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DTA Conference

The Dakota Transit Association's Fall Conference dates are September 9th to the 13th. Please put those dates on your calendars.

The hotel is ready to book your rooms. Phone number is 701-772-8404.

We will be in the beautiful City of Grand Forks, ND!

FYI:

I HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY NOMINATION FORMS FOR THE DTA ANNUAL AWARDS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE FALL CONFERENCE. WHY WAIT?

Welcome Aboard Veterans!

Randy Hartman, Director

Sioux Area Metro - Sioux Falls, SD

Beginning in September 2015 Sioux Area Metro (in Sioux Falls, SD) began providing free rides to veterans on any fixed route bus. Sioux Area Metro is pleased to announce that nearly 45,400 veterans rode Sioux Area Metro buses free in 2016. It is a pleasure to provide free rides to our veterans and to be able to give them something back for their service.

Please remember our veterans this Memorial Day (and every day) and don't forget to thank them for their service.

To ride Sioux Area Metro buses for free, veterans must provide proper identification which includes one of the following: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Identification Card or a South Dakota state issued Operator License or Identification Card with "VETERAN" identified on the front of the license or ID card.

Please drive safe this Memorial Day weekend and remember our Veterans!



Good morning and happy transportation week!

The Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Education Program Clearinghouse (GAMTTEP) will be launching its new and improved website this THURSDAY! This new website comes with over 200 free K-12, standards aligned, transportation themed STEM lesson plans, videos, activities and other resources, including free eBooks and PBL books, to encourage an interest in transportation. It also features a community of practice that puts educators and industry professionals in contact, to share resources, ideas, and opportunities, for the purpose of growing student interest in transportation.

We would love your help in spreading the word about our website launch. If you see fit, please visit [@GAMTTEP](https://twitter.com/GAMTTEP) and retweet our teaser tweets throughout the week for your fellow educators to see, especially our big announcement of the launch on Thursday. If you don't have a personal Twitter account, we would greatly appreciate if you could forward this on to your organization's social media manager.

Thank you for your consideration!

North Dakota Legislative Stuff Then and Now May 2017

Cheryl Jongerius, Director

Dickey County Transportation - Ellendale, ND

The Legislative journey for providers in North Dakota began about 30 years ago when it was realized we needed to pay some attention to what was happening in our State Legislature as their actions affected the services we provide. We testified on a few bills that were of concern - but were very much on the outside of what was happening. The organization then (as is now) that is the main organizer of legislative efforts is the North Dakota Senior Service Providers (NDSSP). Two-thirds of NDSSP members provide public transit services. In 1989, largely due to the efforts NDSSP member agency Souris Basin Transportation, its' Board and former Director Rick Thoms, the State Aid for Public Transit fund was passed - on its' first try. This was really a great accomplishment and has been an absolutely essential funding source for all ND transit providers ever since.

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During the 1990's, NDSSP continued to work on Legislative issues on a small scale and had some successes increasing the mill levy match (for senior programs) and were able to double the State Aid for Public Transit funding.

By the mid 2000's we knew to make real and long lasting progress, we had to step up our game. It was decided to hire a part time Executive Director for NDSSP that would also act as a lobbyist for our group starting with the 2005 session. We had 2 great successes the first year with a lobbyist - increasing the senior mill levy match by 25% and getting a 50% increase in State Aid for Public Transit Funding. Our part time Executive Director/Lobbyist then moved on to full time work with a non-profit entity. For the next 5 sessions (remember the North Dakota Legislature only meets in odd numbered years) we worked with a company called APT and had Ken Tupa as our lobbyist. We made steady progress in increasing funding for both transit and senior programs. After the 2015 session, Ken decided to pursue other opportunities and in a nice little bit of serendipity, Erica Cermak became our APT Lobbyist. Erica happened to be our first lobbyist back in the 2005 session! The legislative funding support provided by the Dakota Transit Association is a significant money source that helps to support our state lobbying efforts.

So here we are finally with a re-cap of the 2017 session. The downturn of both the oil and agriculture economy has decreased revenues greatly from the last 3 sessions. The State Aid for Public Transit Funding comes out of the Highway Tax Distribution Fund which a formula driven combination of state fuel tax, diesel tax, vehicle registrations and some other small revenue sources. This huge fund also provides money for road and maintenance projects for the state along with counties, cities and townships. All of the entities receiving money from the Highway Tax Distribution Fund will see its' funding go back to approximately the levels we were at in 2011, so adjustments will likely need to be made to account for the reduced formula revenue. In the DOT budget bill that was passed, there was a section recommending a study be done during the interim to look at funding for roads, maintenance and transit. We believe this recommended study will be one that is selected for review during the interim before the 2019 session.

