

RTAP

BULLETIN

FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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15th Annual Florida RTAP Paratransit Roadeo

The 15th Annual Florida RTAP Paratransit Roadeo was held on April 16th at the VOTRAN Mobility Management Center in South Daytona. The weather was wonderful, the lodging at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort on Daytona Beach was picturesque, and the hospitality of the VOTRAN staff was magnificent!

This year's event was a Triple Crown Roadeo, held concurrently and in conjunction with the fixed route MEGA Roadeo.

With Florida's best paratransit operators competing for the title of Florida RTAP Paratransit Roadeo Champion, the 2011 Roadeo proved to be a spirited and lively event.

At the roadeo awards Banquet on Saturday evening, the following winners and champions were announced and recognized:

Sure-Lok Above and Beyond Award: Curtiss Simmons, Baker County COA

Van Category: 1st place winner Gus Goodwin, Calhoun County Transit; 2nd place winner Raymond Aylmer, Gulf County; 3rd place winner Michael Wimberly, Calhoun County Transit

Small Bus Category: 1st place winner Jack Binegar, St. Johns County COA; 2nd place winner Benjamin Gonzalez, LYNX; 3rd place winner Ernest Rittman, Big Bend Transit

As Florida Paratransit Roadeo champions, Gus and Jack will go on to compete at the National Paratransit Roadeo, sponsored by the Commu-

nity Transportation Association of American (CTAA). This event will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana on June 4-5, 2011.



Van Category: (L-R) Raymond Aylmer, Gus Goodwin, and Michael Wimberly



Small Bus Category: (L-R) Benjamin Gonzalez, Jack Binegar, and Ernest Rittman



Above and Beyond Award Winner: (L-R) Curtiss Simmons—Baker County COA & Chris Yaber—Sure-Lok, Inc. Representative



Public Transit Professionals Converge on Tampa

More than 325 transit professionals gathered on April 10-12, 2011, in Tampa, Florida for the 2011 NTI Transit Trainers' and FDOT/FPTA/CUTR Professional Development Workshop. The Workshop was sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA), Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), and the National Transit Institute (NTI). Additionally, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) was the Workshop's local transit host. HART offered workshop participants evening tours of their bus and streetcar services and facilities, including the award winning HART Marion Transit Center and TECO Line Streetcar Barn. All five organizations collaborated in the planning and development of the event.

The goal of the Workshop was to offer professional development and educational enrichment opportunities to public transit professionals. The one-stop workshop offered public transit professionals an excellent opportunity to learn from industry experts, attend professional development training, learn about research updates, and network with their peers. Workshop attendees participated in educational training classes and general session discussions that stimulated new ideas and identified creative solutions to problem solving and strategic planning.



Workshop participants in a training session work together on a group activity.

The Workshop drew over 300 transit professionals from more than 35 states and Canada, with more than 150 registrants from Florida alone. The sessions focused on topics such as conflict management, substance abuse management, bus operator retention, ADA, transit threat and vulnerability, emergency management, maintenance,

customer service, marketing, CDL, alternative mobility approaches, communication skills, strategic planning, transit operator distracted driving, and many train-the-trainer facilitation sessions.

Florida's Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) sponsored a session on Disability Etiquette provided by Raquel Peverini from the University of South Florida's Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity and Barbara Page from Disability Rights Florida. This interactive training session provided an overview of the Americans' with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Federal Transit Administration requirements and simulated barriers encountered by people with disabilities. Communication techniques for interactions with people with hearing, vision, and mobility impairments were reviewed and issues related to service animals were discussed.

Next year, FDOT, FPTA and CUTR will return to the traditional format for the Professional Development Workshop.

19th Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Training and Technology Conference—August 9-10, 2011

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) will be hosting its 19th Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Training and Technology Conference at the Daytona Beach Hilton and Ocean Center from August 9-10, 2011.

As in past years, this event will feature over 35 vendors showcasing their products and services. Participants will be provided the opportunity to attend and participate in a wide variety of breakout and plenary sessions. Topics available to attendees will include: mobility management, Medicaid fair

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The **RTAP BULLETIN** is produced by the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research.

