

RTAP

BULLETIN

FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SUMMER—VOL. 9, NO. 3

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2011 TD Conference a Success

The 19th Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Best Practices and Training Workshop held at the Daytona Beach and Ocean Center on August 9-11, 2011 was a huge success!

Focused around the conference theme of “It’s Time for a Change,” the conference started with Brett Eastman’s inspirational keynote presentation on “No Time for Boundaries or Barriers.” Brett, who despite being born with no arms or legs, doesn’t see himself as handicapped and left the audience with the message of being the best they could be.

Conference attendees participated in several power breakout and general sessions throughout the two day event – including another keynote address on “Putting the ADVANTAGE in Transportation” by Community Transportation Association of America Executive Director Dale Marsico.

A display of products and services by the transit industry vendors provided conference attendees with the latest in equipment, technology and services.

As tradition, the highlight of the conference was the annual Awards Banquet. The 2011 award winners included:

- Safety Award of the Year—MV Transportation, Alachua County
- Volunteer of the Year Award—William “Lundy” Parden, Indian River County
- Operator of the Year Award—TMS Management Group, Broward County
- Innovation of the Year Award—Polk County Transit
- Dispatcher/Scheduler of the Year Award—Delisia Pelt-Washington, Polk County Transit

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2011 TD Conference Award Recipients



TD Conference—cont'd from cover

- Driver of the Year Award—Brenda Bland, Polk County Transit
- Driver of the Year Award—Tonya Mullan, Sumter County
- Outstanding Coordinating Board of the Year—Polk County Local Coordinating Board
- Designated Official Planning Agency of the Year—Apalachee Regional Planning Council
- Urban CTC of the Year Award—Senior Resource Association, Inc., Indian River County
- Sheila Winitzer Shining Star of the Year Award —Rebecca Leng, Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, Polk County
- William G. & Budd Bell Lifetime Achievement Award – Ted Waters, Big Bend Transit, Inc.

The 2011 Annual TD Conference proved to be fun, informative, and educational. Thanks to all the attendees, speakers, exhibitors, and staff for making this year's event such a huge success!

For more information regarding the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged please contact Karen Somerset, Interim Director at (850) 410-5701 or (850) 410-5700, karen.somerset@dot.state.fl.us.

Florida RTAP Plays Active Role in 2011 TD Conference

The Florida RTAP program played an integral role in the 19th Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Best Practices and Training Workshop held at the Daytona Beach and Ocean Center on August 9-11, 2011.

From its membership on the conference planning committee to sponsoring presentations, the Florida RTAP program leveraged the annual TD workshop to help inform and educate Florida's rural transit professionals.

Some of the highlights of RTAP related events included:

- The traditional Florida RTAP Advisory Committee annual meeting during Tuesday's luncheon
- The presentation by National RTAP Director of Technology, Frank Condon, on the new National RTAP technology products with a focus on Procurement Pro – a web-based procurement services application
- The interactive session on "Disability Etiquette" in which presenters Raquel Pancho and Barbara Page provided best practice advice on interacting with people with disabilities

37th Florida Public Transportation Association Annual Conference October 16 - 18, 2011

Downtown Hyatt Regency Tampa
Tampa, Florida



For further information and to register
www.cutr.usf.edu/fpta



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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.

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SPOTLIGHT—Marcia Staszko, CFRPC Transportation Disadvantaged Director

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 Marcia Staszko, CFRPC Transportation Disadvantaged Director.



Name: Marcia Staszko

Title: Transportation Disadvantaged Director for the Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Birthplace: Niagara Falls, New York—came to Florida in 1969.

Education: Niagara County Community College and Polk State College.

Professional History: My career started at the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) in 1976 as the Executive Secretary to the Director. Between then and 1984, I assisted with the implementation of the Transportation Disadvantaged Program (Chapter 427, F.S., 1979). In 1984, I was promoted to Program Coordinator for the TD program. The CFRPC was the TD Designated Provider for the four (4) county areas of DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee. Under the initial TD program structure, that designation was somewhat equivalent to being a CTC today. We applied for Federal transit grants and started the first public transportation service with Section 5311 operating funds in the four county rural area.

In 1984, the TD program was administered by the Florida Department of Transportation. FDOT District One provided the initial forum for holding joint meetings for TD personnel in their district. This was a great opportunity to share information and coordinate training. I was part of the forum that created the more formalized Florida Association for Coordinated Transportation Systems (FACTS) that stemmed from those coordinated meetings. I served as a board member of FACTS for several years and I assisted the Coordinating Council for the Transportation Disadvantaged (currently known as CTD) in developing the 1989 amendments to Chapter 427 F.S.. As we all know, that legislation brought first time “Transportation Disadvantaged” funding for trips and planning. It also created the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The legislation also brought change as to how my agency was going to continue to be involved in the program. The CFRPC decided that since there were specific planning funds to support the pro-

gram, they no longer wanted to continue in their role as “provider,” or become a Community Transportation Coordinator. At the same time, DeSoto County decided that they wanted to administer the planning component of the program.

I have been the primary staff person for the TD Program in Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties since 1984. Initially, there were Local Coordinating Boards in each of the counties. However, in 2007 each of the county commissions agreed that it would be more cost effective and efficient to merge the three boards and form a Multi-County Board, as well as a multi-county system. This arrangement has worked successfully since its inception.

