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FLORIDA RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
SUMMER—VOL. 14, NO. 2

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TRANSIT PROFESSIONALS CONVERGE ON TAMPA

START Train-the-Trainer Provided at JTrans

The Florida Department of Transportation's Florida Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), administered by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) presented the National RTAP's START (Safety Training and Rural Transit) Train-the-Trainer Workshop, April 11-12, 2016 at JTrans facility in Marianna, Florida. CUTR instructors Roberta Yegidis and Jay Goodwill provided the START Train-the-Trainer course to 19 Florida transit professionals.

The provision of transit services in a safe, secure, and customer-oriented manner demands that bus and van operators 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.

By the end of this course participants were provided the oversight and training materials to instruct their bus operators on how to:

- conduct a pre-trip inspection to ensure that their vehicle does not have an obvious safety deficiency
- operate the vehicle using industry best-practices in safety and security
- safely load and unload ambulatory and non-ambulatory passengers
- utilize industry best-practices for managing on-board incidents

In addition to the START materials, participants were also exposed to two other CUTR operator training aids – the Distracted Driving video and the Disability Etiquette for Bus Operators computer based training (CBT).

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*.

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Easterseals Project Action Consulting Launches Innovative Travel Trainer Certification Program

Easterseals Project Action Consulting and the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida have launched a professional travel trainer certification program that provides new and veteran travel trainers with the Certified Travel Training Instructor (ctti) credential. The ctti program is the only travel trainer certification program in the United States and is an opportunity for professionals to demonstrate that they have the skill it takes to confidently and successfully assist individuals who want to learn how to independently ride both public and private transportation in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

Travel trainers are employed by transit systems, schools, health and human services providers, and government agencies to teach people with disabilities, older adults, and any interested traveler how to access and use public transportation.

Certification is reached by completing a series of foundation, topical, and elective courses and successfully completing a final test and documented practicum. While the entire certification program consists of 60 hours of courses, travel trainers may substitute work experience for credits. Steps to certification and program details are available at *www.projectaction.com*. Travel trainers may register for required courses on an individual basis or discounted certification bundles are available for large groups hoping to complete the certification in a short amount of time.

ctti certified travel training instructor

"As the field of travel training has grown, the demand for a certification program to support professionals working in the field as well as providers who choose to offer travel training as a service has also grown," states Donna Smith, Senior Director of ESPA Consulting. "Easterseals is very proud to partner with CUTR to make this program possible."

Travel trainers teach people with disabilities, older adults, and interested travelers how to access and use public transportation independently. Skills needed by professional travel trainers include knowledge of human development and behavior, an understanding of transportation systems and services, and ability to teach the concepts of interaction with both the natural and built environment along paths of travel.

Save the Date

Combined FPTA-CTD Annual Conference

Jacksonville, Florida • December 11-14, 2016

Save the dates on your calendar for the 2016 joint Florida Public Transportation Association and the Commission of the Transportation Disadvantaged Annual Conference. For the second time, this 2016 event will combine the FPTA and CTD annual conferences into a single event. This event will be hosted by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) on December 11-14, 2016.

FPTA Florida Public Transportation Association

Florida Commission for the CTD Transportation Disadvantaged

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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— Shawn Mitchell, Big Bend Transit

Each 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 Shawn Mitchell, General Manager, Big Bend Transit.

Name: Shawn Mitchell

Title: General Manager

Birthplace: Miami, Florida

Education: Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Florida A & M University

Professional History: I started working in transit as a part time dispatcher, over time I found myself working full time as a driver supervisor. In 2003 I became Safety & Training Director for Big Bend Transit, Inc. serving in this capacity under Mr. Ted Waters.

Years Working with Current Agency: 15 years

Years Working in Transit Industry: 17 years

Biggest Surprise Working in Paratransit: I would say the evolution of technologies whether it be transit software or vehicle advancements.

Biggest Challenge Working in Paratransit: Managing service demand with limited funding.

Community Involvement: I mentor at risk teenage boys and coach youth basketball.

Biggest Benefit of Working in Paratransit: Knowing that my job really makes a difference in the lives of people who depend on our transit system for their daily activities.