Please direct all questions or comments to:

RTAP BULLETIN

Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida
4202 East Fowler Avenue, CUT100
Tampa, FL 33620-5375
(813) 974-3120, fax (813) 974-5168
email: moorey@cutr.usf.edu
website: www.floridartap.org

OUR MISSION

The Florida RTAP provides training, continuing education, and technical assistance to those who provide or assist in the provision of public transportation services in rural and small urban communities in order to promote the coordinated delivery of safe, efficient, and effective transit services.

Editor: Yolanda Moore Designer: Stephanie Zavacki

SPOTLIGHT—Gwendolyn Pra, FDOT District 2 Program Manager

SPOTLIGHT highlights one of our many energetic Florida RTAP transit professionals and allows these individuals to introduce themselves in their own words. In this issue the SPOTLIGHT is on Gwendolyn Pra, FDOT District 2, Program Manager.



Name: Gwendolyn Horne Pra

Title: District Rural and Human Services Transportation Programs Manager, FDOT, District 2

Birthplace: Jacksonville, Florida

Professional History: My 40 year career includes work with Blue Cross and Blue Shield, The United States Army, and the Florida Legislature before joining the FDOT in 1997. My work with transportation disadvantaged programs began in 1992 when I managed casework involving ADA and Medicaid Transportation issues in the Jacksonville office of then-Rep. Steve Wise.

Years Working With Current Agency: 15 years

Years Working in Transit Industry: 15 years – since joining FDOT in 1997

Biggest Surprise in Paratransit: Being awarded the 2005 Department’s coveted Public Transportation award, name in memory of Jack Johnson.

Biggest Challenge in Paratransit: Managing the area of Rural and Human Services Transportation in one of the largest DOT District in Florida serving 18 counties gives new meaning to the word challenge, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. I say I have the best job in the Department... but I admit with our federal funding workload constantly increasing over the past 10 years, sometimes I wonder how we meet the deadlines and accomplish what we do.

Personal Benefit of Working in Paratransit: To see the reaction of the disabled riders when that new bus rolls into the parking lot is worth anything I can do to make it happen.

Personal Background: I am married to Richard Pra, Sr., a retired NYPD Sergeant and a Chief Legislative Aide in the Florida House of Representatives. We have three sons, Richard, Jr., Rob, and Justin; nine grandchildren and three great grandsons. My hobbies are shopping in NYC, travel, and antique auctions. Richard and I make our home in Fleming Island, Florida.

Childhood Ambition: Teacher

Inspiration: Senator Steve Wise and my Mother

Favorite Book: *Leadership* by Rudy Giuliani

My Motto: If You Always Tell the Truth, You Don’t Need a Good Memory

Florida Photo National RTAP Contest Grand Prize Winner

Sheryl Hartzog from Clay County Council on Aging was recently awarded the Grand Prize in the National RTAP second annual rural and tribal transit photo contest, Photos Across Rural and Tribal America for her photo “Rain or Shine.”

For more information on the National RTAP rural and tribal transit photo contest, Photos Across Rural and Tribal America and to view the winners, please visit www.nationalrtap.org

Congratulations Sheryl!



“Rain or Shine”

Submitted by Sheryl Hartzog from Clay County Council on Aging

Sunshine Line Partners With Veterans

Hillsborough County's Sunshine Line has partnered with the local Office of Veterans Affairs to provide the transportation component for the "Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program," a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. The primary purpose of this program is to remove the barriers that may exist for homeless veterans to obtain and maintain gainful employment. This goal is met through intensive and directed case management activities. Participants must be unemployed or under-employed to receive services.

Transportation is available for all work-related missions including case management, resume and application assistance, job matching and job retention services. The ability to coordinate and provide transportation for homeless veterans in order to obtain and maintain employment has been a critical factor and common denominator in all of the success stories.

