

# RTAP

## BULLETIN

FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SPRING—VOL. 11, NO. 1

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2013 FDOT/FPTA/CUTR  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
WORKSHOP

## MAP-21—Transportation Funding Roadmap

**T**he Moving Ahead for Progress in the Twenty-First Century Act, or MAP-21, is a funding and authorization bill that governs the United States federal surface transportation spending. The bill, signed by President Obama on July 6, 2012, took effect October 1, 2012 and made significant changes to several transportation programs.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC) and the New Freedom Program were rescinded under MAP-21. The good news is that many JARC and New Freedom activities are now eligible under Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) Section 5307, 5310 and 5311 programs.

The FTA Section 5310, Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, program experienced the greatest number of changes. Previously a state administered program providing capital funding, the program now apportions funding based on urbanized area size. Large urbanized areas (over 200,000 in population) will have to select a designated recipient to manage the program in their area. The Designated Recipient for large urbanized areas can be a transit system, MPO, or the state DOT. Small urbanized (50,000 – 199,999) and rural areas (under 50,000) will continue to be administered by the State.

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## FDOT District One—New Initiatives in Commuter Services

**S**ince its inception in 2007, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One's Commuter Services project has proactively provided commuter-choice educational opportunities, and conducted expansive outreach to build partnerships and link commuters through ride-matching services. In the fall of 2012, District One activated a new phase designed to build upon prior project accomplishments and to take the project to new and higher levels of regional achievement by offering vanpool development assistance, through strategies to enhance transit financing and services, and broadening opportunities for college and university students, volunteers, and others to participate.

The Commuter Services project is a very important component of the Department's approaches, based in the Florida Transportation Plan and consistent with the Florida Transportation Vision for the 21st Century, to provide an efficient and effective multimodal transportation network. Connectivity is a key transportation goal. Commuter Services helps commuters to connect. Commuters save money, time, and conserve fuel by using alternative modes of transportation. Bicyclists and those walking improve their health and enjoy "commuter fitness."

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Commuter Services engages with many sectors of the communities throughout District One to promote transportation choices. The project contributes to economic development and vitality, and an improved sustainable quality of life for all through expanded mobility options.

### Heartland Rural Mobility Plan Implementation Initiative

The Commuter Services project team is coordinating with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council to create new and strengthen existing Heartland Rural Mobility Plan projects to meet rural area needs in the Heartland and southern Lake Okechobee regions. Two such projects are the Clewiston–Belle Glade Community Bus Route, a joint project of Districts One and Four, and DeSoto–Arcadia Regional Transit (DART). DART is a new flexible public transit service in the Arcadia area of DeSoto County. It is of particular convenience for passengers with ambulatory issues. DART is a cooperative project of the DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners and the Florida Department of Transportation, with state and Federal Transit Administration financial support.

### Best Workplace for Commuters: Race to Excellence

Best Workplaces for Commuters (BWC) is a national awards program that recognizes qualified employers for offering outstanding commuter benefits. To qualify, employers must meet the National Standard of Excellence in commuter benefits—a standard the National Center for Transit Research (NCTR) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created.

Best Workplaces for Commuters awarded Commuter Services a “Silver Supporting Agency” award during the virtual Race to Excellence ceremony



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on January 31, 2013. Efforts that contributed to the award this year included supporting nearly twenty employers to achieve BWC designation, assisting with the Universal Access Transit Pass in Polk County, and providing a wide range of services to many customers.

Commuter Services is financed through the State Commuter Assistance and Ridesharing Program. Tindale-Oliver & Associates, Inc., and URS Southern Corporation are continuing on the project team.

The Commuter Services team is honored to be working with many local and regional partners, with a strong focus on transportation for jobs, to improve community and regional mobility and to offer transportation choices to all commuters. Project staff welcomes you to exercise “commuter fitness” by contacting Commuter Services at (866) 585-RIDE or at [www.CommerServicesFL.com](http://www.CommerServicesFL.com).