Biggest Challenge in Paratransit: “Challenge” is the middle name of “Public Transportation.” The demand for services increases each year. However, resources have not increased in proportion to the demand. I have had the good fortune of knowing and working with people statewide who are dedicated to finding solutions to mobility “Challenges.” Every social service agency, civic organization, visioning session, etc. that I have been associated with has named transportation/increased mobility as the number one need in the rural areas we serve. FDOT District One has supported the effort to find solutions for that issue. FDOT funded a study/plan (Heartland Rural Mobility Plan) for the rural counties and communities in their district. This plan is now being implemented by the CFRPC. A Mobility Coordinator/Planner was recently hired to take on that “Challenge.” I am excited to be a part of that effort and look forward to expanding mobility options in the rural Heartland area of the state.

Personal Benefit of Working in Paratransit: Prior to 1976, when I was a stay-at-home mom, I belonged to a civic organization and volunteered to transport foster children to and from a local speech and hearing agency so they could receive their much needed therapy. I think this was my awakening to the much deeper problems associated with not having either a personal vehicle or not having other mobility options to access or enjoy the simplest of life’s tasks and pleasures. After working in the TD program for a number of years, two members of my immediate household ultimately lost their transportation independence and are now dependent on others to provide that service. Fortunately we live in an urban area with

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public transportation/ADA complimentary service that allows my family members to enjoy some independence and allows me some freedom from being the sole mobility provider. There's nothing like experiencing the difficulties of being transportation disadvantaged first hand. It makes me work more diligently to find solutions to the "challenges" it presents.

Personal Background: Married to husband Nick for 25 years, we have three grown children and six grandchildren. I enjoy

St. Lucie County, Fort Pierce Transit Facility Opens

St. Lucie County, the City of Fort Pierce, and the Council on Aging/Community Transit held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the official opening of the Intermodal Transit Facility on Avenue D on Tuesday, August 23rd.

The 5,400 square-foot bus terminal and transfer station is a sustainable "green" facility with photovoltaic roof panels and a cistern system for reclaimed water. Designed by Edlund Dritenbas Binkley Architects and Associates and constructed by Sisca Construction Services, a majority of the funding for

reading, movies, spending time with friends and family, and traveling.

Motto: "Nestle, Don't Wrestle" (Corrie Ten Boone). "Discover joy tucked in the corners of each day!"

the Intermodal Transit Facility came from federal transportation funds, the Florida Department of Transportation and the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency.

The Intermodal Transit Facility is located at 725 Avenue D (on the corner Avenue D and North 8th Street) in Fort Pierce.



Steps for Managing Confrontation

How many times in your role as leader have you experienced a clashing of attitudes or ideas with one of your followers or even another employee? How often are you called in to mediate or resolve situations where people just don't see eye to eye on an issue? It happens frequently, doesn't it? And if you're like most people, you find these situations uncomfortable and full of emotional minefields.

As leaders, we recognize that problems like these need to be addressed, but so many of us hate and therefore avoid the confrontation we know needs to take place. We say things like, "this will only make matters worse." "I'm not sure I can control my emotions." "Maybe if I give it some time, the issue will resolve itself." Do any of these sound familiar? Probably so. Unfortunately, it is at best, wishful thinking.

Knowing how to successfully manage confrontation is a skill that all leaders need in their toolkit. If you've been avoiding confrontation for fear of doing more harm than good, consider equipping yourself with these techniques for managing the situation effectively.

1. Prepare yourself in advance. Clearly determine the cause for the confrontation. Are you addressing a performance issue, an unacceptable attitude or perhaps a safety

issue? Also determine the purpose or the goal for the confrontation. What do you want the confrontation to achieve? How do you want to be perceived after the confrontation? With these answers in mind, it will be easier to stay on target during the confrontation.

2. Do not procrastinate if a confrontation is necessary. Many leaders try to convince themselves that the problem will work itself out or dissipate if left alone. Putting off what needs to be addressed allows more time for emotions to grow and frustrations to fester. The reality is that bad news does not get better with time.
3. Avoid extreme emotional involvement. Never initiate a confrontation when you are emotionally charged. This is difficult, but that is why preparing yourself in advance is so important.
4. Choose carefully the time and place for the confrontation. Go behind closed doors if possible. Confrontation in front of an audience invites embarrassment and offers undue opportunities for "emotional performances."

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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.

September 7, 2011

FTA Drug and Alcohol Program Audit Preparation—Tampa, FL

September 19 - 23, 2011

TSI Transit Bus System Safety—Orlando, FL

September 23, 2011

Narrowbanding: Are You Prepared—South Daytona, 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

October 16 - 18, 2011

FPTA 37th Annual Conference—Tampa, FL

¹ Required course for the Florida Transit Operator Trainer Training Certification

Confrontation—cont'd from pg 4

Consider timing the confrontation at the end of the work day. This gives the other person an easy exit for cooling off and considering the issue.

5. Work to determine the other person's driving needs. Try to evaluate the issue from their vantage point.
6. Be willing to accept some measure of responsibility for the situation – admit fault if you are to blame in part or in total.
7. Allow the other person time to vent. Remember, you have had the advantage of sorting through your emotions before initiating this confrontation. Give the other person the same opportunity.
8. Zero in on the problem, not the person. Positive confrontation focuses on the problem. Negative confrontation focuses on the person. Frame the conversation in terms of specific expectations for

future performance. Encourage feedback regarding alternative solutions or approaches for managing the issue.

You may not find a solution immediately. You may never completely agree on the issue. But a leader's responsibility is to address difficult issues and ensure steps are taken to work toward a mutually agreeable solution. It's hard work – great leaders can't avoid that.

All the best!

Phillip Van Hooser, MBA, CSP, CPAE

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