

# RTAP

## BULLETIN

FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WINTER—VOL. 9, NO. 1

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## Brevi Bus Introduced in Putnam County

The new Brevi Bus, which was engineered and built in Putnam County, Florida, was unveiled in October. U.S. Congressman John Mica joined residents, local leaders and state representatives for the first public presentation and roll out of the new transit vehicle designed to service rural communities and passengers with special-needs.

Brevi Bus is Putnam County Ride Solution's response to the passenger requirements of rural, community transportation. While dirt roads demand a rugged vehicle, the human service transport requirements of community transportation require a short, more maneuverable vehicle that is able to access passenger's driveways for pick up and drop off. The coordination of relatively long, human service trips in rural counties also requires a high capacity vehicle capable of carrying at least 20 passengers in order to minimize passenger trip costs. Funding available to rural transit for capital replacement necessitates a long life vehicle. Many Ride Solution vehicles have been in operation for over 20 years. The Brevi Bus is the result of Ride Solution's desire for a rugged, smaller, high capacity, long life vehicle.

In 2003, Putnam County pursued federal transit assistance to update their vehicle fleet, which contained 10 aging buses. Their last new bus purchase occurred in 1989 and some vehicles had more than 500,000 miles of use.

In 2005, Representative Mica was successful in securing federal support for the new Put-

nam Ride Solution buses. However, after an extensive search, Putnam County was unsuccessful in locating a vehicle that would meet its needs. More than 50 percent of the county roads were unpaved, so a large traditional bus would not meet local requirements.

As a result, the county made the decision at that time to pursue the development of a locally engineered vehicle. A special congressional waiver was needed and finally obtained in 2008 to allow for the research and development of this new vehicle. With local support, the low-floor Brevi Bus was designed to be shorter, more maneuverable, more rugged and more accessible to those with disabilities.



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## 2011 Professional Development Workshop Partners with National Transit Institute

The FDOT/FPTA/CUTR Professional Development Workshop is partnering with the NTI Transit Trainers' Workshop this year to offer a unique professional development opportunity for public transportation professionals. This one-stop-workshop will offer public transportation professionals an excellent opportunity to learn from industry experts, attend professional development training, learn about research updates, and network with their peers.

The workshops will be April 10-12, 2011 at the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, 2900 Bayport Drive, in beautiful Tampa, Florida.

There is no registration fee to attend the Workshop if you are a member of the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA), work for a Florida transit agency, FDOT or other public entity.

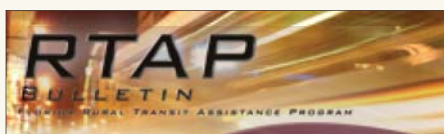
Don't miss this fantastic professional development and networking opportunity. To register [www.cutr.usf.edu/fpta](http://www.cutr.usf.edu/fpta).

Questions should be directed to Amber Reep at CUTR, (813) 974-9823 or [reep@cutr.usf.edu](mailto:reep@cutr.usf.edu).

### Brevi Bus—cont'd from cover

"The resulting Brevi Bus is a great success and a testament to the ingenuity and vision of our residents." Congressman Mica said. "Like Putnam County, many rural areas have many unpaved roads which still need access to public transportation, and the Brevi Buses will fill this unique local and national need. Maybe most exciting is that there are plans to manufacture these buses in Putnam County."

To learn more about the Brevi Bus Project, follow this link: <http://www.wix.com/brevibus/brevi-research-project>



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## Florida Triple Crown Roadeo, April 15 - 16, 2011

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida RTAP Paratransit Roadeo will be held April 15-16, 2011 at the VOTRAN facility in South Daytona. This year's event will be combined with FPTA's Fixed Route MEGA Roadeo. This first in the nation event will bring together all of Florida's public transit agencies, both those operating in rural and urban settings, paratransit and fixed route providers, and provide great training opportunities and camaraderie for all attendees.



Participants and judges will stay on Daytona Beach at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort.

The Roadeo will take place on Saturday at the VOTRAN facility at 950 Big Tree Road in South Daytona.

