

# RTAP

## BULLETIN

FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FALL 2008—VOL. 6, No. 4

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## Florida RTAP Manager's Update

**W**elcome to the first web-edition of the Florida RTAP Bulletin! We have chosen this electronic route to keep our production costs down, as well as to provide us some additional latitude in the size of articles and the ability to include hotlinks to other sources. We hope that this will make the publication more pertinent and useful for all of you. As always, we welcome and desperately need any feedback you can provide because this is done only for your benefit.

I'm happy to announce that FDOT has entered into our third three-year contract with the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida and have some ideas on

what we would like to accomplish during the upcoming contract period. We have a wonderfully talented team staffed by Jay Goodwill, Yolanda Moore, Lisa Staes and Amber Reep.

Training remains our first priority. In the near future, we will be polling the rural transit providers to get a consensus of your top five training needs. We will also keep all of you abreast of any new changes mandated from the federal level.

We will be making changes in the delivery of some of the training, better utilizing the technology that is now available. Since we have entered an extended period of tight travel budgets we need to find ways to provide ade-

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## FDOT Renews Relationship With CUTR to Manage Florida RTAP

**I**n November 2008, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) renewed its contractual arrangement with the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) to manage the Florida Rural Transit Assistance Program (more commonly referred to as "RTAP") for another three year period.

As we at CUTR look forward to our continued involvement with Florida RTAP, a number of changes are in the works.

Jay Goodwill has joined the CUTR RTAP team as the CUTR Program Manager, joining Lisa Staes, Yolanda Moore and Amber Reep to form the

core project team. Other CUTR staff will provide support and input as needed.

Jay brings three decades of transit experience to RTAP, including six years with CUTR. Prior to joining CUTR in 2002, Jay was the long time General Manager of the Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) bus system in Sarasota and is a past President of the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA).

It is CUTR's goal to help maintain the Florida RTAP as one of the nation's best RTAP programs. The new CUTR RTAP team will build upon an already strong program and

*continued on p.6*



# Introducing Florida's United We Ride Ambassador

**W**elcome to my first article for the Florida RTAP Bulletin! I am Jo Ann Hutchinson, a United We Ride Ambassador with the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination (NRC) administered by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). I represent the FTA Region 4, which includes the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Tennessee, as well as Puerto Rico. As an Ambassador, I work with the FTA, state and local human service agencies, state and local Departments of Transportation and other stakeholders to provide information, advice and technical assistance to improve the coordination of public and community services transportation.

## My Experience and My Vision for Coordinated Transportation

Prior to becoming a United We Ride Ambassador, I served as Executive Director of Florida's Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, an independent agency responsible for statewide coordination of human service transportation. There I helped implement a first-time dedicated trust fund that has provided millions of additional trips to Florida's transportation disadvantaged populations. In 2003, I retired with 36 years of public service in the transportation field, of which 23 were in coordinated transportation initiatives. Since the early 1990's I have also served on the CTAA Board of Directors representing the eight southeastern states.

I envision that all Americans, regardless of their status, will have enhanced mobility for activities of daily living (health care, nutrition, work, etc). By providing an investment in coordinated community transportation, we must make transportation available to all Americans but especially our most vulnerable Americans—our elderly, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals. This vision, I feel, can be realized through implementing and funding fully-coordinated community transportation networks in every community.

## Services Provided by Your Ambassador

As Your United We Ride Ambassador and through the assistance of the NRC and CTAA, we can provide all types of technical assistance to states and localities including, but not limited to:

- Facilitating the development and implementation of coordinated transportation;
- Researching coordination models, coordinated funding and other applied research;
- Compiling and distributing useful practices and assessment models;
- Organizing, chairing and participating in quarterly conference calls to share promising practices, discuss challenges and develop solutions;
- Speaking and presenting at federal, state and local venues about coordination; and
- Working with policy makers to advocate for dedicated funding and coordinated transportation.



## Contact Information

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**Save the Date**  
**FDOT/FPTA/CUTR Professional  
Development Workshop**  
Tampa, Florida  
May 19—21, 2009



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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—Ted Waters, GM, Big Bend Transit, Inc.

