference Registration needs to be postmarked by August 28th so you are not assessed a late fee.

**** JUST A SIDE NOTE – on the Registration Forms it states the rooms for the Conference are held until August 19th at \$79.95 + tax per night---the date has been changed to September 3rd.

Project's Contact Information

A few months ago I had a short article in the Transit Tidbit asking all transit agencies to please send me any changes you have made with regards to your addresses.

This information is put in the Fall Conference Booklet which goes home with most of our Venders. It would be nice to have everything updated.

Please respond ASAP as the booklet will go to print shortly.

THANKS!!

Reminder to the SD Rural Transit Providers

Lisa Donner - SD DOT

Updates to the transit provider's Coordination Plans are due by September 20, 2015.

Robin Werre to Receiver Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Lifetime Achievement Award

Kalen Ost, Marketing Director and Mobility Manager
Bis-Man Transit, Bismarck ND

Robin Werre, recently retired executive director of Bis-Man Transit, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Oct. 1 at its annual award banquet in Fargo.

The award recognizes Werre's efforts in starting and growing the capitol city's transit system. She was on the original board of directors when the board asked her to serve as executive director on a temporary basis. She retired July 15 after 25 years. It was her empathy for those with disabilities that drove her to push for improved transportation options in Bismarck and Mandan.

Under Werre's direction, Bis-Man transit launched in 1990 with limited paratransit service. The agency added Capital Area Transit, its fixed-route service, in 2003. Today the system continues to provide door-to-door transportation service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for persons age 60 or older or individuals with disabilities. Capital Area Transit has grown to include 12 routes serving Bismarck and Mandan. Some credit growth of the transit system and its ability to move customers and employees, with enhancing economic growth in the Bismarck-Mandan area. She obtained funding for the current transit facility and for two garage additions.

While at Bis-Man Transit, she was a member and treasurer of Community Elder Service Network, chair and member of the Dakota Center of Independent Living.

Werre is a graduate of Bismarck High School and Bismarck Junior College. She received a bachelor's degree in sociology from Mary College.

Her first career was with Job Service of North Dakota. While working there she served on several commissions appointed by the governor and served as chair and member of the North Dakota Developmental Disabilities Council and Chair of the Protection and Advocacy Board. In 1978, Werre was selected as one of 10 outstanding Women of America.

Werre was also instrumental in launching Bismarck's Pride Inc., an organization dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities realize their potential to live and work in the community. She was president and member of the incorporating board of Pride Industries and a member of the board and Central Nodak Development. Werre worked at Pride for eight years. She also served on the Bismarck Mayor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. She also served as executive director of the North Dakota Developmental Disabilities for a year before leading Bis-Man Transit.



DTA PASS Training

The following is Linda Freeman's contact information for PASS Training:

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Please keep this information available for your use with PASS Training.

Thought for the Month of August
"Do what is RIGHT, not what is EASY."

DTA
Dakota Transit
Association

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Address

Directors, please check with your bookkeepers as well as the rest of your staff to assure they have the correct DTA mailing address.



Thanks to all!

- Jacque

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