This year's event will be a two-day event that will include an awards banquet on Saturday evening at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort hotel. Registration and training will take place at the hotel on Friday with the big event taking place on Saturday at the VOTRAN facility.

For additional information and to register, go to at [www.tmaarc.org](http://www.tmaarc.org) and click the "2011 Roadeo" tab.

Questions should be directed to Bill Mayer at VOTRAN, (386) 756-7496, ext. 4146 or [bmayer@co.volusia.fl.us](mailto:bmayer@co.volusia.fl.us)

Don't delay, register today!

Please direct all questions or comments to:

#### 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: Yolanda Moore Designer: Stephanie Zavacki

## SPOTLIGHT—Sharon Peeler, Executive Director of JTrans

**S**POTLIGHT 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 Sharon Peeler, Executive Director of JTrans.



**Name:** Sharon Peeler

**Title:** Executive Director, JTrans, Marianna, Florida

**Birthplace:** Florida

**Professional History:** I have worked in Transportation since 1988. My transportation career began as a driver providing transportation for Jackson County ARC and the Jack-

son County Senior Program. I worked through the system from driving to scheduling and dispatching to being Fiscal Manager and then in 2003 becoming the Director of JTrans. I have attended various professional development training courses including the Certified Community Transportation Manager training and Certification in 2005 in St. Louis. I also attended and was certified in 2009 to be a Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) Instructor.

**Years Working With Current Agency:** 23

**Years Working in Transit Industry:** 23

**Biggest Surprise in Paratransit:** JTrans winning the State Award Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year 2008

**Biggest Challenge in Paratransit:** Adequate funding to meet the growing transportation needs. The ability to determine the difference in those that truly have transportation needs and those that have other transportation available but choose to use public transportation because they feel it is an entitlement.

**Personal Benefit of Working in Paratransit:** I have met many Wonderful and very Interesting people in transit that like myself really enjoy making a difference in the lives of those we serve that are not as fortunate as we are. We help a lot of people that seem to have NO ONE. Everybody needs somebody! Where are they?? It makes me appreciate having family and friends that I can always depend on.

**Community Involvement:** Attend First Baptist Church of Malone, Clubs – Pilot Club of Marianna, Northeast Jackson County Optimist, FACTS Treasurer, RTAP Advisory

Committee and Member of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.

**Personal Background:** I have seven wonderful Grandchildren that take most of my time. My husband Bobby of 35 years says as he did when we raised our children Sherry, Brad and Jamie – he takes the back seat again. In other words, it's the G-kids 1st then if there is time left he gets what's left. He is Great! – he stands back and watches us on the golf cart, the 4 wheeler, in the pool or the sandbox! We love playing outside. Heaven help don't put us inside. Seven is definitely a crowd!

**Childhood Ambition:** Not sure that I had one! I graduated high school in 1976 and got married in 1976 – There ya go!

**Inspiration:** My Mom and Dad. Always taught to Do My Best and to Do the Right Thing. They were very devoted to God and had strong family values. They not only talked the talk but they walked the walk and expected my brother, sister and I to do the same thing. Thank God for Christian Parents!

**My Motto:** A positive attitude is contagious but don't wait to catch it from others. BE A CARRIER!

**Save the Date:  
October 16 - 18, 2011**

**37<sup>th</sup> Florida Public  
Transportation Association  
Annual Conference**

**Hyatt Regency Tampa  
Tampa, Florida**



For more information contact  
Wes Watson:  
(850) 878-0855 or  
[fptamail@embargmail.com](mailto:fptamail@embargmail.com)

# Message from Florida's United We Ride Ambassador Jo Ann Hutchinson

It is my pleasure to provide an update for this edition of the Florida RTAP Bulletin! But first, I must again congratulate my friends at the Public Transit Office at the



Florida Department of Transportation. It was my honor to present the Department with the Community Transportation Association of America, State Agency Leadership Award at the annual conference of the Florida Public Transportation Association in October. This annual award recog-

nized the Florida Department of Transportation's Public Transit Office for their effectiveness in:

- Providing creative, effective and continuing training and technical assistance programs,
- Using new concepts, strategies, procedures and policies to provide support to local transit systems,
- Communicating local transit systems' concerns, and
- Advocating for public and community transportation at the state and local level.