*L to R: Christine Diaz-Pagan (Commuter Services Program Director), Tom Phillips (Executive Director of Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) and Polk Transit), Richard Shine (FDOT District One Transit Programs Administrator), John Hall (Polk County Commissioner), Keith Merritt (City of Lakeland Commissioner and Chairman of the LAMTD board), Brian Goff (USF-Lakeland Student Body President), Ed Smith (Polk County Commissioner), Angela Taylor (USF-Lakeland Student Council Governor), Michael Nacrelli (USF-Lakeland Student Council Lieutenant Governor), George Lindsey (Polk County Commissioner), Philip Winters (CUTR, Transportation Demand Management Program Director), and Gow Fields (Commuter Services Program Ambassador and City of Lakeland Mayor)  
Not shown: Awards recipient Dr. Kathleen Moore, University of South Florida- Lakeland Campus Director.*

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 Lewis

# SPOTLIGHT—Jim Van Pelt, Transportation Planner, Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization

**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 Jim Van Pelt a Public Transportation Planner at the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Organization.



**Name:** Jim Van Pelt

**Title:** Public Transportation Planner, Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Birthplace:** New Orleans, Louisiana

**Education:** B.S. Business Administration, Auburn University, Minor in Aviation Management

**Professional History:** I worked for Delta Airlines for 11 years, then with Citrus County Transit for 4 years, TD Commission for 1 year, Senior Friendship Center (the CTC for Sarasota) for 4 years, Lake County Transit for 4 years, ATC (the CTC for Lee and Collier counties) for 5 years, and then came to the Sarasota/Manatee MPO.

**Years Working with Current Agency:** Going on 7 years

**Years Working in Transit Industry:** 25

**Biggest Surprise:** In operations, every day was a surprise. There are very few days that are the same.

**Biggest Challenge:** As all paratransit providers know, the biggest challenge in paratransit is figuring out how to meet the demand with such limited resources. Some customers need trips so desperately and you have to figure a way to get them to where they have to go even if you have to take them yourself. Even if occasionally the trip is gratis. You try to make everybody happy, but I learned early that that was close to impossible.

**Personal Benefit of Working in Paratransit:** When you work with so many people who genuinely need help, and being able to help them, it is highly rewarding. Working with so many dedicated people and making so many friends all over the state and laughing with so many people has been great.

**Community Involvement:** I have spoken to many agencies and committees, but being somewhat of a non-joiner, I don't have much involvement in structured things. When you

know your job so well, you can speak without rehearsing, and being so comfortable with your knowledge lets you be involved in many facets of the community; if you choose to.

**Personal Background:** Married once, no kids, had a great dog, Anton, I like to fly planes, fish, workout, work in the yard, eat and drink.

**Childhood Ambition:** To be a pilot.

**Inspiration:** My dad was always my inspiration. He was as honest as the day is long and had an unbelievable work ethic.

**Favorite Book:** *Dark Rivers of the Heart*, *Black Hawk Down*, *The Deep Blue Goodbye*, *East of Eden*

**Favorite Movies:** Kill Bill, Taxi Driver, Blade Runner, Hereafter, Bullitt, One Day

**Favorite Color:** Blue

**Favorite Candy:** Pretty much all chocolate.

**My Motto:** "The more you practice, the luckier you get." and "To thine own self be true and it must follow as the night the day thou canst not then be false to any man."

**Registration is Open  
April 19-20, 2013**

**17th Annual Florida RTAP  
Paratransit Roadeo**

**Hosted by**



**Register here by March 18<sup>th</sup>**

Operating assistance and New Freedom type activities are now eligible expenses under the FTA Section 5310 program. At least 55% of an area's apportionment must be spent on capital projects. The remaining 45% may be allocated to capital, operating or New Freedom type activities.

As this article went to print, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was conducting its annual application process for the small urban and rural areas. The large urban areas are working through the designation process.

The FTA Section 5311, Rural Formula, program remains relatively unchanged, except for the addition of JARC type activities. Eligible recipients remain the same, but maintenance of JARC activities or development of new JARC activities are now eligible expenses. A private-for-profit provider will have to apply through a Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) to request JARC funds and continue a project in a rural area.