The Sunshine Line has coordinated single-day bus passes, monthly bus passes, and Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program funded rides to local veterans. Sunshine Line provided transportation to nearly 200 veterans attending the annual Homeless Veterans Stand Down event that took place in early May.



Sunshine Line driver Barry Michael delivers Navy Veteran Art Jacobs to James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa



RADIO ALERT! FCC January 2013 Narrowband Mandate

With radio communication an important operational component for most rural transit providers, all Florida RTAP agencies should become knowledgeable of the pending Federal Communication Commission (FCC) directives.

The FCC has mandated that Part 90 VHF and UHF licenses operating with 25 kHz bandwidth channels narrowband their systems by January 1, 2013. This mandate could dramatically effect radio communications for many small, rural transit systems throughout the United States. All land mobile Part 90 kHz efficiency systems operating on VHF (150-174 Mhz) and UHF (421-512 MHz) frequency bands will be affected by the mandate. Bands that are not affected by this proceeding include 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, low band and Part 22.

Radios and repeaters purchased prior to 1997 must be replaced; radios and repeaters purchased between 1997 and 2000 should be reviewed to determine if they are dual mode compatible. Radios and repeaters purchased since 2000 are most likely dual mode and can operate either in wideband (25 kHz) or narrowband (12.5 kHz) analog modes. It is likely that these radios only need to be re-programmed to operate in narrowband mode to meet FCC rules.

Transit systems should inventory their communication systems and consult with their radio manufacturers as to whether equipment is wideband only (which must be replaced), dual-mode analog, or narrowband.

Licensees failing to narrowband their operations (except on certain paging-only frequencies) face license revocation and/or fine by the FCC.

It is important for all transit systems to review their FCC licenses or if operating on someone else's radio system, contact the licensee to ensure that the information on the license is correct including; contact, address, expiration, operating frequency, operating location, number of units and emission designator. If the contact information on the license is correct, the FCC will be able to contact you with questions or provide updates and notifications during the transition.

For additional information, please visit www.narrowbandinglaw.com.

2011 UPCOMING EVENTS

The classes and conferences listed below are sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida in Tampa. If you would like to attend any of the courses, you will find a course announcement and registration form for each course at www.floridartap.org in the Training Calendar section. Click on course name to download or view training class details. If you have an idea for a training course or would like to host a course, please contact Amber Reep (813) 974-9823.

June 27 - July 1, 2011

TSI Transit Rail System Safety Course—Tampa, FL

July 18 - 20, 2011

National Transit Database (NTD) Data Collection and Reporting Seminar—Jacksonville, FL

July 19 - 20, 2011

Conflict Avoidance: The Art of Maintaining Control A Guide for Transit Operator Trainers¹—Tampa, FL

August 9 - 10, 2011

19th Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Best Practices Training Workshop—Daytona Beach Hilton & Ocean Center, Daytona Beach, FL

September 7, 2011

FTA Drug and Alcohol Program Audit Preparation—Tampa, FL

September 8, 2011

Disability Etiquette Workshop—Jacksonville, FL

October 3 - 4, 2011

NTI Advanced Mobility Device Securement Train-the-Trainer—Tampa, FL

October 12, 2011

Fatigue Awareness for Transit Agencies (FT00473-A)¹—Tampa, FL

¹ Required course for the Florida Transit Operator Trainer Training Certification

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hearings, distracted driver training, operational policy development, sensitivity in customer relations and dealing with difficult people, wheelchair securement, how to prepare for your quality assurance audit, computer/internet security, a planners network session, transit's future presentation, an update on Florida's transportation plan, and much more.

The awards banquet on the final evening of the conference will recognize the best of the best in the Florida TD industry—both agencies and individuals.

For more information and to register for CTD's 19th Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Training and Technology Conference click on this link <http://conferences.dce.ufl.edu/td/>.

For more information contact Sheri Powers at sheri.powers@dot.state.fl.us or John Irvine at john.irvine@dot.state.fl.us or by telephone at (800) 983-2435 or (850) 410-5700.

We look forward to seeing you in Daytona Beach in August!

RTAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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