Personal Background: I have two boys, Corey serves in the US Navy and Brandon attends Florida State University. I have a wonderful cat name Silver. When possible I like to play billiards.

Childhood Ambition: As a kid, I enjoyed watching "Gun Smoke" and dreamed of being a sheriff.

Favorite Book: Fountainhead

Favorite Candy: Mr. Goodbar

My Motto: "Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little." – Edmond Burke

National RTAP START Online Course

Providing a safe, comfortable, and dependable ride is the foundation of community transit. The START Online course for drivers is divided into three main sections: Vehicle Safety, Driver/Operator Safety, and Passenger Safety. Vehicle Safety outlines procedures for pre-trip, en-route and post-trip inspections; Driver/Operator Safety covers the basics of defensive driving techniques, including everyday hazards and adverse driving conditions; and Passenger Safety reviews the procedures for boarding and disembarking ambulatory and non-ambulatory passengers, securing mobility devices, and handling emergencies.

START Online is an eLearning version of National RTAP's popular Safety Training and Rural Transit instructor-led course was developed in partnership with CTeL. It is an interactive, online version of START and includes the original videos, with one segment updated, as well as a course outline and transcripts of each lesson. The online version gives learners the option to go at their own pace while letting managers track learner progress within each course.

START Online was developed as a partnership between National RTAP and the Center for Transportation e-Learning (CTeL). Visit *ctel.mrooms.net/login/index.php* to register.

How to Perform a Bus Collision Investigation—A Short Course has been developed to provide Florida's transit agencies–both those operating in urban and rural environments–with the structure necessary to successfully conduct a bus collision investigation. The chain of events and contributing factors, human and environmental, the evidence analysis and detailed documentation are critical to conducting a complete investigation of transit bus accidents. **This two-day short course has been specifically designed to guide Florida's transit agencies regardless of size in relevant, standardized ways to conduct a bus collision investigation.**

Discussions will include the purpose of safety investigations, working with local law enforcement, FRA/FTA/FDOT roles and requirements, NTSB role and investigative process, notifications–internal & external, and the Incident Command/NIMS. The training will include a series of tabletop exercises with various accident/incident scenarios that serve to draw out organizational and technical aspects of bus incident investigation. Locations and dates of training are provided on page four.

2016 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 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.*

How to Perform a Bus Collision Investigation – A Short Course[1]

- September 13-14, 2016
  Tampa, FL
- September 27-28, 2016
  JTrans, Marianna, FL
- October 4-5, 2016
  RTS, Gainesville, FL
- October 25-26, 2016
  FDOT District 1 Office, Bartow, FL
- November 1-2, 2016
  GoLine, Vero Beach, FL
- November 15-16, 2016
  FDOT District 1 Office, Ft. Myers, FL

December 11-14, 2016
Combined FPTA-CTD Annual Conference—Jacksonville, FL

[1] Registration to open soon.

Florida Transit Professionals Converge on Tampa

Close to 270 transit professionals representing transit systems, Florida DOT central and district offices, consultants, and other organizations gathered in Tampa at the USF Embassy Suites on June 6-8, 2016 for the 2016 FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop and Transit Safety Summit. The workshop and summit were jointly sponsored by the Florida Public Transportation Association, Florida Department of Transportation, and the USF Center for Urban Transportation Research. The workshop theme was "The Next Generation: Is Public Transit Prepared?"

The fourth annual Florida Transit Safety Summit, hosted by the FDOT Florida Transit Safety Network (FTSN), started off the three days of professional development and attracted over 130 transit professionals. State and national safety experts provided informative presentations on a wide variety of topics related to transit safety.

The fifteenth annual workshop offered 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. The one-stop

workshop provided attendees with 26 different sessions that offered an excellent opportunity to learn from industry experts, attend professional development training, learn about research updates, and network with their peers. All of Florida's transit networks–operations, safety, maintenance, marketing and planning–played active roles in developing and presenting timely workshop content.

This year's workshop included several sessions of relevance for Florida's small urban and rural transit agencies. On Wednesday, three consecutive sessions focused specifically on these agencies providing information on drug and alcohol program management, grant compliance issues, and marketing for small and rural transit properties.