## Florida Highlights

On September 8, 2010, a successful Northeast Regional Mobility Summit was held in St. Augustine bringing together seven northeast counties to develop an action plan to further regional coordination. The summit's primary sponsor was the Jacksonville Transportation Authority and St. Johns Council on Aging Executive Director Cathy Brown hosted it. Nearly 200 people attended including members of the United States Congress, the Florida Legislature, locally elected officials, and state agencies, all the Community Transportation Coordinators in the area and many from other regions. Because of this event and its success, several other Florida counties are discussing regional summits for 2011. As the United We Ride (UWR) Coordination Ambassador, I am looking forward to assisting

Many Florida communities have recently dedicated new facilities and equipment including St. Johns County with

its new transit facility. Putnam County introduced a new innovative vehicle for rural transit, the "Brevi Bus." Finally, in St. Lucie County, the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency, and the St. Lucie Council on Aging hosted the groundbreaking of its future intermodal transit facility.

## Katie Arnold Named Mobility Manager for St. Johns County, Florida

The St. Johns County Council on Aging has appointed Katie Arnold as the mobility manager for St. Johns County. The program that Ms. Arnold will oversee is funded by a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation and is designed to assist residents of St. Johns County in two main areas pertaining to mobility:

- To encourage mobility independence in the senior population by promoting behind-the-wheel safety and competence.
- To develop and facilitate access to safe and cost-effective transportation alternatives for seniors who are not independently mobile. The mobility manager also serves as a resource for the transportation-disadvantaged population.

Katie can be reached from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at (904) 315-6505 or by e-mail at [karnold@stjohnscoa.com](mailto:karnold@stjohnscoa.com).

## National News

The National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination (NRC) is a great resource of information, research, useful practices and technical assistance. As one of the ten ambassadors working for the NRC, we are able to identify many innovative practices across the country, as well as keep you informed about funding, events and other news. More importantly, we are able to respond to your technical assistance needs. One recent publication highlighted by the NRC is the new digital version of CTAA's magazine that focused on coordination. The article "Building Upon Traditional Coordination Models" (PDF) can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/hdZJ3J>. Check out our national website at [www.nrctransportation.org](http://www.nrctransportation.org) for more coordination news or visit my ambassador site at [www.nrctransportation.org/region4](http://www.nrctransportation.org/region4). If you

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want to be added to my distribution list or provide me articles to showcase your work, please contact me at the email or phone provided herein.

### Health Care

There is much talk about the new Affordable Health Care legislation and its impact on transportation. Although most of the provisions of the new law go into effect on January 1, 2014, the National Resource Center on Human Service Transportation Coordination's Director, Chris Zeilinger, is writing a paper on the transportation impacts. This should be available soon and if you want more information, Chris can be reached at [zeilinger@ctaa.org](mailto:zeilinger@ctaa.org) or by phone at (202) 250.4108.

### National Mobility Management Pre-EXPO Conference Scheduled for June 6-7, 2011

The Partnership for Mobility Management, an association of several national transportation organizations and the Federal Transit Administration, is planning a conference for those working in the new and exciting field of mobility management. The conference will be held June 6-7, 2011 in Indianapolis as a special CTAA EXPO event. Information is available at [www.ctaa.org/MobilityManagement2011](http://www.ctaa.org/MobilityManagement2011). For more information email or call Sheryl Gross-Glaser, the Director of the Partnership for Mobility Management, at [grossglaser@ctaa.org](mailto:grossglaser@ctaa.org) or (202) 386-1669. For more information on the Community Transportation Association's Annual EXPO and Training Conference following this pre-EXPO event, visit [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org).

### In Memoriam

In late 2010, Florida lost three advocates for Florida's coordinated transportation systems.

