

# RTAP

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FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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## 2017 Florida Triple Crown Bus Roadeo

**O**n April 28 and 29, Florida's best bus drivers and technicians participated in the 2017 Florida Triple Crown Bus Roadeo in Daytona Beach, Florida and hosted by VOTRAN. The 2017 Florida Triple Crown Roadeo once again combined the FPTA and RTAP roadeos into a single, colossal weekend honoring all of Florida's maintenance technicians, paratransit and fixed route operators. Over 300 competitors, judges, sponsors, guests and dignitaries participated in the two day event.

The year's event was a joint effort of FPTA, the Florida RTAP, FDOT, and the Florida Association of Coordinated Transit Systems.

The 2017 Roadeo offered three unique firsts: the first combined bus roadeo to be held indoors, the first state roadeo to use electronic scoring, and the first roadeo nationally with competition for paratransit maintenance technicians.

There were training opportunities for the participants. Then the bus operator participant's skills were tested with a written test and the on-course competition. The maintenance technicians faced similar challenges with a written test and a series of diagnostic tests.

As always, the event concluded with an Awards Banquet that crowned and recognized the 2017 champions in the paratransit van and cutaway divisions, the fixed route bus division, the individual paratransit maintenance technician, and the maintenance technician's team competition.

Damian Woodard from Ride Right took the top honors in the inaugural paratransit maintenance technician competition, outpacing his fellow paratransit technicians.

Calhoun County Transit's Michael Wimberly drove away with the Van Category Championship, with Lee Tran's Chris Cowles being designated as the Cutaway Category Champion. Both will travel to Detroit, Michigan in early June to represent Florida at the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) national roadeo.

### Paratransit Category Winners

#### Paratransit Maintenance Technician Division

1<sup>st</sup> Damian Woodard, Ride Right; 2<sup>nd</sup> George McGarry, JTA; and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bruce Haney, Levy County Transit

#### Cutaway Division

1<sup>st</sup> Chris Cowles, LeeTran; 2<sup>nd</sup> Charles Ford, JTrans; and 3<sup>rd</sup> Jody Revell, Star Metro

#### Van Division

1<sup>st</sup> Michael Wimberly, Calhoun County Transit; 2<sup>nd</sup> Raymond Aylmer, Gulf/Franklin Transportation; and 3<sup>rd</sup> David Frayer, Saratoga County Area Transit

### Overall Champions

JTrans repeated as the 2017 Overall Paratransit Champion (combined van and cutaway scores) was JTrans with their two team members Tommy Griffis, Van Operator, and Charles Ford, Cutaway Operator.

Congratulations to all Roadeo competitors!!!



# Paratransit Rodeo Winners

## Cutaway Division Winner



L-R: 1<sup>st</sup> Place:  
Chris Cowles,  
LeeTran; and Lisa  
Bacot, FPTA

## Cutaway Operators



## Van Division Winner



L-R: Lisa Bacot,  
FPTA; and 1<sup>st</sup>  
Michael Wimberly,  
Calhoun County  
Transit

## Van Operators



## Paratransit Maintenance Technician Division Winner



L-R: Lisa Bacot,  
FPTA; and 1<sup>st</sup>  
Damian Woodard,  
Ride Right

## Paratransit Technicians



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### RTAP BULLETIN

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### 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: Jay Goodwill Designer: Stephanie Lewis

# SPOTLIGHT—Sheri Powers, Project Manager, Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

**E**ach SPOTLIGHT edition 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 Sheri Powers, Project Manager, Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged



**Name:** Sheri Powers

**Title:** Project Manager, Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

**Birthplace:** Tallahassee, Florida

**Professional History:** 1989 – 2008:

Department of Community Affairs; and 2008 – present  
Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

I have spent most of my career in State government, mainly in Emergency Management. As part of the response teams for numerous disasters including Hurricane Andrew, wildfires, tornado outbreaks, floods and my final deployment to Mississippi for Hurricane Katrina, it constantly reminded me how vulnerable we can be and how our lives can change in an instant. These were some of the most rewarding, yet challenging, years in public service.

In 2008, I accepted a position with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and my eyes were opened to the transportation world.

**Years Working with Current Agency:** 9 years

**Years Working in Transit Industry:** 9 years – still a rookie.

**Biggest Surprise Working in Paratransit:** How many people depend on transportation services for access to medical appointments and other life sustaining needs. If you don't personally need this type of service or provide this type of service, you don't realize the significant impact this service has on the lives of many individuals.

**Biggest Challenge Working in Paratransit:** Funding. Understanding all of the different funding streams and their requirements and/or limitations.

Transportation is not an easy field to step into. It takes many years of working in the middle of everything to really understand how challenging and rewarding this job is – whether on the operational side or the funding side. Right when you think you have it all figured out, you learn something new.

**Personal Benefit Working in Paratransit:** Knowing that what we do makes a true difference in the daily lives of others. Transportation is key to being independent. It provides an opportunity for individuals who cannot drive to medical appointments, shopping, work, etc, without having to always depend on family members or friends. To be able to help someone maintain their independence so that they can feel good about themselves is the icing on the cake.