While having a Lobbyist has been essential for our organization to make legislative progress, providers are the mainstay of how things get done. Our main transit-in-chief testifier has been Pat Hansen. Our testifier for transit "pop-up" bills that show up every session (including this one) is Darrell Francis with an assist this year from Brian Horinka. The essential piece that has to happen year-round is all of our transit providers telling their transit story to their legislators. Telling the transit story is an on-going process best relayed at the local level. Over the years, the Legislature has learned what "public transit" is and that it exists in every county in our state.

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Only a few years ago - much to our surprise - even experienced Legislators thought "public transit" was only fixed route buses in our 4 largest cities.

I am going to end this article back where I started - talking about the North Dakota Senior Service Providers. NDSSP has a standing Legislative Committee and works on state legislative issues year round, every year - not just when the Legislature is in session. We have a diverse, eclectic committee that seems to work well together. Of the 8 member agencies, 4 are multi-service agencies which provide transit, 1 is strictly a transit provider, 1 is a health provider and 2 are multi-service agencies that do not provide transit. Most of the NDSSP Legislative Committee members have served on the committee for many years. Our thanks to these committee members: Pat Hansen - South Central Adult Services, Brian Arett - Valley Senior Services, Karrie Mikkelsen - Cavalier County Meals and Transit, Cheryl Jongerius - Dickey County Transportation/Senior Citizens, Darrell Francis - Souris Basin Transportation, Sherry Adams - Southwest District Health, Roger Reich - Minot Commission on Aging and Colette Iseminger - Greater Grand Forks Senior Citizens.

Training Update - Linda Freeman, PASS Coordinator

Registration information is on our web site. Please go to the Dakota Transit Association web site to register drivers and for map information, etc.

MAY 31-JUNE 1: WATERTOWN, SD

The Watertown PASS and PASS recertification classes are full. We will not be holding the defensive driving class as we only had two registrants.

JUNE 28-29: HURON, SD

PASS Class: June 28-29. Classes will begin at 9 am on the 28th and 8 am on the 29th. PASS class is a two day session.

PASS Recertification: June 29. Class will begin at 8 am.

We do have registration set up for Defensive Driving class at 3 pm on the 29th, but will only hold this class if we have over 10 registrations.

Classes will be held at Huron Community Campus. Address and map can be found on the DTA website. We did not set up a room block so you will need to make your own room arrangements if needed.

AUGUST 24-26: DICKINSON, ND

We have just begun making arrangements to hold this set of classes in Dickinson. This session will be on the web as soon as final arrangements have been made. We will also have full information in the June newsletter.

Freedom Pass Youth Program

Randy Hartman, Director
Sioux Area Metro - Sioux Falls, SD

The City of Sioux Falls and Sioux Area Metro (SAM) will provide free rides to the youth of Sioux Falls through the “Freedom Pass” program. This will be the third-year SAM has provided free rides to the youth of Sioux Falls through the Freedom Pass program on all fixed route buses.

The Freedom Pass program begins the first day after school and ends the day before school begins this fall. The Freedom Pass offers the young people of Sioux Falls transportation to and from their summer jobs, to swimming pools, parks, the Empire Mall, etc.

The Freedom Pass program gives SAM the opportunity to introduce public transportation to the youth of Sioux Falls and also helps them become familiar with the system. Not to mention it takes some of the stress off parents trying to get their children to and from summer activities!

Sioux Falls School district students rode SAM buses 23,756 times in the summer of 2016. To ride a Sioux Area Metro bus for free, anyone ages 6 through 18 must present their 2016-2017 middle or high school ID or Freedom Pass to the driver for entry onto the bus. Wishing everyone a Safe and Wonderful Summer!



Update on our 2017 DTA Membership Registrations

Jacque Senger, DTA Executive Director

As of today, we have a total of 44 memberships in your Dakota Transit Association. Last year we had a total of 50 memberships. If you wish to rejoin, please fill out your registration form and mail it in. We are counting on you!

*Thought for the Month of
May...*

*You walk through life much easier
with a smile on your face.*

*Everyone smiles in the same
language.*

DTA
Dakota Transit
Association

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Tidbit Articles

Please contact me with articles for your Transit Tidbit.

Recycle

Please share your Transit Tidbit with your staff and any interested person(s).

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

www.dakotatransit.org