Shirley Conroy, TD Advocate, FACTS Executive Director, a former grants manager for FDOT, District 2, as well as one of the first coordinated transportation providers operating in Alachua County, died on November 19, 2010 in Jacksonville. Shirley was a tireless advocate for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program and coordinated transportation for over 31 years. At every turn in the road, she advocated and fought for Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, and the state statute requiring coordination. She was one of the early architects of the legislation and saw in it the possibilities of what coordination could be. She set out to see that the potential was made real. She was the genesis for the Northeast Florida Mobility Coalition, as she was the stewardship of District 2 Coordinated Transportation

when she was the FDOT liaison. It is not by accident that, today, northeast Florida is the most likely area to begin the regionalization of CTCs. She saw the potential in Community Transportation in a way that few have.

Mark "Leonard" Plotkin, died on October 20, 2010, in Tampa, Florida after an extended illness. Leonard was a tireless advocate for persons with disabilities in the Tampa Bay Area and in the state as a whole. Through his service on the Hillsborough County MPO's committees since 1994, he diligently worked to raise the consciousness on transportation-disadvantaged issues. In his capacity as a LCB member, he traveled each year to Tallahassee during the Legislative Session. In 2010, during TD Legislative Day, he met with over 33 legislators in the House and Senate regarding continuing to fund and to increase the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. Annually, he attended the Transportation Disadvantaged Training & Technology Conference to continue to update and sharpen his transportation knowledge, and to use that knowledge to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities. Leonard was known through our community for his wit, his plain speaking, his insight and his dependability.

Rita Kane, 57, of Miami, FL, passed away on October 14, 2010. Rita served as a TD Commissioner from 2002-2004. Her career in transportation began as Contract Manager for Comprehensive Paratransit Services in Miami. Ten years later, Rita moved to Orlando to serve as Vice President and General Manager of Gray Line of Orlando, and United Transportation, a company that provides broad transportation services to Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties. Rita was passionate and outspoken about life. She was able to identify and speak the truth when others found it difficult. Her enthusiasm and dedication to hard work were hard to match.

Although we are sad to have lost these champions for coordination, their vision and passion for mobility will live on across Florida and our nation.

### Ambassador Hutchinson Contact Information

Please contact me with your successes or if you need some type of assistance. I can be reached at [hutchinson@ctaa.org](mailto:hutchinson@ctaa.org) or by phone at (800) 891-0590, ext 730. Also check out my website and monthly blog at [www.nrctransportation.org/region4](http://www.nrctransportation.org/region4) and send me articles to post.

## 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](http://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.

**March 7 - 10, 2011**

Instructor's Course in Bus Operator Training (FT00429)<sup>1</sup>—Tampa, FL

**March 11, 2011**

I-Day Instructor's Course in Paratransit Operator Training (FT00542)<sup>2</sup>—Tampa, FL

**March 28 - April 1, 2011**

Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigation—Tampa, FL

**April 10 - 12, 2011**

2011 Transit Trainers' Workshop & FDOT/FPTA/CUTR Professional Development Workshop—Tampa, FL

**April 15 - 16, 2011**

Florida's Triple Crown Roadeo (15<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Paratransit Roadeo and FPTA Fixed Route MEGA Roadeo

Combined)—VOTRAN, South Daytona, FL

**May 10 - 11, 2011**

NTI Implementing Rural Transit Technology Workshop—Tampa, FL

**June 27 - July 1, 2011**

TSI Transit Rail System Safety Course—Tampa, FL

**July 19 - 20, 2011**

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

**October 3 - 4, 2011**

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

<sup>1</sup> Required course for the Florida Transit Operator Trainer Training Certification

<sup>2</sup> Pre-requisite: Successful Completion of the Instructor's Course in Bus Operator Training (FT00429)

### Save the Date: CTD Annual Conference Goes To Daytona Beach

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged will be hosting its 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Training and Technology Conference at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort from August 9-11, 2011.

Registration will open soon.

For more information, contact John Irvine at the CTD: 850-410-5712 or [john.irvine@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:john.irvine@dot.state.fl.us)

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