**Personal Background:** Married to my best friend, Robby. We have two daughters (one in high school and one who is married and recently blessed us with a granddaughter), two dogs and two cats. I guess there is safety in twos.

I love sports and am an avid Florida State Seminoles fan! When I have any “free” time, you can find me at a football/basketball/baseball/softball game or on the beach.

**Childhood Ambition:** I actually wanted to be a wide receiver but back in my day, they wouldn't allow girls to play real football.

**Inspiration:** People who have survived a life-threatening illness or other debilitating condition and continue to smile and live life to the fullest.

**My Motto:** Nothing good in life is easy or free.

## Save the Date



### Florida Public Transportation Association Annual Conference

October 22–25, 2017  
West Palm Beach, Florida

## START Train-the-Trainer Scheduled for St. Johns County – November 2017

The Florida Department of Transportation's Florida Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), administered by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) will present the two-day National RTAP's START (Safety Training and Rural Transit) Train-the-Trainer Workshop, November 6-7, 2017 at Emergency Operations Center facility in St. Johns County, Florida.

The provision of transit services in a safe, secure, and customer-oriented manner demands that bus and van operators (drivers) are well trained and knowledgeable about the equipment they operate, the conditions under which they drive, and the passengers they serve. The National RTAP developed START course guidebook as a training tool to help guide operators in these three very important areas of knowledge and skill. This course provided a guide for

trainers on how to effectively use the START materials when training transit drivers.

The START program has been designed to train new and veteran trainers and drivers in community transit safety and security. The three unit modules that were taught include: Vehicle Safety, Driver Safety, and Passenger Safety

Registration for this training opportunity will open in mid-summer.

For information on the Florida RTAP program and the professional development opportunities available for Florida rural transit agencies, contact Florida RTAP Project Manager Jay Goodwill at [jaygoodwill@cutr.usf.edu](mailto:jaygoodwill@cutr.usf.edu)

## Save the Date: CTD Annual Best Practices and Training Workshop – August 28-29, 2017

Save the dates on your calendar for the 2017 Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged invites you to attend its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Best Practices and Training Workshop. This two day event will be held on August 28 and 29 at the Renaissance Orlando Hotel at SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida.

This workshop provides a great opportunity to learn about the latest in transportation management practices, technol-

ogy, and equipment to better assist you with your transportation services. In addition, this event provides an opportunity for attendees to network with their peers, purchasers of service, riders, and other transportation professionals. Through the sharing of practices and "lessons learned," Florida continues to excel in the transportation field.

Please mark your calendars! Registration will soon be open.

## 2017 Public Transportation and Transportation Disadvantaged Legislative Awareness Day

The annual Transportation Disadvantaged Legislative Awareness Day was again a joint effort this year with the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA). FPTA and FACTS (Florida Association of Coordinated Transportation Systems) hosted this event on Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee.

Despite the cold and windy day, overall the 2017 Public Transportation and Transportation Disadvantaged Legislative Awareness Day was a success, achieving its primary goal of creating awareness and support for Florida's Public Transportation and Transportation Disadvantaged Program.



## 2017 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](http://www.floridartap.org) in the Training Calendar section. Click on the 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 Lisa Staes at [staes@cutr.usf.edu](mailto:staes@cutr.usf.edu).

**May 23-24, 2017**

Transit Dispatch and Supervisor Training—  
Tampa, FL

**June 5-7, 2017**

FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development  
Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations  
Summit—Tampa, FL

**June 19-23, 2017**

Advanced Problems in Bus Collision  
Investigation (FT00556)<sup>1</sup>—St. Petersburg, FL

**July 24-28, 2017**

Transit Supervisor Certification Course  
(FT00545)—Tampa, FL

**August 8-9, 2017**

Advanced Mobility Device Securement Skills  
Development Workshop—Tampa, FL

*Save the Date: August 28-27, 2017*

CTD Annual Best Practices and Training  
Workshop—Orlando, FL

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<sup>1</sup> Course Prerequisite: Successful completion of Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation (FT00435).

### **Registration is Open: 2017 FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations Summit**

**C**lose to 250 transit professionals are expected to be in attendance at the 2017 FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations Summit, which will be held at the USF Embassy Suites in Tampa on June 5-7, 2017. This annual workshop and summit is jointly sponsored by the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR).

The annual Florida Transit Safety and Operations Summit, hosted by the FDOT Florida Transit Safety and Operations Network (FTSON), will be held Monday, June 5th.

The two-day Professional Development Workshop, conducted on Tuesday and Wednesday, will offer unique professional development opportunities for Florida's public transportation supervisors, front-line

employees, and other key staff in operations, maintenance, marketing, planning and administration. The one-stop workshop provides public transit professionals with an excellent opportunity to learn from industry experts, attend professional development training, learn about research updates, and network with their peers.

The Workshop and Summit are for managers, supervisors and other key staff currently employed by Florida public agencies (e.g.: Florida transit systems, FDOT, etc.), Community Transportation Coordinators, planning agencies, transportation providers, and/or Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) members.

Don't delay, register today!

[www.regonline.com/2017PDWandSafetyOperationsSummit](http://www.regonline.com/2017PDWandSafetyOperationsSummit)