

RTAP BULLETIN



A Monthly Bulletin of the Florida Rural Transit Assistance Program

March, 2000

Oh, What a Day!! Florida RTAP Rodeo 2000!



With weather forecasts predicting an 65% chance of rain and dark clouds coming and going all day, participants of the Florida RTAP Rodeo 2000 outlasted the skies and had a terrific time competing and enjoying a truly great event. The Rodeo was held on March 10-11 in Tallahassee, Florida. The rodeo was sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation RTAP Program. A very special thanks to Intelitran, for serving as the host, the Florida Association of Community Transportation Systems and the many volunteer workers and sponsors who made this event such a success.

The event began with the written exam conducted Friday evening. While the drivers were taking the test, the judges were meeting to make sure everyone would be playing off of the same page. They must have had a great meeting because the event went smoothly and the judges were skilled and professional in completing their tasks. Recognizing that they were out in an open parking lot with wind gusts threatening to topple the tents and black clouds threatening to drench them, our judges showed the stamina of real troopers as they systematically judged each drivers abilities. There was always time for a little chatting and a lot of laughter, though!

Following the exam and meeting, everyone got together at the Tallahassee Women's Club for an exquisite catered dinner. The food was good and there was plenty of it. Everyone got a chance to visit and mingle with each other before and during the meal. Some of the sponsors had donated some prizes so there were drawings following the meal. The event planners had the place set up for everyone to stay and party for a while following dinner but everyone chose to head back to the motel and get

rested up—Rodeo's don't accomodate late sleepers!!! We all had to be up and out bright and early in the morning!

As hinted about earlier, the weather forecasts called for heavy rain beginning in the morning. After the awards were passed out around 2:00pm and the area was completely cleared, it did

begin to sprinkle. However, we did not escape the wind. It was gusty and strong. Note the photo of Jo Ann Hutchinson, Executive Director of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, as she help anchor the tents. A lot of us took turns hanging on to ensure that they did not go airborne.



The competition was fierce. Drivers were nervous but ready and they cheered each other on along with all of the spectators and workers. It was truly a day of cooperative efforts and support for all.

Check out the article "**Winners**" (page 3) for more on the RTAP Rodeo. Our upcoming newsletter will have more highlights on the rodeo, the drivers, the sponsors and the workers.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Training to Proficiency--A Train-the-trainer for Teaching Hands-on Skills



If you haven't already registered your lead driver trainer for the upcoming train-the-trainer courses being conducted by Dave Cyra, there may still be some seats left in the courses. The training will qualify your trainer to teach hands-on skills to your new drivers. New drivers trained by a "qualified" trainer will be eligible for certificates through the Florida RTAP Center.

LOCATION	DATE
DeFuniak Springs	April 10

- I. Proper lift operation (automatic and manual),
- b. Wheelchair securement techniques,
- c. Passenger restraint systems, and
- d. Passenger assistance techniques.

This training was designed with the rural transit agencies in mind. Don't be left out--this is training you need to send your trainer to.

EFFICIENCY VS GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVIVING THE BALANCING ACT

Gainesville	April 12
Sarasota	April 13
Port St. Lucie	April 14

This hands-on, skill based training will ensure that your trainer knows how to perform the skills properly and will teach him/her how to teach other drivers those skills in an effective manner. This training will be appropriate for any training program that requires that the drivers know:

An Interactive Half-Day Workshop with Dave Cyra

April 11, 2000

This training is a National Transit Institute training session coordinated through your Florida RTAP Program. Dave will be in Gainesville for this training from 1:00 - 5:00 pm on April 11th. This training is designed to help managers and administrators examine the issues defining the boundaries between efficient operations and good customer service. Inviting a few members from your coordinating boards might help them understand the problems you are dealing with.

If you need to register or want to know more about it, call Jeanne Wise at (352) 392-2371, ext 226, or e-mail her at jwise@ce.ufl.edu.

NEW MEDIA CENTER MATERIALS

Working cooperatively with the Florida Technology TransferCenter, We have some new materials that will assist you in improving your driver training efforts. Any of these videos would be useful for a driver's meeting, a brief training session or to be included in your new driver training. These videos are not reproducible, so we can not provide you with a copy of these videos. They are available at a reasonable cost, though, from the AAA Foundation. You should visit their web site at <http://www.aaafits.org>.