**A** new feature, “SPOTLIGHT”, is making its debut with this issue of the Florida RTAP Bulletin. In each edition of the Bulletin, “SPOTLIGHT” will highlight one of our many energetic Florida RTAP transit professionals and allow these individuals to introduce themselves in their own words and tell us how they became involved in public transportation.



**Birthplace:** Coral Gables, Florida

**Education:** BSCE, Georgia Tech; Graduate Studies, Transportation, LSU

**Professional History:** Civil Engineer, Humble Oil, 1968-1970; Transportation Engineer/Planner, FDOT, 1970-1975; Transit Director, City of Athens, Georgia, 1975-1978; Civil Engineer/

Regional Manager, Post, Buckley, Schuh & Jernigan, Inc., 1978-1985; General Manager, Big Bend Transit, Inc., 1985-Present

**Years Working With Current Agency:** 28 (5 years in Management Services with PBS&J)

**Years Working In Transit Industry:** 31

**Biggest Surprise in Paratransit:** How rewarding being a paratransit provider is - all of us at BBT observe daily the improvement in the quality of life that is experienced by the many persons that BBT is able to serve

**Biggest Challenge in Paratransit:** Accomplishing the “good feeling” of being a paratransit provider within the financial capabilities of the paratransit provider

**Community Involvement:** Various civic organizations, but primary involvement has been in City/County youth athletic programs

**Personal Background:** Family, Mary, wife of 41 years, 5 children, 12 grandchildren; I enjoy spending my free time attending my grandchildren’s performances as athletes, musicians, equestrians, actors/actresses, etc.

**Childhood Ambition:** I was raised by a grandfather who was a Contractor and always assumed I would be in Building Construction

**Inspiration:** Wil Barnes, Director, CPTA (deceased)

## New Addition to the Florida RTAP Resource Library

**N**ational RTAP just released an updated rural transit training aid. The Safety Training & Rural Transit (START), basic training for rural transit drivers, is an update to the National RTAP module also previously known as Special Transit and Rural Transit Safety (START). The module was originally developed in 1988 by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) Transportation Safety Institute (TSI). It has been updated to include the latest information on drivers, vehicles and passenger safety.

The National RTAP developed START as a training tool to help guide operators in three important areas of knowledge and skill: Vehicle Safety, Driver Safety, and Passenger Safety. The START program includes an Instructor Guide, Learner’s Guide and Basic Training for Rural Transit Drivers DVD. These materials were designed to train new and veteran drivers in community transit safety and security and can be customized for one to three day training programs.

This comprehensive training package is a wonderful tool to add to your rural transit training program. It can easily be incorporated into your existing program and offers operators a self paced, interactive and user friendly DVD and guidebook.

**Vehicle Safety**—outlines procedures for pre-trip, en route, and post trip vehicle inspections. While agency vehicles and lift equipment may vary, the inspection procedures can be applied universally.

**Driver Safety**—covers the basics of safe driving, including; everyday hazards, standard safety practices, coping with adverse driving conditions, and other important aspects of driver safety.

**Passenger Safety**—reviews the necessary procedures for safely picking up and dropping off passengers, securing mobility devices, handling difficult and dangerous passengers, security awareness, vehicle evacuation, and other emergency situations.

The START Program is available for loan from the Florida RTAP program or you may request your own copy from the National RTAP at (888) 589-6821. Please be sure to visit the new Florida RTAP website at [www.floridartap.org](http://www.floridartap.org) for other training resources available for checkout through the program.

## Changes to Part 40 Cause Some Confusion—Training Offered

**O**n June 25, 2008, the U.S. DOT issued a Final Rule amending, among other provisions, paragraph (b) of the section pertaining to urine specimen collections. This amendment made direct observation collections mandatory for all return-to-duty and follow-up tests. DOT sought additional comments to this provision on August 25, 2008.