Several changes of note were included for the Urban Formula program (Section 5307). Funds apportioned in the FTA Section 5307 program will be available for 5 years now instead of 3. Large urban areas will be able to use a portion of their apportionment for operating assistance if

they put 100 buses or less on the road during their peak service period. Additionally, the maintenance of previously funded or the development of new JARC activities are also eligible for funding in 5307 under MAP-21.

MAP-21 requires all designated and sub-recipients of FTA funding to have transit asset management plans. Through rulemaking FTA will establish requirements for a capital asset inventory, condition assessments, decision support tools and prioritization of capital investments. The FDOT intends to provide technical assistance for the development of a transit asset management plan to our rural providers after FTA final rulemaking.

Finally of note for all population areas, is the formulization of the Bus and Bus Facilities program (FTA Section 5339). Previously a discretionary program, FTA Section 5339 will be apportioned based on population size and formula. Each state will receive \$1.25M for rural areas. The state will also receive an apportionment for small urban areas. Each large urban area will receive an apportionment based on the FTA Section 5307 formula.

Look for more information on the MAP-21 in future RTAP E-Bulletins as it becomes available.

## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida RTAP Paratransit Roadeo: April 19-20, 2013

It's that time again – roundup your best drivers and come participate in the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida RTAP Paratransit Roadeo. There will be training opportunities for the participants. Then the participant's skills will be tested with a written test and the on-course competition. As always, the event will end with an Awards Banquet that will crown and recognize our champions in both the van and cutaway division.



2012 Roadeo Passenger Stop

This year's event will again be a two-day event that will conclude with an awards banquet on Saturday evening at The Forest County Club at 6100 Club Blvd. SW, Fort Myers, Florida 33908. Registration and training will take place at the hotel on Friday.

For additional information and to register, go to the Florida RTAP website at [www.floridartap.org](http://www.floridartap.org) and click "Paratransit Roadeo". Questions should be directed to Joann Haley at Lee Tran, (239) 533-0323 or [jhaley@leegov.com](mailto:jhaley@leegov.com).

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida RTAP Paratransit Roadeo will be hosted by Lee Tran on April 19-20, 2013 in Fort Myers. Participants and judges will stay at the Crowne Plaza Fort Myers at Bell Tower Shops. The Roadeo will take place on Saturday at the VOTRAN facility at FDLE site at 4700 Terminal Drive in Fort Myers.

**Registration Deadline:**  
**March 18, 2013**  
**Don't Delay, Register Today!**

## 2013 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 Amber Reep (813) 974-9823.

**April 19-20, 2013**

17th Annual Florida RTAP Paratransit  
Roadeo—Ft. Myers, FL

**April 22-23, 2013**

Transit Dispatch Training—South Daytona, FL

**April 24-26, 2013**

Substance Abuse Management and Program  
Compliance (FT00456-A)—St. Petersburg, FL

**June 18-19, 2013**

FDOT/FPTA/CUTR Professional Development  
Workshop—Tampa, FL

**August 6-7, 2013**

21st Annual Transportation Disadvantage  
Conference—Daytona Beach, FL

**October 27-29, 2013**

2013 FPTA Annual Conference—Clearwater, FL

### **Save the Date: FDOT/FPTA/CUTR Professional Development Workshop June 18-19, 2013**

**T**he 2013 FDOT/FPTA/CUTR Professional Development Workshop will be June 18-19, 2013 at the Embassy Suites-USF. The statewide workshop offers a unique professional development opportunity for Florida's public transportation supervisors, front-line employees, and other key staff in operations, maintenance, marketing, planning and administration. This one-stop-workshop offers excellent opportunities to learn from industry experts, attend professional development training, and

gather information about innovative industry research, and network with peers.

Registration will begin in late April. There is no registration fee for FPTA members to attend the workshop. Participants will be responsible for their own lodging. Brochures and registration announcements will be available on the Florida RTAP website.