Preventing Road Rage: Anger Management for Drivers—September 1998; 20 minutes, Adults. Order # V870

Violent aggressive driving, or "road rage," is a growing public concern. This educational video teaches viewers how to: avoid offending other drivers; manage their own anger; and disengage from an angry encounter.

"Preventing Road Rage" is illustrated with exciting footage of on-the-road encounters between angry drivers and personal anecdotes from real people who have reformed themselves by practicing anger management

techniques demonstrated in the program. (You can purchase for \$40-\$60, depending upon agency status.)

The Older and Wiser Driver—1996; 22 minutes, Mature Adults. Order # V871.

Recognizing that many of our best paratransit drivers are retired people, some assistance for them in keeping their driving skills sharp as they mature would be in your agency's best interest. This award-winning video shows how to compensate for changes that come with age and continue driving safely. Viewers would learn about vision, cognition, physical fitness, and the side-effects of common medications as older drivers discuss their strategies for safe driving in their own words. This engaging video is equally well-suited for home or classroom use. (You can purchase for \$19.95)

Driving in Bad Weather (RV 0203); Night Driving (RV 0204)—8 minutes each; Adults

These videos focus the driver on the effects of bad weather and night driving and how to compensate to minimize the effects of both.

Remember that your Florida RTAP Center will work with you to find the resources you need. Our purpose is to help you by providing resources, guidance and assistance. Call us today at (352) 392-2371, ext 237 for Pamela Mancino, our Resource Center Specialist.

"A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake."
Confucius

WINNERS!!!

The hardest part of judging and conducting the roadeos is choosing the winners and knowing that all of the participants had their hearts set on getting that first place prize and representing Florida at the national competition. However, only two drivers can be first place and neither of this years winners were newcomers to this competition. In fact, both were the winners of last years roadeo.



VAN COMPETITION

1st Place—Raymond Aylmer, Gulf County Transportation. **Mitch Burke**, Director of Gulf County Transportation, said that Raymond had been with them for about 3 ½ years but that he had previous experience driving larger vehicles. Raymond won the van competition last year, also, and competed in New Orleans at the National RTAP Roadeo.

2nd Place—Tommy Wyatt, Tri-County Community Council. Tommy has been with Tri-County for over 8 years and is experienced in driving all of their vehicles.

3rd Place—Ernest Rittman, Big Bend Transit. **Ted Waters**, Director of Big Bend Transit, said that Ernest had been driving for them for 7 years and has competed in each of the three previous state roadeos.

SMALL BUS COMPETITION

1st Place—Vann Johnson, Big Bend Transit. Vann has been a driver for Big Bend Transit for 9 years. This was Vann's fourth year competing in the state roadeo. He has placed 2nd in both the van and the small bus competition in past years.

2nd Place—Shelia Daugherty, Sumter County Transit. Shelia, a former school bus driver, has only been a driver for Sumter County for four months. In fact, Jim Sparks, Director of Sumter County Transit, said that she drives a van in her work and had never driven the cut-away buses before.

3rd Place—Jesus Lopez, Flagler County Transit. Debbie Redner, Schedule Supervisor at Flagler County Transit, said that Jesus has been with them for almost five years. She said that he was a bus driver in New York prior to moving to Florida. This was his fourth year competing in the Florida RTAP Roadeo.

In our *Tappin' In* Newsletter coming out in late April, we will run a feature articles on our RTAP Roadeo 2000 place winners. Each of them are unique individuals

with interesting stories and insights into this unique form of competition.

In addition, visit the Florida RTAP web site to see more of the roadeo photos at <http://www-uftrc.ce.ful.edu/t2/rtap.htm>.

Victories that are easy are cheap. Those only are worth having which come as the result of hard work.
Henry Ward Beecher

Van Competition winners. Left to right: 3rd place, Ernest Rittman; 2nd place, Tommy Wyatt; and 1st place, Raymond Aylmer.

Bus Competition winners. Left to right: 1st place, Vann Johnson; 2nd place, Shelia Daugherty; and 3rd place, Jesus Lopez.



Winners from both competitions.