On October 22, 2008, the Department issued a notice responding to those comments. U.S. DOT did not change the amendment, and determined that the revised paragraph would go into effect, as scheduled, on November 1, 2008. On November 12, 2008, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued a stay of the revised paragraph (b). On November 17th U.S. DOT announced that the revised section 40.67(b) is removed from the CFR in order to comply with the court's stay, and the prior version of 49 CFR 40.67(b), will remain in effect until further notice.

Therefore, direct observation collections for return-to-duty and follow-up testing will continue to be an employer option, rather than mandatory. All other requirements of 49 CFR Part 40 that went into effect on August 25, 2008, including the direct observation provision at 40.67(i) (checking for prosthetic and other devices used to carry "clean" urine and urine substitutes) remain in effect at this time.

In order to facilitate a better understanding of the changes to the regulations; CUTR has scheduled training sessions that will provide transit properties with further details of the amendment revisions and a list of action items that will aid in implementing the revisions. Model policy templates will also be disseminated. Participants will receive a certificate of completion from the Statewide Transit Training and Technical Assistance Program sponsored by the Florida Department of Transportation. For further information and to register for the free training sessions please contact Molly Buffington at [buffington@cutr.usf.edu](mailto:buffington@cutr.usf.edu) or (813) 974-7810.

## Florida's Transit Training Moves to Distance Learning—A Success Story

**T**he Florida Department of Transportation's Florida Statewide Transit Training and Technical Assistance Program offered the first in a series of online distance learning training courses on October 30, 2008. The course entitled "Preparing for Triennial Reviews—Helpful Hints" was taught by Randall Pine, a contract Federal Transit Administration (FTA) reviewer, and offered participants an opportunity to "attend" a one-hour training course from an industry expert without leaving the comfort of their office.

Participants in this distance learning course, represented 12 transit systems throughout Florida, as well as the Florida DOT. Each participant was able to quickly and easily login to the course and experience an interactive, user friendly, informative and educational training session. The distance learning "classroom" utilized a Microsoft Office PowerPoint presentation, a guided tour of FTA's website, electronic questionnaires and plenty of opportunity throughout the course to interact with the instructor and other course participants.

There are many benefits to participating in online distance learning courses including convenience, flexibility, effectiveness, affordability, and interactivity. The Florida Statewide Transit Training and Technical Assistance Program along with Florida RTAP will begin offering more of these online distance learning courses in response to Florida's transit systems' dramatic decrease in travel budget dollars.

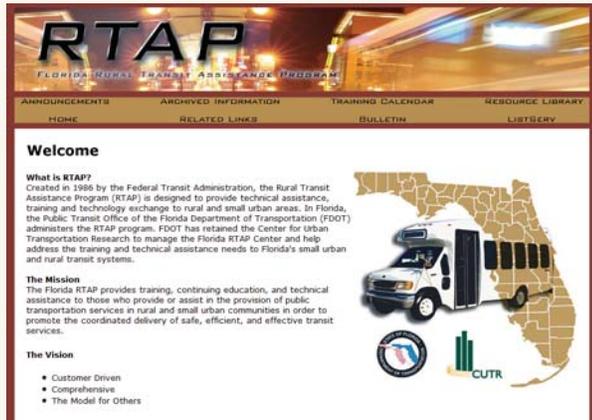
Even if technology is not your forte, this form of online education is easy to use and has proven to be an effective method for professional development. Please visit [www.cutr.usf.edu](http://www.cutr.usf.edu) or [www.floridartap.org](http://www.floridartap.org) for a list of upcoming distance learning courses. There are no registration fees to attend the distance learning course, but registration is limited, so register early to avoid disappointment. If you have any questions, or have an idea of an online distance learning session, please e-mail Amber Reep at [reep@cutr.usf.edu](mailto:reep@cutr.usf.edu).

**Florida RTAP's Website Address**

[www.floridartap.org](http://www.floridartap.org)

# Facelift for the Florida RTAP Website

The Florida RTAP has been through a few changes over the last couple months; from a new project manager to new additions to the RTAP library. The Florida DOT is pleased to announce the launch of their new Florida RTAP website. The new Florida RTAP website is designed to be more interactive, user friendly and to effectively meet the needs of Florida's rural transit properties.



The new website is now branded with the theme of Florida RTAP which helps with consistency in the delivery of news and updates. The new website offers Florida rural transit properties a fresh, easy to read, easy to navigate, and more up to date website. The seven main features of the new Florida RTAP website are:

**Training Calendar:** New RTAP and other related training courses are added on a regular basis. Please visit this section of the website often for new courses and conference announcements. Register early to reserve your professional development opportunities.

**Announcements:** New announcements as they relate to public transportation. Previous announcements may be viewed on the "Archived Information" page.

## Florida RTAP Manager Update—*cont'd from cover*

quate access to training that does not always require travel. Therefore, we plan on providing on-line distance learning options for some of our training courses, providing courses on CD, and utilizing webcasting for topics that work better in an interactive atmosphere.

**Resource Library:** The RTAP program has a wide range of resources which are available for loan. The RTAP managers are continually searching for new training materials to add to the resource library. Fill out the RTAP resource request form posted on the site.

**Bulletin:** The RTAP Center develops and distributes a quarterly newsletter. All current and past issues of the RTAP Bulletin are archived on the new RTAP website in Adobe PDF format.

**ListServ:** The RTAP Center has developed this listserv for rural transportation professionals to ask each other questions, network and gather information about various aspects of rural transit. If you are interested in receiving announcements about upcoming training courses and learning about what is new in the field of rural transportation, please sign up to be part of the listserv by visiting the Florida RTAP website.

**Archived Information:** The RTAP Center maintains an archive of informational announcements distributed throughout Florida including changes/additions to Federal and State rules, regulations, codes, and other updates.

**Related Links:** The RTAP website provides easy to access links to state and national rural transit related associations, organizations, commissions and programs. Mark this page in your Favorites for easy to access.

It is the mission of the Florida RTAP to "provide 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." This new website was designed with this mission in mind and we believe the new Florida RTAP website will help accomplish this mission.

As your Florida RTAP Statewide Manager, I welcome any and all input you would like to share whether it be positive or negative. I can be reached by e-mail at [michael.wright1@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:michael.wright1@dot.state.fl.us) or by telephone at (850) 414-4529.

## 2008 & 2009 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/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.

**December 16, 2008**

Distance Learning: Fatigue Awareness  
10:00 am—11:00 am (Online)

**January 5-9, 2009**

TSI Bus System Safety—Tampa, FL

**February 17, 2009**

Weapons of Mass Destruction:  
Prevention and Response to Suicide  
Bombing Incidents—Tampa, FL

**March 23-26, 2009**

Instructor's Course in Bus Operator  
Training—Tampa, FL

**March 27, 2009**

1-Day Instructor's Course in Paratransit  
Operator Training—Tampa, FL

**April 7-8, 2009**

Conflict Avoidance, the Art of Main-  
taining Control—A Guide for Transit  
Operator Trainers—Tampa, FL



### Save the Date: May 1-2, 2009

2009 Florida Paratransit Rodeo

Hosted By: VOTRAN

Daytona, Florida

### FDOT Renews with CUTR—*cont'd from cover*

add new features and services to help serve and benefit the Florida RTAP community.

Starting with this Fall Edition, the Florida RTAP Bulletin has transitioned from a paper product to an electronic format. This change will allow greater flexibility as to the content of the newsletter. We hope to begin to introduce new features such as this edition's first "Spotlight" feature that will focus on a member of the Florida RTAP community in each issue, adding short highlights of RTAP transit agency news, and much more.

To make all of this happen, we need your assistance and input. Please take a few min-

utes to share your ideas of what you'd like to see included in future RTAP Bulletins. We are looking for any agency and local news that you would like to share with the Florida RTAP community. This could include such things as recent promotions, awards, acquisition of new vehicles, and so forth.

Please submit your articles, suggestions for newsletter topics, local agency news and other suggestions for the Florida RTAP Bulletin via email to Yolanda Moore at [moorey@cutr.usf.edu](mailto:moorey@cutr.usf.edu).

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